SUFSM IN INDIA

During 11th and 12th century Sufism had already grown into a full-fledged movement in different parts of the Islamic world. Sufism acquired distinct features in the Indian environment from the beginning of 13th century. It can be said that Sufism in India accepted the three cardinal doctrines: ‘Mahabat or the love of God, ‘arifa’ or the Knowledge of God and ‘Tawhid’ or the unification of God. Love of God takes the disciple to the arena of Knowledge of God and the knowledge leads to the understanding of unification of God. Nizamuddin Auliya, a famous Sufic saint of India said that the beginning of loving God is to accept a life of devotion and self-sacrifice. Then one has to recollect and repeat the names of the Beloved and remember Him unceasingly. By sincerely doing these, the disciple gains mystical experience by which he develops communion with God, and gains divinity in him.

The sufi doctrine of Unification of God is not similar to the Quranic concept of the Unity of God. The follower of Islam believe in One God, however the Sufi believes in the Quaranic concept of God and establishes his identity with God by following the path of love. He achieves this identity by contemplation. For loving God first requirement is absolute faith in Him and the second one is intense and ceaseless thinking due to passionate love. when the lover turns his eye away from all created things, he is firmly grounded in inward contemplation. This inward deep contemplation develops in him complete annihilation of the self and merger of the self in the God. “Fana” He reaches the stage of ‘Baqa’ i.e subsistence. Ali Hujwiri states that due to revelation of Divine Omnipresence and Omnipotence in his heart this world and the next world are obliterated from his mind and ‘States’ or stations’ appear in the sight of his aspiring thought and what was shown to him as miraculous grace vanishes into nothing; he becomes dead to reason and passion alike. He realizes truth, the eternal ‘TRUTH’, which consists of three facts: (i) knowledge of the essesence and unity of God, (ii) Knowledge about the attributes of God (iii) Knowledge about the wisdom of God Further to proceed in the quest of eternal “TRUTH” it is essential to have knowledge of (i)The Qu’ran (ii) The Sunna and (iii) the consensus of the Muslim community. Knowledge of Divine Essesence or Unity of God means (i) He is infinite and not bound by time and space (ii) that
His Essence is not the cause of evil (iii) that none of His creatures is like on to Him (iv) that He has neither wife or child (v) He is the creator and sustainer of all that exist. Knowledge of the Divine Attributes makes the disciple understand that attributes are contained in God, but God is not any of these attributes. Divine Wisdom is to accept what comes in life, - good or evil, misery or prosperity, as the Wish of God which is always beneficial though some of them appear to be harmful. Further God is known to Prophets due to latter’s unceasing devotion.

By the end of 13th century Indian Sufis and Theologicians had established close contacts with Sufi scholars throughout the Islamic world. Many Indians who settled in Mecca and Medina started their own Schools to preach and teach the methods adopted by them for, God-realization.

Alhujwiri

Al Hujwiri (A.D 1088) was the earliest Sufi of eminence to have settled in India. His tomb is in Lahore, (Now in Pakistan). He was the author of Kashf-ul-Mhjub-a famous treatise on Sufism in Persian language. The Sufis after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of 13th century, introduced various orders in India, built up their own organizations and established themselves in their respective areas of influence. By the middle of 14th century the entire Deogiri had come under the sphere of their activity. By the end of 14th century there were two thousand Sufi hospices (Khanqahs) in Delhi and its neighbourhood.

The Chishti Silsilah

The growth of the Chishti order in India during the Sultanate period took place in two phases. The first phase ended with the death of Shaik Nasiruddin in 1356. The second phase started during the later part of the 14th century.

The Chishti order which later became most influential and popular Sufi order in India was introduced by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (1236). He came to India during the time of conquest of Muhammad Ghory. He finally settled in Ajmer around 1206 and won the respect of both Muslims and non-Muslims. He was not actively involved in conversion and his attitude towards non-Muslims was one of tolerance. His tomb in Ajmer became a famous centre of pilgrimage in later centuries.

The Successor of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Delhi was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar kaki (1235), Shaik Hamidduddin Nagauri (1274), who made Nagaur in Rajstan, the centre of his activities. They lived like ordinary men and dissociated themselves from those in authority. They were strict vegetarians. They and their successors translated many Persian Sufi verses in the local language called Hindavi.
Khwaja Qutabuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was succeed in Delhi by Khalifa Khwaja Fariduddin Masud (1175-1265) known as Ganjshakar and more popularly as Baba farid. Baba Farid left Delhi for Ajodhan in Punjab and lived in his Khanqah there. He despised association with the rich and ruling class. He said: the more you love this world the more distance will appear between you and the Eternal life. The veil between the Master and his servant is but his world and the cause of pollution is nothing but his world. 

Shaik Fariduddin developed the doctrine of repentance-tawba He spoke of six kinds of tawba: (i) tawba-i-dil-, the repentance in heart. This is for removing all the worldly desires form heart. (ii) tawba-i-zaban- or repentance of the tongue. This repentance implies an attitude of silence while recollecting and repeating the name of God. (iii) tawba-i-chasam or the repentance of the eye. This means closing the eyes for forbidden Things. (iv) tawba-i-gosh or repentance of the ear. This means that a Sufi will not listen to any thing other than the name of God (v) Tawba-i-pa- repentance of the feet. This means that a Sufi should not proceed towards evil. (vi) tawba-i-nafs-repentance of the carnal soul. This is the repentance to stay away from sensuous desires, lust and passion. Apart from these six types of repentance the disciple has to observe tawba-i-hal or the repentance for the present bad deeds, tawba-i-madi or repentance for the past wrong full actions and tawba-i-mustaqbil or the repentance for any future prohibited deeds.

According to Baba Farid, there are four classes of devotees: (i) saintly outside but inside full of evils (ii) external is vicious but the inner self is pure (iii) outward existences and inner self attached to evil (iv) outward inward existence are identical and attached to good. The last category is a true devotee.

Baba Farid says that the path of poverty is difficult and has seventy thousand stages. A man who does not traverse all these stages cannot be called as a dervish or a person who has taken the vow of poverty.

Khwaja Qutbudden Bakhtiyar Kaki

He regarded detachment from worldly things as a precondition for a true dervish. Austerity in the life of a man purifies the soul and brings him nearer to God. Until the dervish becomes stranger to every one and preoccupies himself with a state of detachment all the time and hates every pleasure of the world, he will never reach the station of communion with God. He says; one’s friendship with God consists in being satisfied with whatever comes from God and expressing his gratitude hundred thousand times that he was remembered by Him with such and such pretence. Further he declared; the day when affliction does not befall, I conclude that this day God’s blessing has been taken away from me, because a blessing on the path of God is nothing but a calamity that comes from the friend.
As a true follower of Islam Shaik Qutbuddin regarded fear of God as an instrument for the moral progress of the soul. Fear is a whip of God for the undisciplined so that if someone among the devotees of God shows any disregard towards Him, he is corrected and reformed with a lash.

Shaik Qutabuddin felt that as the lover of God advances on his path, his soul becomes more and more impatient for unification. Such a lover of God seeks Him at every moment and attains true knowledge. He describes the real spiritual state of the knower of God: The Gnostic is he who is blessed with thousands of states, moment after moment from the world of secrets and he is overwhelmed in his state of intoxication (*Sukr*).

**Shaik Muinuddin**

Shaik Muinuddin popularly known as Garib Nawaz laid much stress on the ascetic and moral aspects of spiritual life. He said in his letter addressed to Shaik Qutabuddin (*Asrarul-wasleem Lahore P85* by A.A. Shah); He who wants to know the essence of Sufism should close the doors of worldly pleasures for himself and follow the path of love. If he does it he becomes a true Sufi. For the progress in spiritual path, he has recommended four cardinal qualities. They are; poverty, service to others, endurance at distress and amicableness. Among other saintly virtues which are to be acquired by devotees of God important are charity and hospitality shown towards fellow-men. He said that generosity should be like a river, kindness should be like a sun and hospitality like that of earth. When he was asked about the best things of the world, he replied; they are three (i). the knower whose thoughts are derived from his own mystical experiences. (ii). the man who is not greedy (iii). the Gnostic who has realized the attributes of his Beloved. However he maintained that a lover of God has to face a number of afflictions throughout his life but should welcome them as against a common man who blames God when he faces miseries and calamities of life.

Love of God takes one to the attainment of Divine Essence. But the love should be so passionate that the Gnostic thinks of God when he stands, recollects God, while sitting, is drowned in the imagination of God, in his sleep, he dreams God and when awakened he is amazed with the God's creation.

In the real spiritual State ie- *al-Haqq* a person is called Gnostic on whom hundred thousand splendors descend everyday from the invisible world and in every moment thousands of splendours and spiritual states take place. He further states that the Gnostics are blessed with Sun-like quality. The knower of God dwells in the Unicity of God and beholds the Essence of God. The state of a perfect Gnostic transcends even the station of remembrance of God, because remembrance implies duality and duality is the pollution for the Gnostic.
Shaik Muinuddin strongly believed in the oneness of God as he said: "when we come out of the phenomenal world and look at it, we realise that the lover, the Beloved and the Love are one, meaning thereof that in the state of unification the multiplicity is unity.

Nizamuddin Auliya

Baba Farid’s views on theology and mysticism were followed by his disciple Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya (A.D. 1238- A.D. 1325AD) of Baduan. He was the fourth descendant of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and was popularly known as Mahabu-i-Ilahi. He was well acquainted with the works of Ghazali, Jilani and Suhrawardy. Due to his reputation as a theologian and an eminent scholar of Hadith (Islamic Traditions) he was recognized as the spiritual leader of his age. He established a number of monastries (khanaqahs) and propagated the path propounded by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti.

He divided knowledge into three categories: (i). Taurhis (the knowledge achieved through senses (ii). Taur ‘aql (intellectual knowledge) (iii). Taurquds (intuitive knowledge). The third one is the most perfect form of knowledge because it is derived from eternal truth.

Closeness to God is reached through the path of love. Nizamuddin classified love of God into two kinds - mahabbat-i-dhat or love of pure Divine Essence and mahabbat-i-sifat or love of the attributes of God. Love of pure Divine Essence is a gift from God to the chosen persons on earth whereas the love of the attributes of God is acquired by mujahada, or by mystical efforts for purification of the soul. Soul’s purification is attained by getting freedom from worldly desires arising from the impure soul i.e.-nafs. So true love of God is enjoyed by those who have foreshaken all worldly hankerings. This is possible by surrendering of the individual will to the Will of God. It requires lover’s constant watch over his heart. According to Nizamuddin the spiritual training of self analysis is absolutely necessary for the disciple who follows the path of love. The concept of ishq or passionate love is an expression of perfect love of God because now the lover of God wants nothing except his beloved and shows a genuine desire for becoming one with Him.

Love of God wants the devotee to lead a life of devotion and self-sacrifice. The mission of the true lover of God is to recollect the name of the beloved and to remember Him unceasingly. The moment he does not rember Him, he is separated from Him. In due course a sincere devotee experiences various spiritual stages of patience, and faith on the beloved, His mercy and fear of the beloved’s separation.

So Nizamuddin talked of six fundamental principles to be followed by a seeker of God: (i). Solitary life (ii). Physical purity and cleanliness (iii) Fasting (iv) Priority of the beloved over any thing else. (v). following the Shaik or spiritual master. (vi). to regard God above the two worlds.
The concept of Humanism:

Nizamuddin brought humanism at the forefront of Sufism. He said that first lesson of Sufism is not prayer or ritual but mastery of the maxim, “what ever you do not like to be done to yourself do not wish it to happen to others”. Firstly man should learn to renounce his own selfishness. Prayer and fastings are of little use unless you look after the needy in your environment. He said that Islam prescribes a highly ethical code of conduct than empty rounds of prayers and rituals.

Remembrance of God:

Shaik Nizamuddin narrates one estory: Once upon a time there was a great saint named Mira Kirami. A spiritual seeker wanted to visit him. This seeker had a developed intuition and whatever he saw in his dream came true. On his way to meet Mirakirami he halted as the night fell, and in sleep dreamt that Mira Kirami was dead. When day broke and he woke up he lamented for the death of the great man and the futility of his journey. Then he decided to proceed to the village of Kirami and pay respects at the tomb of the departed soul. When he reached the village of Kirami and inquired about his tomb, the villagers were taken aback because Kirami was not dead. Finally he went to Mira Kirami and greeted him. And Mira Kirami said: “Your dream was correct as to its meaning; I am usually engaged in constant recollection of God. But on the night of your dream I was occupied in some worldly matters, therefore I was dead to myself and this was conveyed in your dream. This story puts forth the prime duty of a Sufi to remember God unceasingly and when he stops doing so, he is really dead, though looks to be alive to his fellowmen.

Trust on God:

Nizamuddin said that trust on God has three degrees. The first degree is when a man goes to a pleader for his law suits, who happens to be his close friend. The man knows that the pleader is very competent. He trusts in his capacities and explains his case, gives instructions with regard to the facts of the case. So in the first degree one believes in God and approaches Him explaining his difficulties.

The second degree is when a child sucks mother’s milk. Here there is confidence without question – certainty about mother’s earnestness of feeding the child.

The third degree of Trust is that of a dead body in the hands of corpse washer. As the washer decides he turns the corpse about and so it goes. The third degree is the highest degree of trust where a devotee leaves him completely at the hands of God and does not request God for anything. He accepts everything in life as a gift from God and ultimately is cleansed.
Rununciation:

Shaik Nizamuddin said that the first duty of a sincere seeker is the practice of Tajrid. He explained that abandoning the world is not stripping oneself naked or sitting wearing only a langut. Abandoning the world means to remain in the world and carry out one's family and social responsibilities, but not retaining what comes one's way, not acquiring anything for self and not to be attached to worldly things.

Mercy:

If one side of the coin is renunciation, the other side of it is mercy. A dervish who fed others while he himself remained hungry, went naked giving clothes to others, suffered cruelty and injustice meted out to him, and blessed those who abused him, is a Sufi who has attained nearness to God. A true Sufi is fearless, because his sympathy is for all and his compassion is not by "pick and choose". He is like a sunlight which does not discriminate among places. With regard to a perfect pir, he quoted a Quranic version according to which five methods are to be practiced by a devotee. They are: (i) as a slave of God he does not depend upon anybody except God. (ii) he recognizes that divine reality can not be known without getting rid of all human weaknesses. (iii) he should accept that divine mercy cannot be received unless the seeker created in himself virtues of divine nature (iv) he must hanker to receive knowledge from God directly and by and by obliterating all traces of knowledge acquired through reason or the senses. (v) and thus he should acquire Divine Knowledge, perceive Divine Essence, Divine Action and Divine Attributes. In essence one has to get rid of all human weaknesses like ego, greed and lust, and develop an attitude of other-worldiness to become a lover of God.

He distinguished Divine Knowledge from the knowledge acquired by intellect, reason and from the senses. He stated that the knowledge which takes away simplicity and accentuates personality is verily a hindrance on spiritual path. The iron of human nature must be put in to the melting spot of discipline, hammered on the anvil of asceticism and then to be handed over to the polishing agency of the Divine Love so that the latter may cleanse it of all material impurities. It then becomes a mirror capable of reflecting the spiritual world and then be used by the king for beholding of His own image.

Seeking the path:

The aspirant or the seeker should be so sincere that if he is offered this world with all its pleasures, the next with its heaven and the universe with its sufferings he should leave the world and its pleasures for the profane, the next world and its pleasures for the faithful and would choose the sufferings for
himself. He should seek the Master and His vision in the same way that worldly
men seek ease and wealth. The worldly men seek gradual increase in their wealth
while the seeker gains it at one time.

Guide:

For the above one should be guided by a perfect teacher. So it is
indispensable for a disciple to put off his desires and protests and place himself
before the teacher as a dead body before the washer of the dead so that the
teacher may deal with the disciple as he likes.

The first step for the disciple is to follow the shariat. When the disciple
has been thoroughly disciplined by following the dictates of the religion
scrupulously and aspires to go beyond, he should aspire for taking the higher
path which consists of four stages: (i) Nasut: it is the animal nature of eating
sleeping, seeing, hearing which should be absolutely controlled. (ii) Malakut:
when the disciple controls the senses to the limit of bare necessities, he reaches
the region of angels. The duty at this stage is continuous prayer to God. (iii) By
continuous prayer the soul is elevated to the stage of Jabarut, if the disciple
does not develop pride. This is the true region of the soul bereft of body and
mind. The duties at this stage are love, joy, ecstasy. (iv) When the pilgrim achieves
these three stages by sublimation of self, he brings in him the unconditioned
state. Here works fail. It is Lahut.

The path has also three stages, in Malakut, it is action in form of prayer,
in Jabarut — it is self knowledge and in Lahut, there is universal love.

No one can control the senses, forsake the bondage and darkness of
desires unless by Divine Grace, the aspirant gets the guidance of a perfect teacher.
A perfect teacher can fathom the inner being of the disciple within no time and
can guide him properly to realize the oneness of God. Every human being will
seek to tread the Divine Path, but the eagerness comes according to one’s inner
purity, and knowledge.

The final Stage:

The final stage consists in the pouring forth of the Divine Light so
profusely that it absorbs all individual existence of the pilgrim, like particles
becoming invisible due to sunlight. The pilgrim gets absorbed in the Divine
Light. This is the state called by Sufis as “absorption in monotheism”. Shaik
Nizamuddin cautions that many have lost their balance here; no one can pass this
state without the help of Divine Grace and a Perfect Teacher because there
would be frequent states of elevations and depressions, blessings and sufferings.
Here the soul merges itself with the universe into the Divine Light. “Merge into
Him this is monotheism; lose the sense of merging, this is unity”. Here there are
neither formulas nor ceremonies, neither being nor non-being, neither description
nor allusion, neither heaven nor earth. Absolute unity without duality is realized
here. “Do not be deluded”-says Shaik Nizamuddin – “every one who merges in God is not God.

Shaik Hamiduddin (1273 A.D.)

Initiated by Shaik Muinuddin Chishty, he gave importance on the purity of the inner self. This would mean achieving control over the lower self or nafs through Muraquba or watching of the self. He divided knowledge into empirical which is attained by the lower self and spiritual or Divine Knowledge which is achieved by a Sufi by following the Sharia. Spiritual Knowledge is most certain because it is experienced by the Grace of God. He said that idleness was impiety (kafire) and one should not be inactive for even a moment.

Shaik Hamiduddin did not contribute to intellectual approach to know the truth. So all philosophical deductions for existence of God are to be rejected because they are based on rationality which is imperfect in itself. So all philosophical deductions for existence of God are to be rejected because they are based on rationality which is imperfect in itself. He also refuted a pure religious ritualistic approach to God because it is related to human qualities. God known through human attributes are finite and imperfect. The seeker can only reach the truth by self sublimation or annihilation. In this state the Pure Essence or Divine Knowledge is revealed.

He felt that sharia’ and tariqa’ are related to each other. The law of Islam is to be followed for the moral development of the soul, mystic path starts after the moral development is solidified in the individual. So Hamiduddin said: Tariqa’ (mystic path) is the spirit of sharia’.

The common man follows a path of obedience to religion. This is the first general category. Then, he advances and takes the path where he abandons worldly pleasures for suitable reward in after life. This is the second category. But the most superior kind follows the life and teachings of the Prophet. This is done by severing relations from everything except the pursuit of God. These three types are not categories of persons in the strict sense of the term but the attitudes of persons and the inclination of the mind.

Shaik Hamiduddin says that heaven and hell are nothing but states of mind according to one’s own actions, good actions have rewarding consequences, where as bad actions lead to sufferings.

The most realistic observation of Shaik Hamiduddin is: that nothing can move without the Wish of God but man’s free will plays a major part in shaping his life. Man is free to act according to his own will. In reality man is neither absolutely free, nor his fate is absolutely determined. Creations of life depends upon the Wish of God but human beings are free to choose their own way. All human beings are not alike and certain souls are more pure than others.
Saiyid Ali (1314 AD-1385 A.D)

Saiyid Ali was a great thinker or alim and Sufi. He had contributed a lot to Sunni theology. He maintained that creators and creature are two different realities. God is all-pervading, eternal and self-existing Being. He is neither matter nor substance. He has no form; He can not be compared with anything else, He is unconceivable to human mind. His attributes are uncreated without beginning or end. But the mystical union is possible between the Creator and the created which can be achieved through the highest degree of gnosis based on contemplation. The highest degree of gnosis is marif-mushahada in which the aspirant is completely absorbed in the contemplation of the nature and attributes of God. For this, the heart is to be purged of all evil. The gnosis based on contemplation is obtained through Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration. Saiyid Ali stated that Divine Revelation is granted to the Prophets and Divine Inspiration is received by saints.

He asserted that man's love of God is the supreme goal of all human beings. Of course long before Saiyid Ali Sufis had accepted, Divine Love as the ideal relationship between man and God, tracing it back to the Qur'an and the saying of Prophet Muhammad. Saiyid Ali ascribes inclination for love to five reasons: love for the self, love for a benefactor, love for perfect man, love for beautiful and love based on spiritual relationship. The love of the self is innate in every human being. The love for the benefactor arises from the benefits a man derives from him. When the man realizes that the highest and ultimate benefactor is God, his love for Him takes shape due to reverence and gratitude towards Him. He starts observing ethical values in his life. The respect for virtue helps one to develop love for God. The love for beauty inspires the mind to do good and seek the Creator of such beauty.

Saiyid Ali divided the lovers of God in to four categories: (i) most common (ii) Common (iii) selected ones (iv) highest among the selected. The most common ones are the Talibans or beginners. Their experience belongs to the world of senses; in Sufi parlance they are known as alam-i-nasut and Saiyidi Ali calls them alam-i-Shahadat. When the ordinary man rises above sensual gratification and controls his lower self he becomes a salik. (devotee). Then he enters the world of ghaib wa-misal (invisible similitude), where he experiences some sort of Divine Grace. He gets the experience of Divine Beauty. For gaining this spiritual experience he enters in to a mystical journey of four worlds first the mulk or the visible world and then shahbaz -i-ruh and then malakut, where he perceives lights of various colours. After crossing this stage the 'august bird' (the seeker) flies in the space of jabarut where, he becomes ready to receive manifestation of Divine Qualities and gets associated with Divine Virtues. The various colours perceived in malakut are transformed in to one colour. Then the aspirant enters tahut where he receives the manifestation of Divine Essence and achieves fana.
Fana is the most controversial term in sufi literature. Saiyid Ali has not explained the term. However Al-Hujwiri gives the following definition of fana: “fana is annihilation of consciousness of manhood (ubudiyat) and subsistence (baqa) is subsistence in the contemplation of Godhead (ilahiyyat).” Al Hujwiri further explains: that annihilation comes to a man through vision of the majesty of God and through the revelation of Divine Omnipotence to his heart, so that in the overwhelming sense of His majesty, this world and the next world are obliterated from his mind. He becomes dead to reason and to passion alike, dead even to annihilation itself and in that—“annihilation of annihilation”, his tongue proclaims God, and his mind and body are humble and abased.

According to Bayazid who was remaining most of the time in a state of sukr or ecstatic God-intoxication, ‘fana’ means shedding of one’s ego as snakes shed their skin. In this state the man loses his self consciousness and makes remarks such as—Glory to me—How great is my majesty—I am the throne and the footstool. A similar view was expressed by Arabi who stated that in fana the sufi loses the sight of all creatures and witnesses only the Absolute. Thus the people who witness the Absolute are believed to have attained the stage of fana and baqa.

Saiyid Ali concludes that there are three types of God-seekers. The first type is common Muslims who perform the obligatory duties prescribed by Islam. The second category of people undergo self-mortification for getting rid of the lower self or nafs; the attraction of senses. After self-mortification and subjugation of the sensual appetite, a seeker enters the domain where he kills his own will and adopt His Will. Such seeker reaches the state of lahit, the last state of mystic journey.

Saiyid Ali divides sufi saints in to two categories: (1) Muqtasidan—those who follow the moderate course. (2) Subiqan-i-safuf-i-wiliyat—leaders of the rank of sainthood.

With regard to Creation Saiyid Ali states that God created man in order to manifest His great mystery. He endowed man with reason and faith so that he may select the ideal path for himself. But majority of the human population do not listen to their reason and are guided by passion. So they become cruel, obstinate, greedy, lusty and negligent. Because instead of reason they are over powered by their carnal or sensual self and so they do not fulfill the object for which they are born as human beings.

The Muqtasidans are those who have succeeded in crushing the animal instincts in their nature and seek to lead a pure and pious life. They are in constant war with their lower self. This is the real Jihad; effort, struggle in the way to God. Those, who are ready to fight this Jihad, the Quran assures them: “Fear not nor be grieved and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised.”
The higher category is that of Sabiqan-i-safuf-i-willyat who are no longer engrossed in the darkness of nasut but are in the wide expanse of lahut. By annihilating their ephemeral existence they find an everlasting life with Divine Majesty.

In a treatise called Risala-i-Futuhiya, Saiyid Ali mentions about a category of sufis known as maqbulan or accepted ones. He divides maqbulans in to two categories : (1) muqarraban and abrar.

The muqarrabans are strict followers of tariqa. They subdue their reason, control their carnal self for finding an everlasting existence in the ocean of Divine Unity. They are not concerned with wujud or hair-splitting doctrines and try to see everything through God. They pass through the world of ubudiya (servitude) and fly in to the world of huwiya-Divine Essence. The muqarrabans are similar to ‘Perfect men’ according to the categorization of Arabi, through whom the God manifests Himself to all created beings.

The second class of abrar is again subdivided by in to two,

(i) those who are devoted to the service of mankind and are known as ahl-i-futuwat.

(ii) those who are so devoted to God that they have no concern with worldly people. They are known as walihan-i-tariqa (astonished ones in the path of tariqa).

The walihan-i-tariqa people are absorbed with Divine Ecstacy to such an extent that they at times do not perform the obligatory prayers. They are of the opinion that the world is full of deceit and evil, and hence they remain away from it.

The ahl-i-futuwat are full of compassion and sympathy for others. Their existence is the source of comfort for the mankind. They spend their lives and wealth in treating their fellowmen kindly and generously. They distribute their wealth to the people indiscrimately, to both friends or foes, to a believer or non-believer. They have three virtues: (1) they are pious (ii) they are honest (iii) they are loyal. They have four qualities:

(i) To forgive even when capable of taking vengeance.

(ii) To exhibit patience in anger

(iii) To wish well even to an enemy.

(iv) To prefer the needs of others to one’s own.

Such a person does not miss a single sunna of the Prophet, and is not worldly; though he mixes with people in spirit he is away from them, busy in his contemplation. Ahl-i-futuwat is well-mannered, respectful to his elders, an adviser to those of his age, affectionate to those younger than him, kind to the weak,
generous to the poor, enemy of the unjust and, at war with *nafs* but at peace with people and his own self.

Such a person eventually is appointed by the Shaik (guide) as his *Khalifa*.

Saiyid Ali like all other Sufis mentions that none can travel on the path of God without the guidance of a preceptor who is duly authorized to initiate disciples. Knowledge acquired by personal effort is of no avail. Ghazali held that one who has no *pir* to guide him will be led by Satan. Al Hujwiri called such people as “ignorant pretenders”. An individual might perform ascetic exercises, and mortification for hundred years, but this is of no use unless he serves the man expert in *tariqa*. Prophet Muhammad imbued. “Ali, the commander of the faithful, with him the chain of all living saints go back to Him”. This is the secret of *tariqa* and *silsila*.

The preceptor is endowed with knowledge and teaches the disciple according to his capacity and prescribes remedies for his spiritual ailments and diseases of heart.

**Shaik Ahmed Sirhindi (1564AD – 1624AD)**

He was also known as Mujaddid Alf Thani. He was a great master of contemporary knowledge, philosophy and jurisprudence and taught them to his students. He taught mysticism to those who are eager to learn it. He was such an ardent and close follower of the Holy Prophet and His teachings that he never left a *sunnah* (tradition) unpracticed.even for a day.

During his period India was under the Mughal rule and the Emperor demanded the obedience and allegiance of the Shaiks. It was the need of the time that there should appear such a Shaik who should oppose the worship of the Emperor by refusing to bow before him and revive the true spirit of Islam. Shaik Ahmad Sirhindi fearlessly faced the displeasure of the Emperor and went to prison. He was also known as mujaddid because he started the movement of purifying the Islam by restoring to its traditional orthodoxy. He pressed the people to follow *Sunnah* rigidly and to uproot heresy. His views on mystical revelations and illumination, pantheism, sectarianism and *sufism* were clear. He was a great reformer of Islam as well a sufi saint of very high order. His message can be divided in to two categories.

(i). Following strictly the *sunnah* or religious law prescribed by Prophet Mahammud.

(ii). Purifying Sufi practices from non-muslim influence.
Following of Sunnah:

He maintained that only the Qur'an and the Sunnah are to be trusted. The duty of the theologicians is simply to interpret these fundamental sources and not to add anything to them. The mysticism practiced by the Sufis is to be accepted only if it confirms to them. He maintained that the promise of God is to unveil Himself to His good people in the hereafter and not here. The revelation of "lights" of which the Sufis are so proud — he stated — are nothing but their own mental projections and fantasies. He wrote; “I am afraid the beginners would be discouraged if I were to point out the drawbacks of the revelations and ‘lights’ but if I remain silent, the true and the false would remain undistinguished. I insist that these lights and revelations are to be judged with reference to the revelation of God on the mount of Sinai when the Prophet Moses prayed for the sight-of Him. Who can bear the sight of Him?”

Further he stated: Abundance of miracles is not the sign of a devotee’s spiritual superiority. He quoted Shaik Suharwardi’s opinion that miracles are boon from God to render the faith firm; but a man who has been gifted with a firm faith does not require them, it is enough for him that his heart praises and remembers Him. Miracles can be divided in to two categories: (i) knowledge of God and His attributes. (ii) about creation and information concerning the universe. Unlike the former, even imposters can have a share in the latter. The persons having miracles of first category have more chances to reach God than those having miracles of the second, but to the common man the latter are more acceptable.

Saintly men can inspire the common folk to the religion of their Prophet, without miracles. The real miracle is to purify the heart of the disciple by inducing him to turn away from materialism. These real saints even without miracles are the sureties of peace and prosperity in this world. He said that the distinction between a true and false devotee is that the former adheres strictly to the sariat, the spiritual law, and the latter adheres to his own whims. The man whose company inspires you to be more attentive to God is a true saint.

He was of the opinion that not even the Prophet is safe from the evil designs of the devil. When a devotee is tempted by satan he should judge his inspiration by its accord to the religion preached by his Prophet. Sometimes without any attempt on the part of satan to mislead us, we have false inspirations as in dreams. These false inspirations are the creations of our own fancy.

According to Mujaddid religious law has three aspects: (i) knowledge (ii) fidelity (iii) action. To acquire these qualities one has to purify the soul from the impurities of materialism. Sufism and Gnosticism help in purifying one’s soul by contemplating on the important aspects of fidelity. 'Ecstasy' ‘intoxication' and
'illumination' are the by-products. They are not the ends. They are merely fantasies and projections to please the beginners. After passing them on his way the Sufi has to surrender to the Divine Will, which is his real destination. A Sufi has to experience various states before reaching truth the Ultimate.  

Mujaddid himself experienced these intermediary states for years and ultimately achieved the goal of fidelity. So he held that those who think that the law is superficial and gnosis is the right and sufficient path are misled. They are content with the states – the means and they ignore the end.  

The strait path is the path Holy Prophet whose guidance is the best. Internal purification helps the external and is not contradictory to it. When we submit devoutly to God's Beloved, the Holy Prophet, we become His beloved. Submission to the Prophet's tradition – sunnah – is real bliss while opposition to it is the cause of all disasters. The devotees of the religious law are like dealers in diamonds who work less but gain more.  

The states of ecstasy, gnosis and illumination are good if they are subservient to the law; or else they are misleading: if not worthless.  

The sufi's conduct helps him to abide by the Divine Law, which controls one's lower passions and undermines their influence. It is neither antagonistic nor equivalent to religious law. It is rather subservient to it.  

Those who regard a saint (wali) superior to a Prophet are senseless and are not fully aware of the attributes of the Prophethood which are superior to saintship or – wila ul – in all respects.  

Here it is worthwhile to mention the views of Saiyid Ali on saints. He has refereed to the hierarchy of saints as enumerated by Shaik Hujwiri by interpreting some Qur'anic verses. Hujwiri states that the saints are the choosen ones of God, He has specially distinguished them by His friendship. However he broadly divides them in to two categories (i) the "governors of universe" – through whose blessings the rain falls from sky, and through the purity of their lives the plants spring up from the earth and they are concealed and do not know one another and are not aware of the excellence of their state. The second category are those who have power to lose and bind and are the officers of the Divine Court. They are known to each other and can not act save by mutual consent.  

Shaik Ahmed Sirhindi confirms to the categories of saints given by Saiyid Ali.  

(i) Muqtasidan – (those who follow a moderate course).  
(ii) Sabiqan-i-sufuf-i-wilayat (leaders)
Before proceeding to describe these categories Saiyidi Ali asserts that God created man in order to manifest His great mystery. He endowed man with reason as well as passions so that he may select for himself the right path of renunciation or the slippery gainless but attractive path of worldly enjoyments. The Muqtasidans are those who tread on the right path. They are the people who are successful in controlling the animal instincts. Above them are the wilayat who have found a place in the wide expanse of lahut – Divine majesty.

Mujaddid was a sufi but he did not think Sufism as the soul aim of life. For him it was only a means to an end, the end being complete and unconditional adherence to the Qur' an and the sunnah. He gave a treatise on sufistic perfection, but the best of him is available in three volumes of his letters – totaling to 535.

With regard to his mystic experiences Mujaddid mentioned that the Divine Unity the sufi encounters on his way are of two kinds: (i) Experience of Unity (tauhid-i-shuhudi) and (ii) Existence Experience (tauhid-i-urjudi). Unity experience is to see only one thing. The traveler on the mystic path witnesses only oneness. Experience of existence is to consider that only one thing exists and conceiving anything else is a misnomer. Experience of unity is subjective and experience of existence is objective in the sense that in everything the seer views, he finds the samething as the intrinsic, inspite of their different and varied appearances.

The overwhelming power of the vision of Unity of God is such that it is impossible to see what is beyond the state of annihilation of the self (fana). In experience of existence the devotee sees different objects like the stars on the sky, the vast ocean, the mountains, the rivers, the living creatures, as different in their appearances but the basic in everything is the same, the appearances are only the clothing. The element is the same.

Shah Kalimullah Shahjahanabadi (AD1656 – 1729 A.D.)

Shah Kalimullah revived and reorganized the Chishti Silsila in northern India which suffered decline after the demise of Shaik Nasiruddin chirag Dehlavi (d.1356AD). Near Red Fort in Delhi he started his spiritual school, initiated disciples and taught them.

He took the mission of bringing amity and goodwill among people by practicing the precepts of Islam. He while addressing another Shaik, (Shah Nizamuddin Aurangabadi) said thus: our and your work is not to collect tankas (rupees), cash and goods but our aim is to collect the hearts, from persons of distant and neighboring parts of the world. What is manifest in my eye I should inculcate in them. Out of thousands and thousands I collect; any one of them may attain world-wide popularity."
But Shah Kalimullah to get Emperor's support for his mission had to leave Delhi as Aurangzeb (1686-1707) had to shift to Hyderabad to liquidate the rising power of Marathas. Shahkkalimullah prepared a team of devoted Khalifas whom he sent to Hyderabad. But Khalifas had a tough time there. The main opposition came from Aurangzeb who was a follower of Naqshbandi Silsila; and hence Aurangzeb did not give any importance to them. To this Shah Kalimullah remarked that Aurangzeb considered himself not only a king but also a fakir, so he treated the real faqirs with contempt.

Shaik Kalimulhah believed that for religious and spiritual advancement rigid adherence to sharia was essential. He was also of the opinion that Sharia, tariqa and haqiqat are intimately related to each other. He mentioned: the path leading to sufistic perfection has the aim of haqiqat (the realization of true unity) and sharia is the pillar of tariqa. One in whose eyes the beauty of Sharia is utmost in him the tariqua and haqiqat will be found in ripen state. The sign of acquiring the stage of haqiqat is the growing of intense faith day by day on the road of sharia.

He condemned the mulahids who had given up sharia and ridiculed its followers. They deserved punishment, -he said,-because the concept of tauhid was meaningless to them and hence their company was to be shunned. He impressed upon his followers and especially the Khalifas that they should strictly follow the path of Sharia. According to him, one should get rid of his animal desires by following sharia and soak himself with spiritual love and should not make any effort to become a Shaik or preceptor.

Shah Kalimullah was not in favour of marriage of their Khalifas as he said that women take away din (faith) and one should not listen to their pleas. He closely watched the private and religious activities of his Khalifas and reprimanded them whenever necessary. He mentioned that there are two aspects of moral life (i) obedience to Allah (ii) taking care of the fellow-beings. The Chishti saints had prepared their mission agenda keeping these two principles in view. The Chishti saints laid much emphasis on practice rather than on theoretical knowledge of jazb (ecstasy), and intellectual discussions.

Accordingly to Chishti norms there are two types of disciples: (i) Customary (ii) real. Customary disciples are taught moral codes and are day-scholars where as the real ones had to stay with the Shaik. The Chishti saints stressed on suppression of nafs and for it prescribed suitable methods like humility, social service etc. Marriage was not discouraged but celibacy was preferred, where it was opted on one's own volition., Shaik Nizammudin Auliya Commented that it was pardonable if someone rebukes somebody, but wishing ill of others is worse. The end product of life is to renounce everything which is worldly and to achieve oneness with God. This does not mean that one should
not have a family life and would not rear progeny. What was desired was to develop a sense of detachment towards the material world. More this mental faculty is developed, attachment with God takes place in compounding way.

So the Chishti order prescribed following objectives in is system of training of the disciples:

(i). To cleanse the heart and not to commit the prohibited practices as prescribed in the Qur’an.

(ii). To forgive ill-wishers and lead a secluded life.

(iii). To be honest and sincere and to maintain conformity of outer and innerlife; ie integrated personality.

(iv). Eating should be minimum and starving should be encouraged.

(v). Much emphasis was given on feeding others.

(vi). The disciple should practice Tawakkul and depend upon what is received from others, without in anyway making any demand of it.

(vii). One should spend money for others, without any expectation and without worrying for the morrow.

Shah Kalimullah incorporated these salient features of the Chishti order in his dastur-ul’amal, a code of conduct which he had prepared for his Khalifas. For the spiritual training of his Khalifas he wrote a book-Kashkol-i-Kalimi which gives an account of the methods to be adopted for spiritual perfection.

Before enrolling any person as a disciple the Chishti order wanted his head to be shaved symbolizing cleaning of worldly affinities. Then the sleeves of his robe was cut to remind him of observing piety. He was given a four-cornered cap’ i.e. Kulah-i-chahar turki. The corners are symbolic of (i) renouncing the world (ii) renouncing the world after (iii) renouncing the God (iv) renouncing renunciation.«.

To sum up the credit for reviving the Chishti Silsila after three centuries goes to Shah Kalimulla.

Mirza Mazhar Jani i-Janan (b 1701 AD)

Naqushbandi Silsila, which was supported by the then Emperor Aurangazeb enjoyed the allegiance of Irani and Turani nobles, Jan-i-Janan occupying an eminent position in this Silsila. He started a new movement for more Islamic discipline, which by passage of time received unwanted influences. There were animal sacrifice, theft, adultery calumny or leveling unfair charges against men, female fantacide etc. The Muslim at that time had such firm faith in
astrology and sorcery that no battle was fought, no dress was changed, and no
course was undertaken until an auspicious moment had been prescribed by an
astrologer. Jan-i-Janan believed that Piri (Spiritual preceptorship) and muradi
discipleship) did not end in initiation but the important journey of purification
of the souls of the disciples and inculcation of God’s love in their hearts.

Jani-i-janan tested the sincerity of disciples before initiating them
instead of common practice of taking anyone for initiation who came to the
Sisila. He urged them to follow the teachings of the Our’an and observe Sunna
which meant rejection of heresies, and practices like theft, adultery, unjust shedding
of blood, falsehood etc. Mirza Mazhar initiated women according to the tradition
of Naqshbandi Silsila but the families he initiated, were instructed to abide by
the discipline with all strictness Thus Mirza Mazhar was successful in eradicating
such practices which were not only superstitious but very popular among the
then Muslims but did not have the sanction of the Qur’an or Hadis.

Following the Prophet’s way of living he had only one Jama (outer
garment) and tied the turban according to the instructions of the Prophet.

It was said that his Khanqah was frequented by the disciples of
other Shaikhs. Those affiliated with distress and misfortune came to him to seek
his blessings and obtain a ta’wiz, to ward off the distress. During his life time
and after his death, his work was carried on by his khalifas, like Shah Ghulam

Jan-i-janan was also involved in the internal politics of the state. He
viewed Jats and Sikhs as enemies of the Muslim society. But the battles of
Palassey (1757) and Buxor (1764) had been fought and the British had won
decisive success in both the wars against the Muslims. From this he could
realize the future predicament of Muslims against the British. So he persuaded
the Muslim nobles to form a confederacy against the rising power of the British.

Shah Fakhruddin Dehlavi (1714AD -1784AD)

Shah Fakhruddin established his Khanqah and madarsa outside
the Ajmer gate of Delhi in 1751. He was initiated to Chishti Silsila by his father
Shah Nizamuddin whom he succeeded as the head of khanqah at Aurangabad in
1729. Afterwards he joined the army and spent eight years in military service.
Then he left military service and dedicated himself to spiritual life.

Following the tradition of Chishti saints Shah Fakhruddin conducted
asar Prayer for his disciples followed by muraqaba. After establishing the
Khanqah at Delhi, he lived there for the rest of his life. Experienced disciples
were deputed to different parts of India to impart spiritual knowledge.
Shah Fakhruddin strictly followed Shari'a and impressed upon his followers to do the same. According to the tradition, he initiated disciples secretly; the underlying idea was that every novice was to be taught wazifa or zikr or shughi to his capacity. He revived the Nizamia Silsila started by Shah Kalimullah – which lost its importance during the Shaikhood of Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan at Delhi.

He discouraged the use of charms and amulets for personal gain, Shaik Fakhruddin came to Delhi when there was a complete collapse of political and religious institutions due to increasing supremacy of the British.

**Khwaja Mir Dard (1721AD – 1785AD)**

Khwaja Mir Dard made an attempt to popularize a new mystic silsila called Tariqa-i-Muhammadiya, which was founded by his father Khwaja Muhammad Nasir. The essence of this silsila was “a complete breakaway from everything except God to serve the Master (Muhammad, the Prophet) Thus the objective was to return to the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet. Muslims were asked to attach themselves to the Prophet and Him alone.

Khwaja Mir Dard held that the path of Sari’at is that one should be very busy with God. The heart is to be cleansed by dissociating it from other things and relationship is to be established with God alone. These are tauhid-i-muhammadi and tauhid-i-mutlaq which would lead to salvation. This is the only lesson which the Prophet gave to mankind. So he said that one should rely upon the verses of the Qur’an and the Hadis and discard any other discussions. The followers of this silsila are called Muhammadiy-i-Khalis (Pure Muhammadians). He claimed that this revelation to the followers was according to the Qur’an and Hadis because the accuracy of intuition depends upon it.

Further he said, “it is our practice that if we find in a disciple that his ego is an impediment in his journey on the path of ma’rifat (knowledge of God) and worldly forms are deeply rooted in his heart and that he is a prey to shirk (polytheism), disease and duality, in that situation we instill in him, the concept of unity and we narrate to him the realities of tauhid, after the pattern of wujud (pantheism) and then he attains the stage of fana, ie assimilation in God. He further stated that the condition of surrendering may arise among people because of deep attention to haqiqat and uluhiyat (divinity) or by reason of adam-i-kashf (absence of intuition, and they begin to utter rude words in that condition). They are given lessons regarding special association and are made to understand the ghairiyat ie possible depths in the form of higher state of wujubiyyah (necessary being), so that they might get relief or recovery and remain in God and reach the stage of submission on the straight road of the Muslim religion.”
Naqshbandiya silsila during the time of Mir Dard emphasized on the purification of soul before starting of suluk. At first the outward habits and morals of the seeker (salik) were controlled so that the heart might be purified, then only complete detachment from everything other than God can be achieved and finally the love for God would be the only aim. To achieve all these strict adherence to sharia was necessary and faith of the salik was to be strengthened. As, Mir Dard taught that all is from Him or hama-as-ust but never hama-ust or all He is. He believed that the state of wahdat-ul wujud can be achieved by a chosen few who do not deviate from the path of Sharia in any situation whatsoever.

He said, “our aim is Muhammad and our character is to be that of Muhammad and our love is for Muhammad and our da'wat (invitation) is da’w at-i-Muhammad. This tariqa was derived from Muhammad. We have added nothing to it of our own. Our suluk is the suluk of the Prophet and our tariqa is that of the tariqa-i Muhammad».

So he considered the tariqa-i-Muhammad, suluk-i-Muhammad as the combined essence of all silsilas. He says that suluk means all those conditions and modes (kaifiyat) which the seekers have to pass through tariqa. Tariqa stands for those ashghal and azkar (mystic practices) which are taught by the murshid (guide) in every silsila to his disciples and since the Prophet was the last of the Prophets, all silsilas of the past and of future could only be branches of that true ta’riqa».

The medieval mystics have been divided in to two categories: (i) devotees of Sukr (intoxicated with the love of God) and devotees of Sahv those who had already attained the highest state of consciousness. “In the state of sukru ecstatic utterances come from the tongue of the devotee, but in the stage of Sahv every word uttered becomes a source of guidance”. In the path of Sukr the devotee reaches a stage of Jam’ ul Jam or a stage of complete oblivion and loss of outer consciousness. After the attainment of this stage and its decline the soul gathers knowledge and reality unfolds itself in fuller form by which the mind becomes composed, heart is stable and faith becomes solidified. This is the real Islam and real shariat, according to Mir Dard. This stage is also called farq-ba’d-aljam (separation after union). Here the closeness with God is such that the person becomes competent to provide guidance to others.

There were two schools of speculative thoughts in Islamic mysticism: (i) the concept of wahdat-ul-wujud propounded by Ibnul ‘Arabi and (ii) tasawwuf and tauhid of Mujaddid-(Shaik Ahmed Sirhindi) which adopted the method of induction and deduction. Mir Dard studied these two concepts and at the end offered his own concept of Tarika-i Muhammadi which he considered to be purer Islamic in nature akin to the tariq’a prescribed by the Prophet. But
his Muhammadiya *silsila* did not become very popular; it remained confined to very limited circles.

Delhi was devastated, looted, and its residents tortured by attacks made by Nadir Shah, the Marathas, the Jats and the Sikhs. Many persons of religious importance like Sauda khan Arzu, Mir Taqz Mir etc left Delhi to other places, but Mir Dard did not move from his place and faced poverty and seclusion with patience. In all his works (total six major works) we find assertion of contentment i.e. *tawakkul*, if he received anything from any quarter, he spent it immediately and held- a *dervish* ought to pass his life in poverty and de privation and whatever comes to him in the form of gifts he must spend it properly at the very moment because on it depends his spiritual and outward glory. Worldly possessions place a man under a heavy burden and force him to seek patronage of the royals and nobles. The more he does so, the more does his heart gets involved in worries”.

He believed in the old principle of medieval mystics-*dyak dar gir malikam gir* (grasp one threshold and grasp it firmly) and whoever is at one place is everywhere and who is everywhere is nowhere.

He further held that in old age one should devote himself to prayer and practice of *muraqaba* and repentance. He further held that the problems of compulsion (*jabr*) and freedom of action (*qadr*), were not for discussion by the idle. He pointed out that the differences between *shi‘as* and *sunnis* was due to ignorance. He advocated staunch faith (*din*) and warned the Muslim community that it was foolish to rely on wisdom and understanding of an individual except the Prophet.

He advocated that a *dervish* should have full faith on God and impart peace to the hearts of other people. He has introduced and stressed on following two practices: (i) *pir parasti* (worship of the spiritual guide). He says a *murid* should love his *pir* and this kind of ideal-worship leads to the pure worship of God. If a lover of *pir* in excitement of his love imagines his *khanquh* (hospice) to be *Khana-i-Khuda* (house of God) and treats it as his *qibla* (in the direction of ka’ba) he would not be guilty of the charge of *kufr* for infidelity. If a devotee in the state of *Sukr* treats the stone of the threshed of the *pir* as an idol and calls it his beloved and himself as its lover, he would not be deemed to be a breaker of etiquette”.

He held the tombs of spiritual men in great esteem. He urged that people should visit them as they go for pilgrimage and by doing so people can attain both material and spiritual advancement. He further directed that on the anniversaries of the death of those saints people should organize assemblies and consider those sacred souls always to be alive and immortal. They should deem them, at all times and in every condition to be their protector and saviour. When
Shah Ghulam Ali (1745AD-1824AD)

Shah Ghulam Ali succeeded Mirza Jan-i-Janjan as the head of the Mujaddidiya Shamsiya-Mazhariya Khanqah at Delhi. Like Jan-i-Janjan, he initiated disciples in all the four popular silsilas i.e. Naqshbandi, Qadiri, Chishti and Suhrawardi. He also laid stress on following the Prophet and the Qur’an.

He was very particular in observing the rules of shari‘at in his personal life. He had studied the sciences of the hadis under Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janjan. His khanqah was attracting a lot of disciples from different parts of India and from places outside the country. He took a lot of interest in initiating those who came to him and bore the expenditure of their boarding and lodging.

Shahwali Allah (1703 AD-1762 AD)

Shahwali Allah belonged to Naqshbandi order. He noticed the decline of the Moghul Empire and the growing power of the British and Western thought. So his aim was to restore Islam in India. He followed the Philosophy of Shaik Ahmed Sirhindi and Iban-Arabi that Sufism as a whole was in terms with traditional Islam. He also argued that inter rivalries among the Sufi orders can be sorted out to serve the cause of Islam in India. In this reassertion of Islam he, visualized, that the Muslim ruler had a vital role to play by giving more patronage to Shaiks and pleaded for taking away the administrative powers from the hands of Hindus.

His philosophy gave rise to a mighty movement under the leadership of Shah Ismail Shahid and Sayyid Ahmed Barelvi. The most important work of Shahwali is Hujjat Allah al-Balighah. He was aware of the gap between the pattern of life as enunciated in the Qur’an and the Sunnah; and the pattern of life the Muslims had devised for themselves in the course of time; the gap between the social and political institutions in the past and the present.

Being and Universal Being:

Tauhid or ‘Unity of Being’ implies all beings to be one and this is Absolute Unity. But it should not mean that all individual beings are essentially One Being. When Iban Arabi or Sirhindi said that all existence is one, they meant that all existence has come from one source i.e God and He is the cause of all that has in existence or in substance. Thus the world is only a manifestation of the attributes of God.

So ‘be’ is the presence of the creator. The Being of God (dhāt), is not similar to His attributes (sifat) as the Sun is not the same as the sunrays-the manifestation (tajalliyat) of Sun. In other words the phenomenal world is the image in the mirror, the shadow of the real objects beyond. The Qur’an says:
Verily God is wholly sufficient unto Himself. He needs none of the world. The attitude by which he turns to the world and creates it are other than His self. The attributes of God are perfect; while the world is full of imperfections. The shadow of a being is not the being. So it is wrong to conclude that God depends upon the world for His unfoldment. So the verse goes “Thy Lord is nobler than the qualities which they ascribe to Him”.

Mystic experience however valuable and perfect, has no objective validity with regard to Being and His Attributes. It is through Prophetic revelation alone that we can understand Reality. Moreover the finite beings cannot comprehend the infinite through mystical experiences. So the faith in the unseen is unavoidable.

Shahwali Allah says that world is not an attribute or emanation of attributes but consists of non-emanative modes of attributes in the mirror of non-existence. These modes look real but in truth their reality lies only in the Being. He gives an example: Let us make a horse, a donkey, and a man out of wax. This wax is common to all of them although their forms differ from each other. We call these forms; moulded out of wax as a horse, as a donkey and as a man. If we reflect deeply we find that these forms are only modes of their being and their being is nothing but the wax.

Shahwali opined that between the material world and its Creator, there is a spiritual world, in which the Will of God is first reflected and then materialized into different forms. All the creations and changes in the material world are first reflected in the spiritual world, which are transmuted into physical world. He gave the example of a clairvoyant dream. The coming of events are first visualized in the form of shadows which have no material existence. But later they are transformed into tangible forms. The dream appears to be immaterial to a layman but to the Prophet they are tangible and concrete. For example the Prophet in the midst of His prayer is reported to have the vision of heaven and hell. Shahwali concluded that Prophet had the glimpse of these not by his physical eyes, but through the inner vision. Thus over and above the material world, there is another world which transcends its time-space limitations and receives the impression of Will of God before they come in to being in the material world.

In his book Al-khair al-kathir he concludes that space is inconceivable without time, and vice versa. They are not two separate categories but a single one of space-time continuum. So time and space are indivisible and had there been no indivisibility there would have been complete chaos. But space and time are not eternal but were created by Will of God. Matter comes in to existence due to space and time.

Regarding the concept of fate he holds that it is fundamental. Here the word Fate is used in its universal meaning. Our belief in God is closely related
to our belief in the Divine Ordinances. These ordinances regulate the movement of the celestial bodies, and belief in such Divine Laws is the foundation of Islam.

Of course Shahwali did not mean absolute determinism which leaves no scope for the free activity of man. If men are mere puppets made to move in the ordained line, they could not be held responsible for their actions and the lack of understanding of distinction between good and evil. All this is repugnant to the teachings of Islam. For, Islam holds man responsible for his actions to God, His justice demands that man should be given freedom to avoid the path of vice, and follow the path of virtue and piety. Every human being has two inclinations: one pure, encouraging him to do good and the other devilish inciting him to indulge in evil. It is up to man to adopt one and leave the other. ShahWali stated; “Every one is divinely furthered in accordance with his character. Say not that man is compelled to act in a particular manner for that means attributing tyranny of God, nor say that man has absolute discretion. We are rather furthered by His help and grace in our endeavours to act righteously and we transgress because we neglect His commands”.

Shahwali Allah placed great emphasis on the importance of Jitihad or legal interpretation in the context of Islamic life in India. Jitihad is the method by which a novice understands the Holy Law in circumstances not covered by previous decisions. In other words it is the interpretation of the Qur'an and the dictates of the Prophet, to be interpreted in the context of present circumstances. Further the legal interpretation is necessary whenever conflict arises between Hindu Law, its Customs and Islamic Law and its traditions. This is to be formulated by taking into consideration.

(i). The Holy Book – the Qur'an.
(ii). The saying of the Prophet – the Sunna.
(iii). The accepted of opinion of the Muslim Community.
(iv). The application of analogy.

Within the Sufi orders there was much conflict and disunity over the interpretation and nature of mystical experience. Shahwali Allah tried to solve them by stating that the disputes are more apparent than real. He said that two of the most influential figures in Islamic mysticism in India, were Ibn’Arabi and Shaik Ahmed Sirhindi. Ibn’Arabi had argued for the unity of all existence, since everything is a manifestation of God. Against this apparent pantheism Sirhindi had argued about unity of experience to say that the seeming unity of existence was an illusion of experience.

Unity of existence and unity of experience are two relative terms used while talking about the Divine Path. Unity of existence implies choosing between evil and good. Both revelation and knowledge support it. One has to accept that
all the created beings are one in one respect and different in other respect. This can be perceived by saints who are perfect. They pardon the evil doer when the evil is done on them but at the same time resist evil in social context. Thus they understand the unity of existence of all beings.

The state of unity of experience is more subtle than unity of existence. In unity of existence the much known simili is the wax forms of man, horse and ass, which have wax as common in different shapes. This is the doctrine believed by the pantheists. But the votaries of unity of experience maintain that the universe is a reflection of the names and attributes of the Supreme Being reflected in their opposite; non-existence. So the reflection that is tangible, the visible creation is as a matter of fact unreal.

Shahwali Allah tried to bridge these differences and brought coherent and logical forms as any theological-philosophical system could be. His philosophical endeavour consists in explaining and resolving the apparent contradictions and dichotomies between the eternal values and changing conditions, the Unity of God and the multiplicity within the universe. He stressed that genuine mysticism encourages an active way of life which assures progress and prosperity in this world and salvation hereafter. Thus he broke away from the orthodox manual of "poverty, deprivation and acceptance of afflictions" as gifts from God. He laid much stress on the ethical and psychological elements in religion.

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