Akbar's son Jahangir and his grandson Shahjahan did not follow the liberal religious attitude of *Din-i-ilahi*. But his grandson Dara Shikoh gave a new dimension to Islamic mysticism. He was executed for political reasons by his brother Aurangzeb who wanted to gain the support of orthodox Muslims. The French traveler Bernier who was in Delhi at that time observed: the people weeping and lamenting the fate of Dara in the most touching language...men, women an children wailing as if some mighty calamity had happened to themselves.

His realization, views are compiled in two treatises *Risala* and *Tariquat*— in which he had discussed the various works on Islamic mysticism and different stages of spiritual illumination respectively. His views are discussed below.

**On Tawhid:**

The doctrine of Unity of God; *Tawhid* which is foremost in all orders of Islamic mysticism;—“Everything is He, I am nothing” or “There is no real existence apart from God, “Man is a reflection of the Absolute Being”, These are to be constantly believed and practiced for spiritual development. Dara Shikoh mentioned about the following saying in the Qur'an: “He is within your very souls but you vision Him not”. It is therefore your duty to know your own essence so that you may know yourself and doubts and misconceptions will not come to your mind and you would not consider this world of relativity as a veil on the face of Essence. Dara Shikoh expresses the same idea in one of his quatrains: Here is the secret of Tawhid, O friend, understand it:

No where exists any thing but God.
All that you see or know other than Him
verily is separate in name,
but in essence one with God.
On Truth:

While giving the description of *Huviyyat* or truth he says: O friend! when the ocean of Reality begins to move, then on the surface appear waves and hundreds and thousands of bubbles come out it and they constitute these heavens and earths. But these can not be separate from the ocean. Therefore though everyone of these has a separate name and form and yet in essence and reality it is one. From this stage the Sufi proceeds for his final goal; the stage of *fana-fil-haq* or submergence in to Unity. At this stage he asserts that partial existence becomes Universal Existence and all fear, grief and anxiety vanish.

On Vision of God:

He feels that vision of God; i.e *Ruyat* is possible by following the paths laid down by Prophets or Perfect Saints, whether they are believers in the Qur’an, the Vedas, the Book of Moses or the Old or New Testaments. So one who disbelieves in the Unity of God is ignorant and disillusioned member of his own religion. So the suggestion that He can be known in the world hereafter and not in this world is groundless for He is omnipotent. So he says; my own view is that who can not behold Him in this world will be hardly able to behold Him in the world hereafter as God has said: whosoever is blind in here, he shall be blind in the hereafter.

Dara Shikoh states that there are five ways of getting the vision of God: (i) in the dream with the eyes of the heart (ii) contemplating Him in the state of wakefulness with the physical eyes (iii) vision in the intermediate state of sleep and wakefulness (iv) beholding Him in a state of deep determination (v) seeing and feeling Him deeply everywhere.

On Contemplation:

With regard to contemplation, *Mushahada* Dara Shikoh states: The lovers of God are lost in the light of manifestation and submerged in the ocean of Reality. They adore Him both in form and spirit inwardly and outwardly. The religion and nationality do not matter. The creed and *dogoma* have no influence. They do not distinguish existence from non-existence and entity from non-entity.

On Inherent Perfection:

With regard to the Divine Spirit lying dormant in every human being he writes: know O’ friend, that the reason why the essence of man has entered the frame work of body, is that the seed of perfection which lies latent may become patent; the potentiality may reach the actuality and may return enriched with all experiences to its original source. So it is the duty of every human being to free himself from duality and join himself with his source ». 

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On Souls of Humanbeings:
With regard to souls, Dara Shikoh says that broadly they are of two kinds: common souls and purified souls. When the attractive power of the gross body, due to its intimate connection with the soul overpowers it, the latter becomes gross like the former. But if the soul brings the gross body under control, then the former becomes subtle like the latter. Accepting this formula of transformation of the gross body into finer forms, Dara Shikoh explains that Prophet Muhammad transformed His body into such a state of weightlessness, it was so much rarified and refined that He could ascend the heaven in His physical body. Further he thinks that in the cave of Hira by controlling His breath, He could make His body subtler than air, more transparent than diamond.

Dara Shikoh in line with Sufi tradition advocates for annihilation of the self, complete negation of individual self is always associated with subsistence which means the complete realization of the Universal Self after the annihilation of human will, before the Will of God.

On Assimilation of Hindu Thought:
In Hinduism God is said to have three aspects ie Brahma-the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer of evils. Dara Shikoh explains that the world ‘Allah’ means – He is the Lord of three attributes – Creation, Preservation and destruction of devil. With regard to repetition of the name of God, he says that his spiritual guide Mian Mir used to say that the name of Allah should be recited very slowly and mentally without the movement of tongue. Hindu yogis repeat the Holy Name mentally which is known as “ajapaajapa”. By constant practice of this method one attains a stage in which mind remains awake even in sleep and the link of consciousness is not broken when the body goes to sleep.

On Habis-idam:
Darashikoh also practiced Habs-i-dam, or regulation of breath which is done by disciples of Qadiri order. This is very much akin to pranayama or Yoga system of Hinduisms. He says: this method of regulation of breath which has been adopted by this fakir (himself) is such, without which success can not be obtained. He gives the description in the following manner: Sitting in a secluded spot, in the posture in which the Holy Prophet used to sit, place the elbows of both the hands on the knees, and with two thumb fingers close the holes of the two ears, so that no air can pass through them, with the two index fingers shut the two eyes in such a way that the upper eyelid may remain steadily fixed on the lower eyelid but the fingers should not press the eyeballs. Place the ring and small fingers on the upper and lower lips so as to close the mouth. Place the two middle fingers on the two wings of the nose, the right middle finger on the right wing and the left middle finger on the left wing. Having assumed this posture

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firmly, close the right nostril with the right middle finger so that air may not come through it. Now open the left nostril also, with the left middle finger and thus keep the air confined in the body. Then keep the breath confined so long it can be easily done, and increase the period of retention slowly. After this, throw the breath out by opening the right nostril by removing the middle finger from it. The breath should be thrown out slowly by reciting the words illa Allah. Then the same process is repeated by drawing the breath through the right nostril and so on. This method is akin to the pranayama as propounded by Rishi Patanjali. After describing the methods, he talks about its effect: This noble practice of retention of breath has been practiced by me and I have felt a sensation of lightheartedness, a great delight and subtle illumination in the mind and body. All the grossness vanishes and there is a feeling of immeasurable ecstasy.

On Reverence Towards Saints:

His reverence for saints, whom he calls “chosen souls” is manifest in all his writings. He writes: this humble writer always cherished perfect reverence, and obedience for the great body of saints. Day and night he had no other thought than to think of them and consider himself as one of the aspirants to reach them. Further he says: know that next to the Prophets of God are the great masters about whom the Qur’an says: “They are both lovers and beloveds of God.” Therefore—says Dara Shikoh—loving them is loving God. To seek them is to seek Him, to unite with them is to unite with Him and showing respect to them is showing respect to God.

On Spiritual Teacher:

He emphasizes the necessity of a spiritual guide for everyone who seeks the spiritual path. The practice of spiritual preceptorship is very common both among Hindu and Muslim mystics. According to Dara Shikoh it is necessary for every person that he should seek to attach himself to an “illuminated soul” who possesses peculiar spiritual gifts and diligence in seeking God. Dara Shikoh says that by the Grace of God a disciple or seeker meets a perfect person—Tariq-i-Mujahadat who by his magic touch of Spiritual attainments rouses him from the sleep of worldliness. Dara Shikoh then speaks of the second path i.e. exertion and austerity. He personally did not believe in observing painful austerities. According to him fast and vigils are no good weapons. He says my path is Grace and not Exertion. He further says that a man may be engaged in worldly activities and still persue the spiritual path. One need not leave the world and be a fakir.

O you in quest of God, you seek Him every where
You verily are God, not apart from Him
Already in the midst of boundless ocean
your quest resembles the search of drop for the ocean.
He was not in favour of any organized religion and the autocratic attitude of its captains. This attitude irked the mullahs, and because of this they incited Aurangzeb for his execution. He wrote:

Paradise is there where no mulla exists
Where the noise of his discussion and debate is not heard
May the world become free from the noise of mulla
And none should pay any heed to his decree
In the city where a mulla resides
No wiseman ever stays.