Chapter III

Development of Spiritual Thought
Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi amongst his contemporaries was the pioneering personality among the exponents and interpreters of this doctrine in those days. From his boyhood he was drawn to mystic life. Although he obtained a formal education from eminent Ulama, his absorbing interest was in pantheistic ideas. According to Simon Digby, throughout his life he remained a vigorous advocate of the doctrine of Wahdat-ul wajud, the ‘Unity of being’. He also wrote a commentary on the Fusus al-Hikam. His famous work Rushd Nama openly revels his mystic ideas, in support of Tawhid-i wujudi. Explaining this mystical Philosophy. Shaikh Abdul Quddus, in some of his Hindi verses, says that steam rising from a river is called vapour. When it rests in the atmosphere it is called a cloud. If water from the cloud falls into a vessel, it is known as water of whatever receptacle it finds itself. If it falls in form of rain, it is known as rain water. In all cases there remains water. Similarly, according to him, duality is a false concept and the idea of anything besides God is misguided people should, therefore, believe only in the ‘Unity of Being’. In support of his views he also quotes the Quranic verses. All that is on the earth will perish. But will abide (for ever) the face of the Lordful of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. Shaikh Abdul Quddus started open discussions about the pantheistic philosophy. On one occasion he delivered, in his own Mosque, a sermon on the concept of Wahdat-al wujud. But his sons made objections and questioned the doctrine. It is said that the Shaikh was so grieved that he set out from Gangoh to take up residence with one of his Khalifas whom he believed to be convinced upon the point. He is also reported to have
argued with Miran Saiyid Ahmad, a theologian from Multan, upon this doctrine for five or six months until he persuaded him to accept it.9

The Shaikh's son Shaikh Ruknuddin10 informs that once Shaikh Jalaluddin Thanesari11, the famous Khalifa of Shaikh Abdul Quddus came to see his mentor in his Khanqah in Gangoh, Shaikh Abdul Quddus allowed Jalaluddin Thanesari to enter the Khanqah after the latter had assured him that he believed in the same religion, and followed the same path that his preceptor followed. The Shaikh then warmly welcomed and embraced his devoted Khalifa.12

The letters of Shaikh Abdul Quddus to Shaikh Jalaluddin contain very subtle explanation of the ‘Unity of Being’ they also emphasize that love (Ishq) is the principal cause for the creation of the world from a superficial point of view love appears easy. But in reality it reduces the lover to ashes.13

It is interesting to mention here that Shaikh Abdul Quddus had drunk so deep at the fountain of the unity of Being that he is said to have made the remark, “the prophet of Islam ascended the highest Heaven, during his nocturnal journey, i.e. Meraj, and returned to this world. I swear by God that if I had gone there and reached that point. I would never have come back.” The famous twentieth century poet philosopher Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, differentiating the prophetic consciousness from the mystic consciousness, had mentioned above remark of the Shaikh is one of his famous lectures delivered during the early thirty’s of the last century.14

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the doctrine of the ‘Unity of Being’ seems to have completely dominated the Sufi circles in the whole subcontinent. In the words of Yusuf Husain Khan, it ‘had by now become a
part of the texture of mystic thought in India. Its impact is clearly discernible in Indo-Muslim religious thought throughout the sixteenth century. Shaikh Abdul Quddus of Gangoh, Shaikh Amanullah of Panipat, their spiritual followers and many others are reported in different works to have evinced profound interest in Ibn Arabi and *Wahdat-al Wujud*. They actively worked for the popularity and development of this Sufi spiritual philosophy and its propounder in India during the sixteenth century. Its also makes an analysis of the impact of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought on the sixteenth century Sufi-saints in India.

Before dealing with them, we must bear in mind the doctrine of *Wahdat-al Wujud*, the ‘Unity of Being’, as propounded by Shaikh-i Akbar so as to clearly understand the contribution and interpretations of the saints of India in the field of theosophy. We can say that Ibn Arabi’s conception of *Wahdat-al Wujud* is an extension of the Islamic doctrine of *Tawhid*, the Oneness of God. From the concept that ‘there exists but one God’, he takes us to the profession that ‘there is nothing in existence except God’. According to him, Being is one it is that which exists. This being is God. Every thing else is his manifestation. Hence the world is identical with God. The identity of the world and God is conceived on the basis of the identity of his existence and essence or the substance and attributes, the world being only a manifestation of his attributes.

For Ibn Arabi, Being is identical with attributes, and attributes express themselves in manifestations or modes which are the world and its objects. He holds that relation between the world and God is one of identity. In bringing out this identification he proceeds either from the negation of the world or from the affirmation of God. Proceeding from the negation of the world, Ibn Arabi
holds that the world as such is merely nominal, unreal, imaginary, objectively non-existent, and that God alone exists. The world exists only as the modes of the unity as his modes. It has no existence of its own. Proceeding from the side of God, Ibn ‘Arabi maintains that the world is God. It is the modes in which the unity has differentiated itself. These modes exhaust the unity wholly. The unity has no existence over and above them. Therefore, the mystic should not take the trouble of seeking God beyond this world.

Again, according to Ibn Arabi, God is the Reality and the world is his adumbration. But adumbration is the appearance of Reality. It is Reality appearing, manifesting itself. Hence the world is identical with God.¹⁸ As to the relation between man and God, Ibn ‘Arabi maintains that the relation between God and man is that of identity, of immanence, of nearness. Really, nearness means nothing other than the fact that God Himself is the very essence of the limbs and parts of man. That means that man possesses all the attributes of God. In fact it is His attributes that are manifested in man. They are bodily there in man. That is why it is said that one who is cognizant of his own self comes to be cognizant of his God.¹⁹

It may be mentioned here that Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical doctrine, as he himself maintains, is a matter of the heart and cannot be realized through reason. It needs a higher system of knowledge, based on the intuitive experience of the individual which he calls Zauq.²⁰

As mentioned earlier, the spiritual scenario of the Indian subcontinent was covered with the clouds of the pantheistic philosophical views at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Almost all the Sufis of the period were sunk in the ocean of Wahdat-al Wujud. Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi²¹ who held
significant place amongst his contemporaries, was the pioneering personality among the exponents and interpreters of this doctrine in those days. From his boyhood he was drawn to the mystic life. Although he obtained a formal education from eminent ulema, his absorbing interest was in pantheistic ideas. According to Simon Digby, ‘throughout his life he remained a vigorous advocate of the doctrine of Wahdat-al Wujud, the “Unity of Being”. He also wrote a commentary on the Fusus-al Hikam. His famous work Rushd Nama openly reveals his mystic ideas, in support of Tawhid-i Wujudi. Explaining this mystical, philosophy, Shaikh Abdul Quddus, in some of his Hindi verses, says that steam rising from a river is called vapour. When it rests in the atmosphere, it is called a cloud. If water from the cloud falls into a vessel, it is known as water of whatever receptacle it finds itself in. If it falls in form of rain, it is known as rain water. In all cases, there remains water. Similarly, according to him, duality is a false concept and the idea of anything besides God is misguided. People should, therefore, believe only in the ‘Unity of Being’.  

Shaikh Abdul Quddus started open discussions about the pantheistic philosophy. On one occasion he delivered, in his own mosque, a sermon on the concept of Wahdat-al Wujud. His sons, however made objections and questioned the doctrine. It is said that the Shaikh was so grieved that he set out from Gangoh to take up residence with one of his khalifas whom he believed to be convinced about his point. He is also reported to have argued with Miran Saiyid Ahmad, a theologian from Multan, upon this doctrine for five or six months until he persuaded him to accept it. The Shaikh’s son, Shaikh Ruknuddin, informs that once when Shaikh Jalaluddin Thanesari, the famous Khalifa of Shaikh Abdul Quddus, came to see his mentor in his
Khanqah in Gangoh. Remain there and tell me as to what your religion is, and as to which path do you follow.

Shaikh Abdul Quddus allowed Jalaluddin Thanesari to enter the Khanqah after the latter had assured him that he believed in the same religions and followed the same path that his preceptor followed. The Shaikh then warmly welcomed and embraced his devoted Khalifa.\(^{31}\) Shaikh Jalaluddin Thanesari himself was a staunch follower of Wahdat-al Wujud. When Emperor Akbar started for Kabul to suppress the revolt of Mirza Muhammad Hakim in 1581, he paid a visit to the saint in his khanqah in Thanesar. In his conversation with the Emperors, the Shaikh recited a Persian quatrain (rubai) explaining the ‘Unity of Being’ to him\(^{32}\).

Likewise, Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi Sirhindi,\(^{33}\) another famous follower of Shaikh Abdul Quddus, also earned great fame and popularity as an exponent and interpreter of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought.\(^{34}\) His lectures particularly covered the theme discussed in the Fusus-al Hikam of Shaikh Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi and the Awarif-al Maarif of Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi. He is said to have taught these works to his students with deep emotions and concentration. He described and explained subtle points of Islamic spirituality, tasawwuf, so clearly that everyone could easily understand them. His discourses created very attractive atmosphere especially when he described the concept of Wahdat-al Wujud. It was on account of his deep insight in the subject the ‘Unity of Being’, that the seekers of knowledge, students and mashaikh, attend his sermons in large number. It appears he had reinterpreted the doctrine of Wahdat-al Wujud and tried to reconcile it with the Sharia, the laws of Islam.\(^{35}\) His illustrious son Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, popularly known as
Mujuddid-i Alf-i Thani,\textsuperscript{36} writes in one of his letters that Shaikh Abdul Ahad always remained spiritually occupied with the ‘Unity of Being’.\textsuperscript{37} He taught Ibn ‘Arabi’s works to his students with full confidence and devotion, and frequently delivered scholarly lectures on \textit{Tawhid-i Wujudi} in his ancestral seminary at Sirhind. Students, \textit{Ulema}, sufis, and \textit{Mashaikh} attended his sermons in large number.\textsuperscript{38} The famous sixteenth century Sufi-scholar, Shaikh Mirak,\textsuperscript{39} had been Abdul Ahad’s pupil and studied \textit{Fusus-al Hikam} under him.\textsuperscript{40} Shaikh Abdul Ahad is reported in the \textit{Zubdat-al Maqamat}\textsuperscript{41} to have said, in the last moments of his life, ‘Really God is Absolute Existence. But as our eyes cannot see Him, He remains hidden.’\textsuperscript{42} He also wrote a brochure, \textit{Kanz-al Haqaiq} in support of \textit{Wahdat-al Wujud}.\textsuperscript{43}

The other important exponent of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought, during the sixteenth century, was the famous Qadiri saint, Shaikh Amanullah of Panipat.\textsuperscript{44} He developed his interest in the \textit{Fusus-al Hikam} and other famous works on the concept of \textit{Wahdat-al Wujud} in the company of his teacher Shaikh Muhammed Mawdud lari who, becoming filled with ecstasy, used to deliver extempore lectures on the ‘Unity of Being’.\textsuperscript{45} Shaikh Aman was so well versed in the pantheistic philosophical sciences that, according to Abdul Qadir Badauni, he was known among the people as the Ibn ‘Arabi of his time or Ibn ‘Arabi-i Thani.\textsuperscript{46} Shaikh Abdul haqq Muhaddith also mentions him in his \textit{Akhbar-ul Akhyar} as a great scholar of \textit{Tawhid-i Wujudi}.\textsuperscript{47} His (Abdul Haqq’s) father Shaikh Saifuddin, himself a renowned scholar and interpreter of the ‘Unity of Being’, was the favourite disciple (\textit{murid}) of Shaikh Aman. When on one occasion Saifuddin went to see his pir, Shaikh Aman started crying: The world is so closely related to Him that every thing is He.\textsuperscript{48}
Shaikh Aman claimed that he could deliver public lectures on the principles of *Wahdat-al Wujud* without veiling them by the use of similes and metaphors, and even then could fully convince his audience of the truth of his message. He used to say that in the beginning of his career he could use only two completely acceptable arguments in defence of the 'unity of Being' but now the number had increased to sixteen. The Shaikh wrote a number of treatises on the theme. In one of his most famous works, *Ithbat-al Ahadiyat*, Shaikh Amanullah meaningfully reinterpreted the universality of Reality and its process of surrounding the essence of phenomenal existence and embodying what was beyond existence. According to him, the hierarchical order of *wujud* as defined by the followers of the *Wahdat-al Wujud* merely included varying degrees of self-manifestations of the Absolute. Being represented in His transcendent absoluteness was beyond the dichotomy of existence and nonexistence. He says that *Mahhiyat* or quiddity cannot be understood in its general sense but in the special sense of essence. Shaikh Aman died in 957 AH / 1550 AD.

Shaikh Amanullah's famous Khalifa, Shaikh Tajuddin, popularly known amongst his admirers as *Taj-al Arfin*, also played an important role in the development of *Wahdat-al Wujud* during the sixteenth century. Badauni informs that he frequently visited Emperor Akbar and secretly talked to him during the night about the 'Unity of Being'. He also explained the Quranic verses to Akbar in the light of Ibn 'Arab's thought.

Shaikh Hasan Tahir (d.944AH/1537 AD), a Sufi of the Qadiriya order, also seems to have showed great enthusiasm in the Sufi pantheistic ideas of Ibn 'Arabi during the sixteenth century. In one of his letters, quoted by Shaikh
Abdul Haqq in the *Akhbar-ul Akhyar*, he says that nothing but the Essence (*Zat*) or ‘Absolute Being’ existed. He reminded his disciples that although all manifestations were apart from essence and particular aspects of Reality, there is no duality and the reality of many (in terms of their substances or as opposed to the essence, such as pure light and unmixed darkness) is inconceivable. According to Shaikh Hasan, what is visible, is a theophany which is mixed with darkness and is collectively known as brilliance or *ziya*. All manifestations (the Universe) are perishable. All intelligible forms of prototypes have originally been manifested through the divine consciousness, the Perfect light. The Shaikh also reaffirmed that the Universe is a macrocosm of which man is the microcosm, created in the image of God, and is the manifestation of True Unity and relative multiplicity.\(^5\)

Shaikh Hasan’s distinguished *khalifa*, Shaikh Abdur Razzaq of Jhanjhana (d.949/1542-3), was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the leading exponents of Ibn ‘Arabi's philosophy. He is reported in the *Akhbar-ul Akhyar* to have said that the entire universe is the manifestation of divine attributes and divine names. According to him, creation is a concrete manifestation of something which already existed in God’s mind and is a theophany or *Tajalli-i ilahi*. Everything other than Reality is bound by the process of annihilation. God as Absolute is unfettered by the attributes which man can comprehend, and the concept of other than God is therefore meaningless.\(^6\)

Another saint of our period of study is Mir Saiyid Abdul Awwal bin Alauddin Husain (d.968 AH/1561 AD) who had the spiritual authority in the Chishtiya and Qadiriya orders. He was a scholar of high repute. He wrote a
commentary on the *Futuhat-i Makkiya* of Ibn ‘Arabi by simplifying the great author’s complex theories.

As regards the Sufis of the Shattari silsilah, Shaikh Muhammad Ghoath of Gwalior is known as a great champion of the philosophy of *Wahdat-al Wujud*. Throughout his life, he was devoted to this mystic doctrine. However, he seems to have completely reinterpreted it in accordance with the need of the time. His famous book *Jawahar-i Khamsa* consists of a number of a different aspects of the ‘Unity of Being’, such as the Journey towards God (*Sayrila-Allah*) and ‘annihilation and subsistence’ (*Fana* and *Baqa*), etc. As no sufficient material is available in this regard, it is better to make a survey of the experts of *Wahdat-al Wujud* amongst the followers of the Shaikh and other Shattari saints. Shaikh Wali Muhammad (d. 987 AH/1579-80 AD), a *khalifa* of Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwalior showed deep interest in Ibn ‘Arabi’s spiritual thought. The emphasis on the *Wahdat-al Wujud* in his mystic perception promoted him to perceive the Essence as veiled in the attributes of every particle of the universe. Similarly, another Shattari Sufi Shaikh Isa (d. 1031 AH/1621 AD), was also a passionate devotee of the *Wahdat-al Wujud*. A *khalifa* of Shaikh Lashkar Muhammad Arif Shattari, he closely studied and always staunchly defended Ibn ‘Arabîs works. He wrote treatises explaining the theories of the *Shaikh-i Akbar*. He also wrote an exegesis (*tafsir*) of the *Quran* entitled *Anwar-al Asrar*, which is designed to demonstrate that the seeds of *Wahdat-al Wujud* can be found in the verses of the *Quran*. According to him, the commentators of the Divine Revelation (the *Quran*), who took them literally, could hardly understand these points. He also composed verses revealing the secrets of the truth of the ‘Unity of Being’.
Though the famous sixteenth century Chishti saint Shaikh Nizamuddin of Amethi, near Lucknow (d.979 AH/1571-2 AD), disapproved the study of Ibn ‘Arabi’s books and rather preferred and recommended the ihya al-Ulum al-Din of Imam Muhammad Ghazali, the Awarif al-Maarif of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrwardy, the Risala-i makkiya of Imam Qutbuddin, and Adab-al Muridin of Shaikh Abu Najib Suhrwardy to his disciples and followers. Yet one of his famous khalifas, Shaikh Sufi, showed profound interest in Ibn ‘Arabi and his philosophy. After his pir’s death, Shaikh Sufi shifted to Gujarat where he studied for several years the Fusus-al Hikam and the Futuhat-i Makkiya under the ablest guidance of Shaikh Wajihuddin Gujarati. He wrote a commentary on the Fusus and used to deliver brilliant lectures on the technical terms used by Shaikh-i Akbar in discussing Wahdat-al Wujud.

Moreover, in the closing years of the sixteenth century, there emerged another great exponent of the panthetic philosophy of Muhiyuddin Ibn ‘Arabi in the Indian subcontinent. He was Shaikh Abdul Jalil of Lucknow who earned fame as an Qwaisi Chishti saint, and directly benefited from the spirit of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. His writings show great frankness in expressing his belief in Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought.

Besides, Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni informs that Shaikh Azizullah, Shaikh Chayan Ladh Sohni, an Abtari Badakhshani were also the famous advocates of Wahdat-al Wujud in those days. Shaikh Azizullah used to instruct his pupils in expounding the secrets of Tawhid and taught them the Fusus-al Hikam and its commentaries. He also wrote a broucher, Risalah-i Ainiyah, in support of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Wahdat-al Wujud. It deals with many obscure questions relating to this theme. Shaikh Chayan Ladh was one of the most famous
successors of Shaikh Abdul Aziz of Delhi and travelled resolutely in the path of mysticism. He too used to give instructions in Sufi books such as the *Fusus* and the *Naqd-i Fusus* to his pupils who were seekers of the truth.\(^5\) Similarly, Abtari Badakhshani also was a famous exponent of Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical thought. He had committed to memory some phrases from the *Futuhat-i Makkiya* and the *Fusus-al Hikam*. He also wrote a treatise on the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*.\(^6\)

Thus we see that Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical concept of *Wahdat-al Wujud*, the ‘unity of Being’, which entered into Sufi-circles of the Indian subcontinent in the first half of the fourteenth century, had reached the pinnacle of its popularity and permitted the spiritual and intellectual life of the muslims throughout the country during the sixteenth century. In Akbar’s time it had become the dominant mystical theosophy of Muslim India. Most of the eminent Sufis and *Mashaikh* of different spiritual orders had drunk at the fountain of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought.

The same Sufi thought the *Wahdat-ul Wujud* was dominated on the minds and hearts of the Sufis of India at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Among the Sufis who flourished in the country in the beginning of this century, Miyan Mir of the Qadiri Silsilah and Khwaja Baqi Billah of the Naqshabandi order are most significant. Miyan was deeply influenced by the pantheistic philosophy of *Wahdat-ul Wujud*. It is said that he had committed to his memory a number of pages Ibn Arabi’s *Futuhat-i Makkiyah* and Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami’s commentary on *Fusus-ul Hikam*,\(^7\) Although according to Dara Shukoh’s *Sakinat-ul Auliya*, Miyan Mir was more devoted his prayers and spiritual practices rather than mystical thought.\(^8\)
Similarly, Khwaja Baqi Billah of the Naqshbandi silsilah also believed in the same mystical philosophy and fully agreed with all the points discussed by Ibn Arabi in his works. He was strongly of the view that there is no harm in believing this sufi ideology by living in the framework of the Shariah of Islam. But it appears from the study of his Khalifa Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi’s letters, entitled as the Maktubut-i Imam-i Rabbani, that he (Baqi Billah) had changed his views regarding the concept of Wahdat-ul Wujud the ‘Unity of Being’.

The beginning of the seventeenth century is a significant time in our country’s medieval history from the point of view of the development of the sufi thought. There emerged in the sufi scenario of the sub continent a great spiritual figure who revolutionized the Muslim spiritualdom. It was the above mentioned Khwaja Baqi Billah’s Chief Khalifa and spiritual successor Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. As has been said earlier, his father Shaikh Abdul Ahad was among the first ranked exponents of the ‘Unity of Being’. It is, therefore, correct to say that Ahmad Sirhindi too had inherited this ideology. Even by the time he joined the Naqshbandi discipline at the hands of Khwaja Baqi Billah in 1599 AD. he was an enthusiastic supporter of this mystic doctrine. But it was in those days that Sirhindi started meditations and practices in accordance with the teachings of the naqshbandi silsilah under the guidance of the Khwaja and achieved rapid success. It was in those days that Sirhindi passed through various spiritual journeys and experienced many new ideas and stages. During this process of spiritual journeys and experiences, he was encounter with the reality of the conception of Wahdat-ul Wujud. It may be said that Shaikh Ahmad, during these meditation, the last and ultimate stage of this mystic concept. Very soon this (final) stage completely dominated him.
He continued his mediations. Shading light on his mystical journeys Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi writes: “Suddenly God’s special favours appeared and unvailed all obstacles of the way. The learning consisting of Wahdat-ul Wujud were perished. It appeared to me that God is God and the world is world. These cannot be one.”

This new idea was turned by the Shaikh as the doctrine of Wahdat-ush Shuhud ‘Unity of Appearance’. It may be defined in by saying that Sirhindi passed through the stage of Wahdat-ul Wajud and reached the stage of zilliyat or adumberation where the error involved in the earlier stage (i.e wujudiyat or unityism), was revealed to him. After these stage of Adumberation (zilliyat), he attained the stage of Abdiyat or servitude. At this stage he found himself so thoroughly convinced of the error of wujudiyat or unitism that be felt himself compelled to denounce it emphatically. It was at this stage that he clearly realized that mystic experience has no objective validity with regard to the being and attributes of God. God is beyond all such names and attributes as can be comprehended by us. He is beyond all modes and relations, beyond all externalization and internalization, beyond all realizable and explicable, beyond all mystic intuition and experience, and beyond all conceivable and imaginable. He the Holy one is beyond the beyond, again beyond the beyond.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is view that whatever is known through mystic intimation is merely a subjective experience, without any objective validity whatsoever. Sirhindi, termed this stage (servitude) as the Shuhudiyat and as such a new sufi doctrine, known as the Wahdat-ush Shuhud, came to limelight.
It is said that when on experiencing this stage Shaikh Ahmad apprised his mentor Khwaja Baqi Billah of its details, the latter too changed his views by believing that *Wahdat-ul Wujud* is an intermediary stage, and final and real stage is the *Wahdat-ush Shuhud* i.e. the Unity of Appearance.  

A detailed study of the development of sufi thought is the seventeenth century reveals that if on hand the doctrine of *Wahdat-ush Shuhud* was received warmly particularly by the followers and spiritual descendents of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, on the other, there came forward a group of Sufis in its opposition. This controversy started even during life of the Shaikh. However after his death in 1034 A.H. /1624 A.D. his sons, Khwaja Muhammad Said and Khwaja Mohammad M’asum, played significant role in popularizing this (their father’s) conception of *Tauhid*. After them, their descendants particularly Muhammad Naqshband and Muhammad Zubair, and their followers made strenuous efforts in the dissemination of the philosophy of ‘Unity of Appearance’ in the sufi circle in India and abroad.

As pointed out earlier the exponents of the concept of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* also remained active in popularizing their mystical thought throughout the seventeenth century. The sufis, who actively participated in this regard, were Shaikh Muhibullah of Ilahabad (Allahabadi). All his views and teachings are based on the mystical thought of Ibn Arabi. He was held in this field as a renowned interpretor. He wrote two voliminous commentaries on Ibn Arabi’s *Fusus-ul Hikam*, one in Arabic and the other in 1041 A.H. /1631 A.D. in Persian. In 1050 A.H. /1640 A.D. he compiled his work Haft Ahkam and *Manazir Akhs-ul Khawaj*. Similarly in 1053 A.H /1643 A.D. be produced his work such as the *Ibadat-ul Khawas*, the *Tafsir-ul Quran* and *‘Aqaid-ul Khawas*, etc.
In all his works his basic purpose is to promote the idea of *Wahdat-ul Wujud*. The collection of letters has also appeared. Most of his epistles contain the same theme. Muhibullah Ilahabad was in close contact with Prince Dara Shukoh who was deeply impressed by his deep insight in the doctrine.\(^7^8\)

Dara himself was emotionally inclined to this them.\(^7^9\) Rather he was a renowned exponent of this philosophy. Most of his works support it. He was also very deeply influenced by the views of his *pir* (mentor) Mullah Shah Badakhshi and grand mentor Miyan Mir of Lahore.\(^8^0\) There was another famous admirer of the idea of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* who flourished in Delhi during the closing years of Shahjahan’s reign and early years of Aurangzeb. His name was Sarmad. Came from Arminia, he was a convert to Islam from Judaism. He was a learned Arabic, Persian and Hebrew languages and different rational sciences.\(^8^1\) Sarmad settled in Delhi in 1064 A.H./ 1654 A.D. and according to Sher Khan Lodhi he made close contact with Dara Shukoh.\(^8^2\) Famous European traveler Bernier had also met Sarmad.\(^8^3\) Sarmad preached very widely the concept of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* through his Persian poetry.\(^8^4\) He did not read the complete *Kalima*, i.e. the Muslim confession of faith. Rather he used to say only Lailah means there is no God. Ulama of Aurangzebs time issued a verdict against this behavior of Sarmad. The Emperor, therefore, ordered for his execution.\(^8^5\)

At the same time the descendants and followers of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also continued their efforts, during the second half of the seventeenth century, to preach *Wahdat-ush Shuhud* among the masses. They laid much and much emphasis on the study of Imam Ghazali’s work *Ihya-ul Ulum* and *Kimya-i Saadat*. Several of the Naqshbandi saints of the period were in good and close contant with Emperor Aurangzeb.\(^8^6\).
It was during the last quarter of the seventeenth century that flourished in Delhi a renowned sufi of the Chishti silsilah Shah Kalimullah of Delhi. He was very popular among the people and supported the concept of *Wahdat-ul Wujud*[^8]. Thus we see that the admirers of both those mystical thought remained active in popularizing their ideas in the country during the seventeenth century.

[^8]: The concept of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* is a theological position in Islam that emphasizes the unity of being in the divine and the creation. It suggests that the divine is the ultimate reality and that the world is not a separate existence but is a manifestation of the divine.
References

5. Ibid.
7. Tariq Ahmad, op.cit., p.12.
8. Lataif-i Quddusi, p. 59 Also Simon Digby op.cit, (Med. India Mscl, p.19), Also: Muhammad Aslam, Din-i Ilahi aur uska pasmanzar, Delhi, 1969, pp.74-75.
10. Born on 5th March 1492, he was the son and spiritual successor of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi. He carried on his father’s spiritual mission till his last moment by permanently residing at Gangoh where he died in 1575-6. He compiled his father’s biography and Malfuzat, entitled Lataif-i Quddusi, for his derails, see, Zubdat-al Maqamat, pp. 101-2, Also Akhbar-al Akhyar, p.222.
11. He was a distinguished Khalifa of the Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, throughout the life he was devoted to meditation, prayer, Zikr and sama, he wrote a sufi work Irshad-al Talibin and a treatise on sama. Shaikh Ruknuddin died in 1582, see, Zubdat al-Mqamat p. 103, also Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i Chisht, Vol.I, p.280.
12. Lataif-i Quddusi, p.60.
16. It may be noted that by the time of Akbar the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul Wujud* had become the dominant mystical theosophy of Muslim India. For details, see ibid, p.57.
17. Ibid. p.50.
18. For detailed study, see Affili, op. cit, pp. 1-65.
21. He was a renowned saint of the Sabiriya branch of the Chishti silsilah. Shaikh Abdul Quddus received *khilafat* from and succeeded his pir Shaikh Muhammad, the grandson of Shaikh Ahmad, Abdul Haq of Rudauli. He himself resided there but in 1491 he migrated to Shahabad near Ambala in eastern Punjab where he lived for about thirty years. Finally, in 1526, he shifted to Gangoh where he died at a ripe old age in 1537. He was on good terms with Sultan Sikander Lodhi and Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He also maintained cordial relations with Emperors Babur and Humayun. Among his works *Anwar-al Uyun, Risalah-i Qudsiya, Rushd nama, Gharib-al Fawaid*, and *Mazhar-al Ajaib* are very famous. He also wrote a commentary on ibn Arabi’s *Fusus-al Hakam*. The collection of his letters *Maktubat-i Quddusiya* also deserves special mention. For his detailed accounts, see, Shaikh Ruknuddin, *Lataif-i Qiiddusi*, Delhi. Also *Akhbar-ul Akhyar*, pp.221-4; Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, *Zubdat-al Maqamat*, Newal Kishore, Kanpur, 1890, pp. 97-101. Also, *Tarikh-i Mashaikh-i Chisht*, vol. I, Delhi, 1980, pp.271-4.
29. Born on 5 March 1492, he was the son and spiritual successor of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi. He carried on his father’s spiritual mission till his last moment by permanently residing at Gangoh where he died in 1575-6. He compiled his father’s biography and *malfuzat*, entitled *lataif-i Quddusi*. For his details, see, *Zubdat-al Maqamat*, pp.101-2; also, *Akhbar-ul Akhyar*, p.222.
30. He was a distinguished Khalifa of Shaikh Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. Throughout his life he was devoted to meditation, prayer, *zikr*, and *sama*. He wrote a Sufi work *Irshad-al Talibin* and a treatise on Sama. Shaikh Ruknuddin died in 1582. See, *Zubdat-al Maqamat*, p.103.
33. For his detailed accounts, see the present writer’s article in *Burhan*, vol.99 no.5, Delhi. May 1987, pp.286-306.
34. *Zubdat-al Maqamat*, p.113.
36. Born in 971/1563 in Sirhind, he holds a pre-eminent position among the Sufis of Islam. Though initially he obtained *khalafat* in the Chishtiya and other spiritual orders from his father, however, subsequently he joined the mystic discipline of Khwaja Baqi Billah of Delhi into the Naqshbandi silsilah, and organized it in the whole subcontinent. He was deeply perturbed at the religious experiments of Akbar and left no stone unturned in challenging the situation created by political interference in religious life. He established close contacts with eminent Mughal nobles through correspondence and made them realize the nature of heretical
development at the Court. He deputed his disciples and khalifas to spread his spiritual mission in every important city and town of the Mughal Empire. Emperor Jahangir imprisoned him in 1029 AH/1619 AD in the fort of Gwalior for a year and then released and bestowed upon him the robe of honour. He also presented the saint a gift of rupees one thousand. The shaikh preached the importance of spiritual values in man’s life by reviving people’s interest in the shariah, the law of Islam. He attacked Ibn Arabi’s Wahdat-al Wujud the ‘Unity of Being’ be declaring it one of the main causes of weakening the distinctive features of the faiths and creating an atmosphere of moral holiday. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi’s chief contribution to the Sufi thought in Islam was his enunciation of a counter theory popularly known as Wahdat-ush Shuhud, the ‘Unity of Appearance’. He died in 1034/1624 in Sirhind. For his details, see Zubdat al Maqamat; also Badruddin Sirhindi, Hazrat-al Quds, Vol III, Lahore, 1971; Friedman, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Mc. Gill, Canada, 1971; B.A. Faruqi, op.cit.

41. It contains the biographical and other details of the seventeenth century Naqshbandi saints, particularly khwaja Baqi Billah. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, and their sons and khalifas. Its author, khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, was an eminent khalifa of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It was first published in 1885 (1302 AH by the Matba-i Mahmud'. Lucknow, at the initiative of Pandit Ajodhia Nath, an advocate at the Hon’ble High Court at Allahabad, and then by the Newal Kishore Press, Kanpur, in 1890 (1307 AH). Another edition has also appeared from Pakistan. Its Urdu translation was also published from Lahore in 1909.
42. *Zubdat-al Maqamat*, p.123.
44. For his biography and other details, see *Akhbar-ul Akhyar*, pp.241-3.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., pp.241-2.
52. Ibid.p.242.
53. Ibid. p.242.
54. Ibid.p.195.
56. For details, see ibid, pp.237-41.
57. Ibid, pp.251-57.
65. Ibid. p.110.
66. Ibid, p.188.

68. Dara Shukoh’s whole book is devoted to the saint’s and his followers biographical accounts. It has been published from Tehran (Iran) in 1965 A.D.


74. For details, see: Ibid.

75. Ibid.


78. Ibid,pp.78-80.

79. *Tarikh-i Megalat*, p.149.


