THEOLOGY AND SUFISM

Theology or _kalam_ that has a long history in the classical writings of Islam\(^1\), found a special response in Shah Wali-u Allah thought. Having a profound insight into the Qur'an and the Sunnah little was he satisfied with the existing literature on the subject. He reinterpreted the subject and formulated his comprehensive system of theology and sufism. The present chapter attempts at the analysis of theology and sufism, the two outstanding trends in the Shah's religious thought. It will deal with some issues of special concern on the subject in the light of his famous writings\(^2\).

In the first instance Shah Wali-u Allah's approach to theology will be treated and in it focus will be given to his description of conception and attributes of God. The related themes like position of _man_, his freedom and _s'adah_ (happiness) will also be treated in the discussion.

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1. This refers to the writings of the scholars of the medieval period like Abu Ishaq Asfara'ini (d.418/1027), Ibn Hazam (b.384/994), Abdul Karim Shahristani (d.548/1153), Fakhru-din Razi (544-606/1149-1209) and Ibn Qaym (692-767/1292-1395).

2. Famous writings on the subject of theology are _Al-Budûr al- Bâzigha_, _Hujjat Allâh al Bâligha_, _al-khayr al Kathîr_ and _Tafhîmî llâhiyya_ and on sufism, besides the above mentioned last two works, are _Ham'ât_, _Lamahât_, _Sata'ât_, _Fauz al Haramian_, Infra, n.48.
Shah Wali-u Allah conceives God through both the axioms of humanism and transcendentalism. Earlier the M'utazilis have got swayed with "rationalism" and the Asharís with "literalism" in their approach to God. To the Shah, their interpretations do not sound balanced and moderate and he thus reconstructs his own mode. His paradigm epitomises reformative axioms and principles in it.

In his conception of God, Wali-u Allah considerably deals with the principle of innate God-consciousness in man and animals. He describes it through a proposition of cause and effect. He says that God, the Creator, has endowed both human beings and animals with innate knowledge of His Self and the universals of life. Attitudes, actions and movements of these creatures are caused by this innate consciousness, i.e., *ma'rifat al-fitrah*. God acts as the Agent to cause much knowledge in His creatures and it is on this principle, observes Wali-u Allah, that makes an animal cautious of the danger when he hears an unusual sound. On this knowledge or consciousness he distinguishes himself from his other species, friends and enemies. According to the Shah this innate consciousness is, however, at superior level in man.

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3. This is evident from his position of not sticking to any of the group's doctrines. See Shibli N'mani, *Ilm al Kalám*, Lucknow, p.80.


5. Ibid., P.240.

6. Ibid.
to that of animals. An animal's consciousness, no doubt, notices the recognition of male, female, stranger, familiar, friend and foe yet it is restricted within its rudimentary level. In case of man it is growing and extending towards wider and higher levels. Apart from shaping his personality man can develop his society and civilization through this consciousness. He can even approach the other realm of being - 'alami malkut - through it. On the basis of this consciousness he makes search for more and detailed knowledge and discovers the reality of the whole universe:

When man saw in himself and in the universe an orderly plan and guessed about the arrangement just as he guessed about planets, he came to know by his nature, that this existing regular order must have a cause outside this world. This much of knowledge is, however, established and fixed into the nature of all men. That is why you see people in the east and the west conforming to its establishment, differing only in its particularisation to the extent they comprehended the order.

Shah Wali'u Allah also makes a mention of the perversion of this innate consciousness and he considers this perversion the cause of misunderstanding among some groups, about God. Their error, observes Wali-u Allah, is that they either assign

7. Ibid., P.241.
8. Ibid., P.242.
9. Ibid., P.243.
10. Ibid., PP.243-244.
ultimate causation to matter or attribute its agency to heavenly bodies, souls of by-gone sages and thus, rule out the existence of Higher Being. The Shah views them as the men who have indulged in ignorance till their death, excluding those who got an opportunity to return back to their innate conscience (‘iql- sal’im) and God came to their rescue (anayat -i Rehmāni). Those who are inclined to follow this “God-Consciousness” find directions and are also aided in their activities of life.

According to Wali-u Allah, the consciousness develops on right lines in the ordinary minds provided it is not mingled with anthropomorphic concepts. It is kept free from all the conceptual determinations and limitations conceived by the mind. It takes, in the ordinary mind, the form of an implicit awareness and abstract attitude relating to God without a definite conception of his nature. Such minds possess only practical reason (al-‘aql al - māshī) capable of merely pragmatical knowledge and can have the basis of their knowledge of God and His transcendence on this kind of consciousness accompanied by the negative knowledge about His nature and with negation of this likeness with things of the creation. Shah Wali-u Allah holds that the ordinary mind when develops on its nature it advances towards the higher stages. It can be also experienced when the physical impediments are removed to him (in

11. Ibid., P.245.
13. Supra, n. 11, P.250.
akhirah). In both the cases the previous knowledge or consciousness about God will
not cause confusion in its approach to realisation of God\textsuperscript{15}.

Hence innate God-consciousness, when developed on right and sound lines, it
becomes the source of s'ālah (happiness). Adoration and admiration of God, observes
the Shah, simultaneously come into being as ones needs and welfare is dependent
upon Him. The mind evolves the state of tazallul- supplication, gratitude and humility
towards God\textsuperscript{16}. This state is manifested in the form of ibadah (worship) and gradually
transforms into the stages of iqtibarat (means of approach to God and of development
of higher consciousness) where birr (natural good) is realised within the shari'ah\textsuperscript{17}.

Attributes of God

Like the Ash'aris, Shah Wali-u Allah believes in the attributes of God. His
approach to them, however, marks some differences with that of the former. By his
extensive use of descriptive method he renders the reformative and reconciliatory
counter to his theology.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., PP. 247-248.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., PP. 300-301.
\textsuperscript{17} Shah Wali-u Allah, Hujjat Allah Baligha, Islamabad, PP. 177-178.
\textsuperscript{18} The Mu'tazilis do not believe in Attributes of God and view them as
additional and contrary to His essence.
According to Shah Wali-u Allah, God is Reality which man needs to approach and realise properly. The approach is possible from the two sides. One is from the ordinary reason (al-aql al m'ushi) and the other from the source side (mabda') or the higher reason\(^\text{19}\). The first kind, observes the Shah, is related to objective method of description. Here Power, Knowledge, Mercy etc. of God are understood on his personal experience and response to the world. Attributes are termed as names (asma'), by the Shah which denote mental meaning' and become an aid to attain knowledge of God and to offer His worship (ihādah)\(^\text{20}\). Wali-u Allah makes mention of some principles through which the Attributes are understood in human language. He enumerates four such principles for describing the Attributes of God. These emphasise the eradication of taints of anthropomorphism, use of expressions and exaltation of God’s Power (Qudrah)\(^\text{21}\). Shah Wali-u Allah cites the examples of man’s looking at the creations of the world and call God mussawir (Artist). For God’s blessing upon the weak with health and providing the necessities to live, He is called Rab, Razāq (Sustainer). Such observation and experience makes man to evolve other names, dignified and higher, like Mālik (King), Qudūs (Holy), Ahad (Single), ‘Alā (High), Kabīr (Great), Hayy (Living)\(^\text{22}\). These names are also called al-asmā-u al

\(^{19}\) Ibid., PP.256, 359.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., P. 221.

\(^{21}\) Al-Qur’an, 2:255.
husanā (Beautiful and exalted names). Their manifestation with necessary cause (illah) and practical wisdom – hikmah baligha.

Can he (the scholar of religion) deny the far reaching wisdom which, if neglected will lead to ignorance and folly in each and every action? He will surely find lawfulness, the relation of which to the performance of an act or non performance is the same according to the nature of the possible, without the consideration of the relationship of God, before the action which necessitates its emanation. He therefore, describes it by the word power in this sense. As such do not be negligent of this kind of cognition. Those who have fully comprehended the developments have recognised this, but how it is permissible for those persons who are created upon one capability to neglect the nasamic cognition when it is the nearest of the stages to their worldly life? In short it is the detailed gnosis reposed in the fitrah of man to take notice of things when he devotes himself to his nature.

The second side of approach, as referred to in the above cited passage, is nasamic (intuitive) or tawfiqi (taught on the authority of Traditions). It is, says the Shah, from the source side (mubda') and is termed as higher reason. Unlike the ordinary reason (al-aql al-māshi), the higher reason is tafsili (extensive)

23. Supra, n.20; P. 263.
24. Ibid., PP. 263 - 264.
consciousness of God. A person who does not possess high reason but possess ordinary reason must view the Attributes from the side of the manifestation in the world and not from the source side. To a common mind it is convenient as well as natural to develop awareness about God and about the characteristics of His work or His Attributes through viewing the signs and effects that are manifested in the world. The higher reason is not here extensively described by the Shah yet by it he means the deeper and the effective comprehension and consciousness of God through visionary patterns and the Prophetic teachings. When man progresses and gains nearness to God he is endowed with the higher reason with which higher conception of God's Attributes becomes possible. Wali-u Allah's terming this method as nasami or taujiqi that connotes the revelatory (kashafi) nature of the approach and is characteristic of firm faith in God and His Attributes leading to ibadah and s'adah.

In his response to the controversy on the interpretation of God's Attributes, Wali-u Allah himself explains some of the Attributes to reconcile the divergent

27. Ibid., PP. 257-258.
28. This refers to the Shah's theology as dealt in al-Budur al-Bazigha and Hujjat Allâh al-balîgha and the theme is however, treated in detailed manner in his sufism - sufi treatises. Infra "Sufism" in the present chapter.
positions. He holds that the approach to God through defining his Attributes is not a misconception as due care has been taken in the traditional practice to define Attributes through beautiful names. He interprets Qudra (power), Hayat (Life), Sama' (Hearing), Kalam (Speech), Irada (Will), etc. and substantiates that what we realise about them are their effects only. As these effects in their appearance display the same qualities as mentioned above, hence we, says the Shah, assign these qualities to God as well. However, there is difference of nature of meaning in our mind and in God's Essence. In the universe there are signs showing that God is not deficient in comprehending a thing that we comprehend through the sense of hearing. This means that He hears but it does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that He has ears too. God is kind but, His kindness does not come from tender heart. In the same way, Shah Wali-u Allah differentiates the Attributes of Irada (Will) and Qudra (Power) as God's Attributes from the characteristics of man. These manifest in two stages -- of the will and the execution of the will. In case of Kalam (Speech) Wali-u Allah mentions that the purpose and the effect of speech is to create an idea or understanding of the idea in the mind of the person addressed to. The manifestation of

31. Ibid; PP. 163 - 165.

32. Ibid; P. 163 and Shah Wali-u Allah, Al-Budur al-Bazigh, PP. 266 - 267.

33. Shah Wali-u Allah, Hujjat Allah al-Baligha, P. 167. In his al-Khayr al Kathir, Shah Wali-u Allah describes will as God's desire to effect unity in the world order (nizam) which emanated before the will itself. And that is because there ought to be coherence between successive modes of existence. Production of new manifestation is its constant feature. (Khazana 2).
this kind of speech is made in the forms of revelation\(^{34}\). Thus on the basis of the observation of this manifestation one can claim that God possesses the Attribute of speech. What theologians term as al \textit{kalam} al nafsi is called by Wali-u Allah an ambiguous statement\(^{35}\).

In his description of the Attributes Wali-u Allah also discusses the issue of God’s Determinism (\textit{taqdîr}) and man’s will in a broader perspective. Unlike the early theologians his approach is moderate and discourages the misconstructions on the subject. He views God’s Determinism through Attributes of \textit{Qudrah} -- Power and Will. He explains it through both ordinary reason and the higher reason. In case of the former it is realised when a common man experiences the frustration of his events and happenings contrary to his wishes and endeavours. It is one of the innate ideas in the minds of ordinary people that assigns the ultimate management of affairs in the hands of an unseen power (\textit{Ghayb}) that inspires them to act with its directives\(^{36}\). The men of higher reason, on the other hand, apprehend the unity of whole universe which is governed by one universal scheme (\textit{al-tadabîr al-wahdâni}) determined by God’s

\(^{34}\) Forms of revelation to Wali-u Allah are \textit{ru’ya}, \textit{ilqa}, transmission of meaningful words to the recipient (Prophet) directly, or through the messanger (Jabrail) see \textit{Al-Budur al Bâzigha}, P. 269.

\(^{35}\) This refers to al-Ashari who holds that God’s speech is \textit{kalam} \textit{nafsi} – the inner self speech and Wali-u Allah’s position is not to affect the ends and results of his speech. See His \textit{Al-Budur al- Bâzigha}, P. 270.

\(^{36}\) \textit{Ibid.}, P. 283.
eternal will and power. Things cannot occur at slightest variance with it. The thing that is pre-ordained must take place and that which is not cannot occur at all. Wali-u Allah elaborates this second category of apprehending Determinism by tadhbir-i wahdāni and sunnatu - al Allah. He observes that whatever comes into existence is incumbent and essential. Under the universal scheme and order it is not possible for those things which are not essential and incumbent to come into existence. This is realised through sunnat Allah (Law of Nature) that is manifested in potentiality (ist’dād) of things. Things follow the universal scheme on the basis of their having capability and capacity to it.

Man’s faculties even work within this tadbir (scheme). His self is constituted of both the powers of bahāmiyyah (animal tendencies) and malakiyya (angelic tendencies) to use according to the Trust (imānah). Wali-u Allah views that ista’dad is on the part of God and man’s use (tassaruf) is dependent upon it. He holds that the Trust is not given or received until there is potentiality in the recipient (man) for taking it. Freedom of man lies in use of his powers either in a balanced (tādil) or unbalanced (zālim) ways. Imanah or Trust is meant to obtain the eternal

37. Ibid., P.67
38. Ibid., PP. 64-65 and Shah Wali-Allah, Hujjat Allāh al-Baligha,,PP.64-65. This view is also held by Dr.Mohammad Iqbal in his The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Kitab Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, PP.49-51.
39. Ibid., P.66.Cf. his Sata’āt, (Tr.M.S,Hashmi), PP.176-77
40. He also calls it alam-i amr and alam mujarid. See al-Buddur al-Bāzigha, P.P.64 and 65.
s'ādah. Wali-u Allah, thus, formulates that Determinism is the working of the higher order (al nizām al fauqâni) which is absolute and eternal. Man's freedom is in the lower order of the universe emerging in the situation of his phenomenal environment.

Precisely, Wali-u Allah's theology notices both the ordinary and the higher understanding of God. The ordinary apprehension emanates from innate God-consciousness in man, patterned by al-‘aql al-m‘ashi that disciplines and civilizes it humanistically and advances, gradually towards the higher reason—a revelatory method. The revelatory method is a deeper realisation of God and is the result of man’s special ibadah as well as what Wali-u Allah calls, anayat-i Rehmani. Attributes of God, unlike, the Mu’tazilah and the falsafa, are viewed by Wali-u Allah as a means to approach God—His Essence, Tawhid, Tadbir, Qudrah etc.—at human level. The attributes do not distort God’s Essence or Tawhid as they are al-asmâ' al husna (beautiful and exalted Names) devoid of anthropomorphism. Wali-u Allah’s theology depreciates the early theologians’ axioms of over-rationalism, literalism and tjasimiyah and replaces them with those of fair transcendentalism and just humanism. His is the comprehensive and reformative theology that aims at the true realisation of ibadh to attain the eternal s’ādah.

Sufism:

Sufism or tasawwuf, as mentioned earlier, emerged as an important mode and

41. Ibid., PP.67-68.
42. See Supra chapter I, PP.29-32.
method to understand and experience Islam. In its inception it was characteristic of *zuhd* (piety) *tawakul* (reliance upon Allah), repentance and simple living. Some of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW) have been given the name of *aslih-i suf* (companions of piety)\(^43\). In the second century Hijra *zahidun* and *abidun* were special epithets with which such men were identified\(^44\). Abu Zar-i Gaffari, Sulman Farsi, ‘Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz etc. are generally mentioned as the people who represent this modest sufi living\(^45\). However, the rise of sufism owes much to the indulgence of the Muslim rulers into worldly luxuries and the fragmentation of the community into sects\(^46\). In its early period the outstanding sufi personalities were Hasan Basari (622/6th A.H); Maruf Kharkhi (b. 165 A.H) Shqiq Balki (d.194 A.H) and Harith Muhasibi (b.165/871)\(^47\), with the passage of time the simple doctrines of sufism got transformed into the complex intellectual ones by confronting the foreign cults\(^48\).

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At the advent of the new Sufi personages like Rabi’ā al-‘Adawuja (d.185/801), Dhu al Nun Misri (b.180/706), Bayazid Bistami (d.260/874) and Mansur al Hallaj (b.244/857) the themes of tasawwuf like tawhid, love, knowledge, trust found a complex intellectual treatment. Rabi’a is known for introducing the doctrine of disinterested love in sufism standing that she worships God not for fear of punishment or desire for reward but for His love and finds in it ‘union with God’49. Dhu al Num Misri classified knowledge into several kinds and calls the knowledge of the attributes of God as the privileged of the saints only and he further describes this knowledge in terms of ma’rifah (gnosis)50. In Bayazid Bistami and al-Hallaj sufism tended to monistic doctrine, which developed a strong controversy in the subsequent ages. Bayazidi sayings “I went from God to God, untill He cried from me in me, ‘O thou I’. “Glory to me! How great is my majesty”. When I came out of ‘myself’, I found the lover and the beloved as one, for in the world of thought, all is one”51. Al-Hallaj does not seem different from Bayazid when he declares “I am the Truth” (an’al Haqq)52. Such idiosyncratic views on ‘knowledge’ ‘anihilation and ‘union with God’ were strongly reacted by the ulama as well as the general public who considered them unIslamic and heretical.

51. Ibid, PP.342-344.
In some of the propounders of tasawwuf a new direction, is found which is characteristic of its reform from within. Junaid of Bagdad (d.298/910), al-Sarraj (d.456/1063) al-Qushari (d.465/1072), al-Ghazali (d.505/1111) and Shiekh Abdul Qadir Gilani (d.525/1166) are some of the outstanding personalities of this line of sufism where special attempts activated the popular growth of sufism through out the ages. As against the doctrine of fanā (annihilation) and ma’rifah (gnosis) the valid knowledge, al-Kharraz and Junaid propound the doctrine of baqā (subsistence) and priority of knowledge over gnosis the latter does not give any objective validity to sufi, state (ahwāl)⁵³. Al Sarraj’s Kitāb al Luma and al-Qushari’s famous Risāla add much to this reformative movement of sufism. It were, however, al-Ghazali and Shiekh Abdul Qadir Gilani whose writing became the corner-stone of this reformative sufism of the medieval times.

Al-Ghazali attempts are remarkable as to him tasawwuf is not a way of finding the extra facts about Reality but is a meaningful way of looking at it as a unit⁵⁴. To him it is both knowledge and action. He criticised those who sought reaching the mystical knowledge in a hurry and criticised the sufi claim in a mystical experience that one reaches God through fusion into or unity with the divine Being⁵⁵. The true perception of the presence of the transcendent as a commanding being, knowledge of Him is never

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knowledge of His self but of His will\textsuperscript{56}. In al-Ghaz\textsuperscript{\textdegree}li there is the repudiation of those sufis who preach doctrine of withdrawal of society and non obligation of the Shariah\textsuperscript{57}. In Shiekh Abdul Qadir Gilani four stages of spiritual development are propounded-stage of piety, stage of reality (identical with wilayah), stage of resignation and the stage of annihilation\textsuperscript{58}. To him the final stage is meant to attain the nearness of God and it does not mean monism or pantheism. To him tasawwuf consists of generosity, cheerful submission, patience, constant communion with God through prayer, solitude, faqr, humility, sincerity and truthfulness\textsuperscript{59}. In this way both al-Ghazali and Shiekh Abdul Qadir while repudiating ascetic and monistic forms of tasawwuf, there is an attempt to present it as a meaningful way of life which affirms both knowledge and action, obedience to the Shariah and the communion with God. Down the ages Ibn Taymiyah (d.728/1328) and Ibn Qayam (d.751/1350) are found also concerned with the reform of Sufism and it were the endeavours of such great traditional ulama which gave tasawwuf a valid popularity\textsuperscript{60}.

Ever since the spread of Islam in the Indian sub-continent sufi mode sought a

\textsuperscript{56. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{57. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{59. Ibid.}
good expression to preach and teach Islam on the land. As the Muslims founded their rule in the sub-continent, sufism flourished throughout the land. In due course of time various sufi orders became popular among the people. Shiekh Abu al Hasan ‘Ali ibn Uthman al-Hijwiri (b.400/1009)62 and Sultan Sakhi Sarwar (d.577/1181)63 are regarded as the earliest sufis who settled on the Indian soil.

Khawja Mu’in ud-din Chisti (b.590/1193)64, the disciple of Khawja Uthman Haruni founded Chistiyah order in India and it was spread widely by his disciples and the successors here. The prominent personalities of the order were Khawja Qutb al Din

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62. Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Uthman b. ‘Ali al Hijwiri popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh was born in Ghazna (400/1009) and died in India. He is one of those early Persian sufis who settled in India. He is the author of famous sufi treatise Kashf al M’jüb and some of his other works are Minhâj al-Dîn, Kitâb Fanâ wa al-Baqqâ.

63. He was also one of the early Sufi’s who came from Arabia and settled in Multan. He is attributed to have made good impact on a section of Hindu Jats. See also Moinul Haq, Islamic Thought and Movements, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi (1979) p. 122.

64. Khawaja Mu’in al Din Chisti was born in Sistan (Iran) in 847/1443 and came to India little before the invasion of Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori ( ) and acquired great fame as sufi here.
Bakhtiyar Kaki (d.633/1235)\textsuperscript{65} Shiekh Farid al Din (b.559/1173)\textsuperscript{66}, Shiekh Nizam ud Din Auliya (b.737/1336)\textsuperscript{67} and Nasir ud Din Chirag-i Delhi\textsuperscript{68}. The emphasis of the Chistis was on love, simplicity, equality and social justice. They were also fond of sama' (sufi music), life regulated by the Shari'ah norms leads to the higher stage of spiritual development-\textit{tariqat}\textsuperscript{69}. The Suhrawardiyah, the Qadriyah and the Naqashbindyah were other renowned orders of sufism which got flourished in India

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} He was born at Ush (Farghanah) and joined the discipleship of Khawaja Mu\textsuperscript{s}in al Din at Ajmir.
\item \textsuperscript{66} He is popularly known as Ba\-ba Farid Ganj-i Shakar. His father had come from Kabul to Multan where he served as qadi (judge). Khawaja Farid al Din got enrolled in sufi circle by the impressive personality of Khawaja Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki. He led a life of severe austerity and piety.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Nizam al Din Auliya was born in Badaun in 737/1336 and became influential suf\textsuperscript{i} of his time. According to Barani, Nizam al-Din regulated the life of his disciples in accordance with the Shari'ah to reach the higher stage of sufism are recorded in \textit{Fawa'dul Fauwad} of Amir Hasan Sijzi.
\item \textsuperscript{68} He came from Khurasan to India and settled at Lahore. At the age of forty three he came to Delhi where he joined the discipleship of Shiekh Nizam ud-Din Auliya. Like his predecessors his land stress on the observance of the shari'ah laws.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Yusuf Husain, \textit{Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture}, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp.45-46.
\end{itemize}
before the advent of Shah Wali-u Allah Shiekh Baha uddin Zakariyyah (578/1182)\textsuperscript{70}, Shiekh Ruknu Din\textsuperscript{71} and Shiekh Sharif udddin Yahya Manairi (d.782/1380)\textsuperscript{72} were the followers of Suhrawardiyah order in the sub-continent and Shah Niamet ullah\textsuperscript{73} Makhdum Muhammad Gilani (d.1231/1815)\textsuperscript{74} Shah Musa Gilani (1002/1593)\textsuperscript{75} and Shiekh Abdul Haq Muhadith Dehlvi (d.1033/1663) introduced the Qaddiriyyah order here. As these two orders have been expounded by their followers, speculative and practical issues about sufism become complex and intricate due to the influence of Ibn Arabi's (b.561/1165) doctrine of \textit{wahadat al wajud} (unity of Being) and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70} His grand-father migrated from Makka to Khevarvan from where he came to Multan. 'Shiekh Baba al Din was born in Multan in 1182 CE. He travelled to many Muslim centres of learning and had got sanad for teaching hadith. His guide shaiekh Shahabuddin enrolled him in his silsilah and directed him to make Multan his centre of activity. He was very cordial with some Chisti saints of sufism.

\item \textsuperscript{71} He was son of Shiekh Baha uddin Zakariya and contributed substantially to the sufism. He was highly respected person of his day even the sultan Muhammad b. Taghaluq held him in great regard.

\item \textsuperscript{72} He belonged to the branch of Suhrwadi order known as Firdausiyah. He was not only a practical guide but also a good exponent of the theoritical side of sufism. Cf. Yusuf Husain Khan. \textit{Op.cit.} pp.49-50.

\item \textsuperscript{73} He lived towards the middle of the fifteen century.

\item \textsuperscript{74} See Shiekh Muhammad Ikram, \textit{Rüd-i Kawthar}, Taj Company, Delhi, pp. 64-65.

\item \textsuperscript{75} He was son of Sayyid Hamid Ganj Bakhash, the sufi of Arabic order and got martyred in Multan. Cf. Shiekh Muhammad Ikram, \textit{Op.cit.} p.66.
\end{itemize}
King Akabar's (the third Mughal ruler in India) patronage of 'syncretic' theosophy.76 The Naqshbandiyah order which was introduced in the late medieval times in India by Khawja Baqi Billah (971-1012/1563-1603) and flourished under Shiekh Ahkmad Sirhindi (971-1034/1563-1624). The Shiekh played a remarkable role in refuting the monistic under currents of sufism and expounded the vitality of the observance of the Shari'ah in realising mysteries of Divine existence77.

Shah Wali-u Allah has also shown keen interest in the subject of tasawwuf. He has devoted a good number of works to the various themes of sufism especially philosophy of sufism, description of some of its important practices and doctrines of the wujudi and the shuhudi thought of sufism.

Like his theological thought Wali-u Allah presents his sufi thought in a systematic way and explores keenly the philosophy78 of sufism. He defines Din (Islam) as an entity of two major components exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric is related to guidance and shaping of man's actions, matters social activities. The Shah conceives the Shari'ah as that constituent of Din which directs exoteric and social life

77. Ibid.
of man and checks the rise of tyranny and conflicts in the world – masalaha ‘amah. The other component, according to the Shah, is related to internal states and activities of man which he calls sufism or Din-i batin. This component treats the mystical states of man in relation of his Lord (Allah).

Shah Wali-u Allah bases his sufi thought on ihsan. He takes the meaning of ihsan which it connotes in the famous hadith of the Prophet (SAWS) known as hadith-i jabra’il which says: “(Ihsan is) to worship Allah as if you see Him, if (you are) unable to do so then think that He sees you.” In the hadith ‘Din’ is described as representing three stages of development in man – Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

Ihsan is, therefore, a state in which the close relationship with God and His presence is felt by the worshipper or servant that renders his worship the submissive

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80. Ibid., P. 62.

81. Ibid.

character - *khushū wa khazū*. In the sufi terminology the state is sometimes defined as *tawwujh* and *jadhīh.* The Shah holds that as the ulama and the mujadidin protect the exoteric component of Din similarly the pious personalities - awliya Allah - guard of the esoterics of it. People turn to the latter for knowledge and purification of their self.

The *walis*, says the Shah, attract the people through their height of *m'rīfah, tawwajh* and *kashf* and consequently the discipleship takes place. At the different stages of history various tariqhas and descipleships of sufism came into being. Among them the Shah considers Junidiyyah, Hikmiyyah, Muhasabiyyah, Haqiqiyyah, Nuriyyah, Tabifuriyyah, Qadiriyyah, Akbariyyah, uhrawardiyah, Kubrawiyyah, Wuyusiyyah, Chistiyyah as some of the popular sufi orders of the Muslim World.

Shah Wali-u Allah highlights the philosophy of tasawwuf through reviewing of its four epochs in the Muslim history. The first epoch, he says began from the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and his Companions. During this time tasawwuf

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83. See Infra, Pages of the present chapter.

84. Ibid, PP. 68 - 69.


86. Ibid., P.71.
functioned in subordination to the exoteric matters of Din Shari'ah. The pious men, there, took *ihsān* in the sense of observing *salāh*, recititating the Qur'an, observing fasts, paying *zakah* and observing jihad with keenness. They did not indulge in meditations (*tafakurāt*) and absorptions but their adherence to the Shar'iah rules, recitation of the Qur'an and *adkari kalimāt* made them to attain what was thought later possible through suluk (travelling the sufi path). Such men of the epoch, states Wali-u Allah, achieved both kinds of contentment, of the spirit and the matter, on account of their honest adherence to the Shari'ah. The second period, according to Wali-u Allah began with Junaid Bagdadi (d.298/910) whom he calls the leading figure among sufis. Although, during this period, most of the sufis repeated the previous sufi practices but at the same time many of them developed special qualities in them. These qualities included not to aspire for worldly things and resort to meditations; *dhikr*, *maraqaba mujahada* and *kashf*. Such men, thinks the Shah, were conscious of the aggressiveness of *nafs* and the satanic temptations. The practices of the *tariqah* made

87. Ibid.

88. Abu-i-Qasim ibn Muhammad al-Junayd was important figure in the development of sufism. He taught in Bagdad and was widely quoted by other sufis. His teachings are reported in the *Kitāb al-Luma* of al-Saraj (d.378/788). He has also good knowledge of theology and jurisprudence and his approach to sufism is that of an *ālim*. He became the spokesman of the harmony of sufism with the shari'ah. Cf. M. M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol.I. Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1989.

89. Supra n.79,p.73

90. *Al Qur'an*, 2:139
them to overcome these deceptive temptations and arouse deep love, in them, for God and make themselves identified with His colour—sabgat-u Allah. However, tawajuh i.e. the concentration of soul on Ultimate Reality to such an extent that colours it with God's colour, did not manifest in its proper way during this period of sufism. The men of the path, views the Shah, were overwhelmed by enlightenment of obedience and worship of God yet the spiritual ecstasy of tawajuh manifested merely on occasions like the flashes of lightening. At this time the importance of latâ'if (ecstacies) and use of bay'ah (allegiance) were introduced and consequently sufism became the tariqah to realise the reality of life. The third period which is associated with Shaykh Abu al-Khyr (d.435/1043), and Shaykh Abdul Hasan Khurqani (d.425/1033) witnessed a new development of tasawwuf. The sufis here, through the practice of jadhib (absorption in God) attained the state of tawajuh and realisation of the essence.

91. Shah Wali-u Allah, Ham'at, P.74.
92. Ibid, P.74
93. Shaykh Abu Sa'aid Abi 'al-Khayr was a famous sufi of Khursan. He is known for his experimental sufism while speculative sufism is ignored by him. He discusses the doctrines of fana, baqa, latâ'if, sirr-i Allah etc. in his sufism. Cf. R.A.Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, Delhi, 1988, Chapter I.
of God upon whom all the things depend—Qayum of all things. Such men, states the Shah, absorbed in His Being and their personalities were coloured by His favours. They, no longer, required mujahadah (mortification) and adhkar (remembering the sacred words) and confined themselves in one mystical state—tawajuh. According to the Shah, the controversy on the difference between tawhid-i wujudi and tawhid-i shuhudi had not yet arisen at this stage of the development tasawwuf. The main objective of the sufis was to absorb into Being of God and experience the spiritual blessings of that ecstatic state.

The fourth period started just before Shayk al-Akbar ibn Arabi (561-638/1165-1240). In this period, says Wali-u Allah, the vision of the sufis went beyond the existing knowledge of mystic states and stations and they got engaged themselves in discussion of the different sufi theories and the highest realities of life. They find out the stages of wujūd (being) and tanazulāt (decent) and its way of manifestation from Necessary Being (Wājib al-Wujūd).

Shah Wal-u Allah views each of the above mentioned epochs of tasawwuf as the manifestation of one common base—ihsan—though they differ in terms of their

95. Supra. n.92, PP. 74 - 75.
96. See Infra., pages of the present chapter.
97. Ibid.
98. Supra., n. 95, PP. 75-76.
respective states and stations of sufism. He holds that God has sanctioned their validity and *malat-i a'la* (superior Angelic sphere) also recognises their importance. In this assessment of four stages of development of *tasawwuf*, the Shah's emphasis is upon their evaluation in the historical context taking the circumstances, aptitude of the respective times into consideration. The yardstick of judgement for the sayings and states of one period cannot be, according to him, applied to those of the others. This is illustrative of Wali-u Allah's approach to sufism, on the one hand, in its proper perspective and, on the other hand, marks his reconciliatory method. By this the philosophy and the importance of *tasawwuf* as developing the inner self of man to its best perfection becomes intelligible. Apart from his unfolding of the significance of the different epochs of sufism, Shah Wali-u Allah’s description of its practices is also considerable. He talks about various practices of the tariqah like obedience (*tā'ī*), *dhikr* (words used in remembering awarad, a routine programme of *dhikr* and reading the Qur'an), *marāqaba* (Allah's watching) *karāmah* (miracles granted to awliya) which lead a sufi to realise his chief objective - *mashahidah-i haq* (observing of the ultimate truth through mystic vision). His treatment to these issues has won both the positive and the negative responses from the quarters of scholars.

Obedience (*tā'ī*) to the Shari'ah is thought by the Shah, as the primary requisite for the path of sufism. By obedience to the *Shari'ah*, he means adherence to the

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100. Infra., P.
beliefs and the regulations of Islam. Here the salik (the traveller in the mystical path) is obliged to follow them on the model of the Companions (Sahabah), the Tabi’un, the Taba Tabi’un. Wali-u Allah cautions of following the controversial interpretations of the mutakalimun regarding Islamic beliefs and simultaneously suggests the salik to avoid indulging into the intricacies of tanazulat of wahdat al wujūd in his early stage of sulūk. He also holds that if the salik is not well versed in his direct understanding of hadith and the sayings (athār) of the Sahabah, he is bound to follow any of the four sunni schools of law and must guard himself against the ambiguous differences and deductive methods of the later fuqaha. The Shah’s estimate of this practice of the sulūk underlines that he does not bifurcate tasawwuf from the Shari’ah and is as such following the tradition of some renowned Sufi scholars like Junaid Bagdadi, Ghazali, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani and Sirhindī.

Adhkār and awarād are considered by the Shah as the next important pracitces for the salik. Wali-u Allah holds that a good formulation of them is found in the works of al-Ghazali (d.505/1111) Shaykh Abdul Qadir Gilani (d.562/1166) Syed Ali Hamadani (b.714/1314). He emphasises that the best among them are those which

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101. Supra., n.98, P.80
102. Ibid., PP.80-81.
103. Ibid., P.81.
105. Supra, n.103, PP.82-83.
occur in the collection of hadith. Here the salik must guard himself against exhibitionist attitudes (riyā) and receive such adhkār and waḍāʾ if as suggested by his sufi-guide which would endow him with the higher states of his mystical development. These adhkār are the means to keep away the sālikīs mind from the luxuries of the world and fuse in him love for God. The Shah here also attempts to resolve the misunderstanding about Khawaja Naqashbandi’s ignoring of adhkār and the silent dhikr. Regarding the former issue, the Shah believes that it is not true that Khawaja Naqashbandi denied adhkār totally points out is that he approved them within the collections of the hadith. The Khawaja himself could not select the adhkār like those of other sufis and left it upon the sālikīn to follow them as per the hadith of the Prophet (SAWS). Regarding the dhikr-i-jahr and dhikr-i khafi. Wali-u Allah holds that dhikr both loud and silent are uttered by the tongue as per the hadith and to say that it is qalabi (uttering from the heart) is even implicit in the hadith. When it is said that it (dhikr) is qalabi, it means that its impressions do pass from heart to intellect. The significance of dhikr is thus extended rather than ignored by the Naqashbandis.

Furthermore, Wali-u Allah like some other sufi scholars conceives dhikr a central to concentrate on the Essence of God. This grows in the salik states of jadhb (absorption) and wajd (unconsciousness) which in due course of time become a

107. Supra, n.105, PP.84-85.
118. Ibid., P.86.
109. Ibid, P.87 and 96
common quality of his self. According to the Shah, it is the stage where the salik has to undergo maraqaba. He defines it as:

By maraqaba it is meant that the sālik puts his faculty of understanding upon comprehending God. He may collect in his mind the state of separating the soul from the body or put his mind upon such kind of the state so that his intellect, and the other senses become subservient to the main concentration (on Allah). Consequently such states descend upon the sālik that may lead him to witness the mystical secret. The more powerful, in nature, towards witnessing the unseen the sālik is, the more fortunate he becomes ...

This indicates that maraqaba is the contemplation where the sālik surpasses all worldly considerations and becomes in communion with God. He observes, states the Shah, the light of God everywhere. The main objective of the maraqaba is thus made to witness the light of God through the spiritual experience.

The Shah at another place, treats this theme emphasising that it is to follow the process of imagining the aloofness from the worldly objects and survival merely of Necessary Being. He also refers to the significance of the types of

110. Ibid, P.93
111. Ibid, P.97
112. Ibid, PP.89-90
113. Shah Wali-u Allah, Al-Qawl-i Jamīl, P.39 vide Dr. Ubaid Allah Farahi, Tasawwuf, Idarah Tahqiq wa Tasnif-i Islami, Aligarh 2nd.ed. 1922, P.105
maraqaba which distinguish spiritual experience of the one type from that of the other\textsuperscript{114}.

Although maraqaba makes the sālik to witness the light of God from all sides but it is, thinks Wali-u Allah, the last stage of the salik’s journey. According to the Shah after completing the stage of maraqaba the salik has two options available – to follow the course of the sulūk or the jadhīb\textsuperscript{115}. In the former he attains more qualities of ethics like humility, purity and passionate love (ishq). The latter i.e. jadhīb, according to Wali-u Allah, does not mean to absorb absolutely in God’s self and forget all other things including even the observing of the Shari‘ah, but indicates of the state where the veils of determinations of wujūd from the universe to the Essence of God tear away and the salik’s ego comes forward towards the Prime Ego (God)\textsuperscript{116}. The specification of wujud dissolves here to lead the salik in communion with God – the Ultimate Truth. The Shah, however, illustrates the course of jadhīb in terms of tawhid-i fa‘āli, tawhid-i šfāti and tawhid-i dhāti:

a) The tawhid-i fa‘āli (oneness in action) – Here the salik discovers that all movements and actions of the world are through the planning (tadbir) of God. By this ‘discovery the sālik places his full trust in God\textsuperscript{117}. However, it does not,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Supra, n.82, PP.110-101.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., P.109
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid., P.110
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., P.111
\end{itemize}
says Wali-u Allah, mean the cause and the effect are absolutely ignorable but play their own role as per sunnah (natural law) of God. The Shah conceives it as the reality, witnessed through its shadows which are not other than the reflections of the Actual\textsuperscript{118}.

b) The *tawhid-i sifāt-i* (oneness of the Qualities) – This comes to the salik after the *tawhid af'ali* (oneness of action). It indicates that there is a unity (archetypal) in the various forms of phenomena. For example, there are many candles yet all candles have the same wax, many individuals represent one universal man. Similarly to the *sālik*, says the Shah, the actual of all this world is colourless one Being whom the *sālik* experiences spiritually through the forms and objects\textsuperscript{119}.

c) the *tawhid-i dhati* (oneness in the Essence) – This is attained when the *salik* contemplates his own ego and dwells upon it, he achieves through this refineness of the ego’s communion with the essence of Being. Here the *salik’s* experiences, according to Wali-u Allah, reach the state where the veils in between the two egos disappear and the state of *tawhid-i dhati* descend

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., P.112-113.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, PP. 112-113.
upon him like a thunder-bolt. Wali-u Allah calls this the highest stage of jadhb where the sālik is supposed to have a stop in order to experience and apprehend what is revealed to his ego. He is exposed to the ultimate reality as such his course of jadhb becomes complete. Notwithstanding the salik's own estimation of it as tawhid-i wujūd, he, however, retains his normal position (baqā) by observing the stages of the experience as the result of the processes of the spiritual experience - process of zulliyāt, the process of the Qualities of attributes and the process of ego. This in totality becomes the passage from tashbiyah (forms) to tanziyah (transcendance) and most of the walis, according to Wali-u Allah, recognise this course as the crux of their path (tariqah) and if differences do occur among the sufis it is because of the different interpretations being offered to the processes and experiences which come to them.

At this place it is relevant to mention Shah Wali-u Allah's response to tawhid-i Wujūd of Ibn al-'Arabi (d.525/1166) and tawhid-i shuhūdi of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1625). Both the concepts have dominated doctrines in the sufi

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120. Ibid., P.115
121. Ibid., P.116.
122. Ibid., P.117.
123. Ibid., P.117.
124. Ibid., P.118.
thought of the subsequent times. During the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries many controversies arose about these two doctrines.\(^{125}\)

Ibn Arabi’s view-point is that Being (Wujud) is one and the world is His determination (t’ayyun). Multiplicities proceed from the Being yet its unity and ratification does not suffer. Ibn Arabi, thus, sets forth two fundamental postulates in his approach to tawhid. One is that world is the self-revelation (tajali) of God. The second is that the world is one with God in its being, attributes and acts\(^{126}\). Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, on the other hand, views that the real being is one and the world is imaginary (mawhûm) or shadowy (zilli) being. The two are distinct and separate though not unrelated to each other. The world is dependent upon God in its movement, knowledge and power. Sirhindi does not call the objects of the world as a’yan thabitah (determinate forms) but as haqa’iq-i munkinat (the essence of contingent beings)\(^{127}\).

Like some of the other parts of the Muslim world, in India strong controversies have been developed on the two doctrines of tawhid. Those who adhere to wahadat al-wujud oppose Sirhindi’s wahdat shuhûd. Shah Wali-u Allah responds to both the

\(^{125}\) See Yusuf Husain Khan, *Op.Cit.*, PP.


doctrines in a positive way and attempts at the reconciliation of them. Recently M. Abdul Haq Ansari has refuted this attempt of reconciliation of the Shah which to him tends to the revival of wahdat al wujūd. However, many scholars of the modern times namely Muwlan Ubiad Allah Sindhi, Dr. Mir Waliud-Din, Prof. Muhammad Sarwar, Sabbah ud-Din Abdul Rehman and Prof. Zia al Hasan Faruqi, hold that the Shah’s response to the doctrines is that of reconciliatory. These scholars have not elaborated their opinion and as such the position of Wali-u Allah has been left unexplored. An attempt is, therefore, made here to explore this reconciliatory response of the Shah to the two doctrines:

Shah’s concern of reconciliation of the two doctrines of tawhid, wahadat-al wajūd and wahadat al-shuhūd, is well discerned in his Fuyūd al-Haramain


and Maktub-i Madani. The first 'mushahidah' in Fuyud al Haramain describes the Shah's dream wherein he is entrusted by the two groups of tasawwuf with the function to resolve their mutual differences on sufism (of wujud and shuhud). The Shah here categorises knowledge of truth (ilm-i Haq) into two kinds – one which reforms the self and the other does not attempt at this particular reform. To him the two doctrines represent these categories of valid knowledge. Maktub-i Madani is a reply to the letters of Etfendi Ismail Abd Allah al-Rumi al-Madani seeking the reconciliation of the wahdat al wujud and wahdat al shuhud from Shah Wali-u Allah. The Maktub is a clear attempt to harmonise the difference between the two doctrines of tawhid vis-a-vis the wujudi and the shuhudi sufism.

To Wali-u Allah, the wujudis find out the single reality deep into the multipule objects of the world. Though the objects, he states, differ in many ways as do the models made of wax, yet at the root they emanate from one Being – God. The

134. Both the works depict special features of the Shah's sufi thought.
136. The maktub is produced in Shah Wali-u Allah's, Tafhimat-i Illahiyyah, Part II, Majlis Ilmi, Dabhill, 1936, pp. 216-236.
137. It is said that he was Turkish and had met Shah Wali-u Allah in Madina and also settled in Medina.
shuhūdis too, writes the Shah, reach the relationship between ḥādith (contingent) and qadīm and the process of organisation is related to the Attributes of God\textsuperscript{139}. In both the axioms (doctrines) the singular reality i.e. God’s omnipotence, is the focus of the understanding and Wali-u Allah conforms to their being true even at the level of kashf (knowledge through mystical means)\textsuperscript{140}.

Shah Wali-u Allah, however, finds limitations in Ibn Arabi’s term of tanazulāt (determination) and Sirhindi’s haqa’iq al mumkināt (the essence of contingents) for conveying the reality of being (wujūd). He uses wujūd-i munbasit (the universal existence) to comprehend the individibility of wujūd\textsuperscript{141}. To the Shah, the former does not make clear distinction between Being and non-Being and presumptions of the vitiation of God’s transcendance are found in it. In the latter the confusion about the innate attraction towards God is found. Wali-u Allah, in view of the exigency of the times due to the burning controversies on the issue, devotes himself to the revision of the two doctrines in a moderate way. So when he says that wujūd is munbasit he seeks the unity between ‘ayān (ideals) and mujudāt (forms)\textsuperscript{142}. This wujūd-i munbasit pervades over both the ‘determinations’ and the contingents. It is the decent of knowledge and action from God and, in other words, a manifestation of

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, PP. 15-16.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., P.5.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., P.10 (Cf. original version in Tafhimāt Part.II, P.223).
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., P.11
His Attributes. In his concept of *wujūd-i munbasit* the Shah attempts at overcoming the misunderstanding found about the essence and the activities of Being. He writes:

> Since God is one, nothing proceeds from Him except one .... and this one thing is in our view the Universal Existence that flows to everything that exists, or does not exist but God knows that it will exist. The existence is common between all existing beings contrary to the view of philosophers. For there is nothing in the view of true gnostics (*muhaqqiqīn*) except God, and the world is nothing more than the ideas of God subsequently qualified with existence\textsuperscript{143}.

To sum up, Shah Wali-u Allah’s religious thought is characteristic of the sufī mode, coinciding with his theological (*kalāmi*) mode. Notwithstanding its legacy in the history of Islam, he describes the practices of the *tariqah*, like obedience to Allah, recitation of the Qur’an and the names of Allah, *dhikr*, *awrād*, *marāqaba*, *tawajuh*, *jadhb*, *kashf*, in a systematic way. This sufī trend in his thought is in consonance with his adherence to the Shari‘ah. It is based on Islamic principles of *ihṣān*, *tazakiyah*, profound love of God and as such strengthens the individual’s adherence to the Shari‘ah. Richness and perfectness of the personality becomes the chief goal of his life. Throughout his elucidation of this trend in understanding the multiple nature of

religion, his approach is remarkable for its moderateness and reconciliation. His review of the four epochs of the history of tasawwuf, Naqashbanidi's concept of dhikr and reinterpretation of the doctrines of wahdat al wujūd and wahdat al shuhūd is a clear illustration of his reformative and reconciliatory approach to sufism. The attempt at the reconciliation of the two doctrines also implies the direction towards uniting the Muslims at both intellectual and social levels under the prevailing circumstances of the Indian subcontinent.