CHAPTER X

Sheikh Sharf-ud-din Ya'hya Munsiri

Sheikh Sharf-ud-din, a man of great piety and penitence, was a resident of Bihar Sharif. He had developed love towards Sheikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya without meeting him. His burning desire to meet Sheikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya attracted him to Delhi, but alas! Sheikh Nizam-ud-din was no more in this mortal world when Sheikh Sharf-ud-din reached Delhi.

Sheikh Najib-ud-din Firdosi was the eminent saint at that time in Delhi. Sheikh Sharf-ud-din submitted himself at the feet of Sheikh Najib-ud-din. Seeing Sheikh Sharf-ud-din, Shaikh Najib-ud-din uttered; "Oh durvaish, for years together I have been waiting for you. I possess a trust which I have to hand over to you".

Sheikh Sharf-ud-din became the disciple of Sheikh Najib-ud-din and completed his mystical course under his inspired guidance. After that he returned back but before reaching his native place, Munair, he stayed on his way home, in the forests of Agra and absorbed himself in the meditation of God, for a number of years. He died in Bihar Sharif.

Like Sheikh Nasir-ud-din, Sheikh Sharf-ud-din Ya'hya Munsiri too struggled hard against the innovations and misconceptions which were introduced in Islam at that time, and which were sapping its very vitality. Different
sects were appearing in the camp of Islam and they were putting forward baseless arguments and reasonings in favour of current innovations. Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, with the help of his writing, tried his best to refute their arguments and to purify Islam from vulgarities and corruptions.

Shaikh Sharf-ud-din says that there are people who demand the explanations and reasons for the performance of salat. The simple answer to these people, is that every one among the divines, Shaikhs, and mystics has attained the high position only through the performance of salat. Hence, it is only the path of Shari'at through which a man can attain the boons and bounties of God in the world beyond.\(^2\)

He further says that there are people who are labouring under great misconceptions. One of these sects believes that God is independent and absolute; hence He is indifferent to their prayers. They argue that since God is independent of His creatures—indeed the virtuous and vicious actions of His creatures, there is no need of mortification, vigil and penitence.

Such a conception, however, is based on absolute ignorance. It is erroneous to believe that the tasks imposed on the creatures by Shari'at are in any way advantageous to God. The prayers, vigils and penitences performed by the creatures are for the good of the creatures. It is they, and not God, who are benefitted by them. The Quran
categorically says "Whoso death right, it is for his soul and whose death wrong, it is against it". The Qur'an further says, "And whosoever striveth, striveth only for himself, for Lo! Allāh is altogether Independent of (His)creatures."

There is another sect which, on account of their neglect of Šari'at and attractions for sins puts forward the plea that God is all merciful. He will therefore pardon their sins. But these people ignore the fact that if God is merciful, He also severe in punishment. The Qur'an says, "Ask of the children of Israel how many a clear revelation We gave them! He who altereth the grace of Allāh after it hath come unto him (for him), lo! Allāh is severe in punishment."

There is a third sect which tries to eradicate passions and anger through a life of mortification. But it is foolish on their part to think so. The Qur'an and the tradition never preach such things. The only thing which has been emphasized by Šari'at is the sublimation of passions and anger.

A fourth sect advocates the theory of absolute determinism among the masses and tries to take refuge from actions behind this belief. But this sect too is on the wrong path. Man should endeavour to attain his allotted share.

These views bring to light the fact that such sects were gaining ground in the fourteenth century. Later on,
in the fifteenth century, they took the form of full fledged movements.

Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, however, approved of sama' which was a distinctive feature of the chishti order. He like Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya classified sama into three classes: (i) The lawful, (ii) The Unlawful and (iii) The permissible. He has discussed at length each class of sama' and has quoted frequently the views of Al-Ghazzali in his support.

Visiting the graves was also not disapproved by Shaikh Sharf-ud-din. On the contrary, he encouraged people to continue it though he taught them the correct form of this practice. He says, "People should acquire the habit of visiting the grave-yards, and the graves of the saints and the believers, because it carries a great advantage. The visit should, however, be only for the good of the dead men. The visitor should recite the Qur'an and pray to God for the salvation of the departed souls."

Shaikh Sharf-ud-din was an eminent scholar of the fourteenth century. He made a remarkable contribution in the field of mysticism. His 'Maktubat' is very famous in this respect. Shaikh Abdul Haq Dehlawi commenting on 'Maktubat of the Shaikh', writes as follows: "One of the disciples of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din has collected the sayings (Mulfuzat) of the Shaikh. But the Maktubat of the Shaikh..."
contain more subtlety and literary fervour as compared with his mulfuzat.\(^{11}\)

Mukt\(\bar{u}\)bat of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Muna\(\bar{r}\)i once again takes us back to the time of Al-Ghazzali and remind us of the affinities between Indian Muslim saints of the 13th century and Imam Ghazzali. There is a close resemblance of ideas among them regarding gnosis, inspiration, love of God, vision of God, conception of God, nature of soul, freedom of Will and renunciation of the world. Further we find that Shaikh Sharf-ud-din in his Mukt\(\bar{u}\)bat has dealt with almost all the topics on mysticism that were mentioned in Kashf-al-Mahjub.\(^{12}\) The main conceptions of the thought of the Shaikh are as follows: (i) Shari\(\bar{a}\)t, Tariqat and Haqiqat; (ii) Conception of God; (iii) Knowledge of God; (iv) The love of God; (v) The Vision of God, (vi) The nature of soul; (vii) Freedom of Will; (viii) World; (ix) Renunciation of the World.

(i) Shari\(\bar{a}\)t, Tariqat and Haqiqat

Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Muna\(\bar{r}\)i was a theologian as well as mystic. He has discussed Shari\(\bar{a}\)t, Tariqat and Haqiqat but has laid great emphasis on Shari\(\bar{a}\)t. Shari\(\bar{a}\)t, according to him, is the basis of Tariqat and Tariqat springs from Shari\(\bar{a}\)t.

Shari\(\bar{a}\)t is the path prescribed by the prophets. It includes the unity of God (Tawhid), cleanliness (Tah\(\bar{a}\)rat),
prayer (Salat), fasting, Jahad, Huj, Zakat and other commandments and injunctions of the Sharia.

Tariqat is the search for the inner meaning of these laws of Sharia. It is to purify one's own actions and to keep oneself aloof from evils such as hypocrisy, lusts, and other things which pollute the heart. For example, to purify one's clothes from the impurities is Sharia, but to purify the heart from human infirmities is Tariqat.

Sharia is the external aspect of the human conduct but Tariqat is its internal aspect. There is a close affinity between these two aspects and their ultimate basis is the same. To quote an example, for the acceptance of faith and belief in Tawhid both profession from lips and consent of the heart are indispensable.

As regards the relation between Haqiqat and Sharia "There is no God but God" (There is no God but God) is Haqiqat, while "Muhammad is the apostle of God" is Sharia. There is only an apparent difference between the two. In this connection Shaikh Sharf-ud-din criticises some erroneous views.

According to some scholars and theologians there is absolutely no difference between Sharia and Haqiqat. Sharia itself is Haqiqat. But this is not acceptable to Shaikh Sharf-ud-din.

Again, some misguided people (heretics) separate Sharia from Haqiqat. They assert that man who
attains reality becomes free from the obligations of Shariat. But this belief is also condemned by Shaikh Sharf-ud-din. He believes that what has remained constant from the time of Adam is Haqīqat, i.e., the gnosis of God. But what has kept changing from time to time is Shariat. In other words Haqīqat refers to the ultimate goal and Shariat refers to the means of attaining it. Shariat is the body and Haqīqat is the soul. Just as a living man cannot exist without body and soul, similarly, for the completion of faith both Shariat and Haqīqat are essential.

Salāt is the backbone of Shariat, because all other laws of Shariat are included in it. Salāt comprehends the spirit of fasts, Haj, Zakāt and Jehād. (to fight against oppression).

To be independent of food is one of the qualities of God, hence a man who observes fast, he adorns himself with the virtue of God and obeys the commandment of God. (Adorn yourself with the virtues of God)

Worship (قُبُو) is of two kinds; one is the physical worship and the other is the worship through offering some property or wealth. Zakāt is the worship of the latter kind and has superiority over the physical worship.

Haj includes the characteristics of both kinds of worship. To perform Haj is as if to visit God. All such writings of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din indicate that he was a staunch theologian.
(ii) **Conception of God**

Shaikh Sharf-ud-din was against the pantheistic conception of God. His notion of God was that of a personal God. God, according to him, is the creator and the whole universe is His creation.

He says that at the perfect stage of Tawhid, a mystic attains the gnosis of God. His soul is enlightened by the grace of God. Due to the enlightenment of his inner self, he does not perceive the existence of any thing except God. As in the bright light of the sun the dust particles become invisible, in like manner, at this stage, only the existence of God remains before him. But the invisibility of the particles does not mean that these particles become non-existent. In the same way at the perfect stage of Tawhid neither the creatures become the creator, nor they become non-existent, but due to self absorption in God, one forgets the existence of every thing except God.

He tries to explain it by another analogy. When a man is absorbed in the perception of his own beauty in a mirror, he does not see the mirror but sees only his beauty. It does not mean that the mirror has disappeared or it has been converted into the image or the beauty has been transformed into mirror; mirror and beauty remain at their own places. Similarly, even after the attainment of highest stage of Tawhid, there remains a difference between the creator and the creature.
In one sense, Shaikh Sharf-ud-din believes in the union of the creature with the creator. But this union signifies the severance of relations with everything other than God and absorption of one's self in the remembrance of God. In short, Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Munairi believes that God and His creatures are not identical and there is a personal bond between them.

(iii) Knowledge of God

Gnosis (Marifat), says Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, is the essence of man's soul; salvation and immortality of man lie in its attainment. Love of God, the supreme end in this life, and the vision of God, the Summum Bonum are the direct consequences of it.

It is attained by the purification of the heart from human infirmities. This purification leads to love and love begets complete vision. The heart of the individual is just like a mirror. A mystic perceives the grandeur, magnificence and the beauty of God in his own heart. Thus, the perfection of gnosis is based on the purification of the heart. Purification is of two kinds: one is external and the other is internal. Just as prayer (salat) can not be performed without the purity of the body, in like manner, without the purification of the heart from human infirmities, gnosis can not be attained. Here Shaikh Sharf-ud-din fully agrees with the views of Shaikh Hamid-ud-din Sufi.
The knowledge of God includes the knowledge of the creator and His creation, including the universe and the soul. Soundness of reason and careful regard for evidence are the means to gnosis, but not the cause thereof; the sole cause is God's will, His favour and guidance (Hidayat); for without His guidance reason is blind.

Reason, says caliph Abu-Dakr, is helpless in itself. It does not lead a man on the right path. The function of reason is to see every thing either as a substance or as an attribute; it deals with a corporeal bodies in time and space, or with the attributes of such bodies. A man who tries to know God with the aid of intellect, either applies these attributes to God or affirms that God does not exist. In both these cases he is an infidel. Thus, for gnosis, reason is helpless.

Similar ideas have been put forward by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

Again, gnosis relating to the soul and the universe, i.e. relating to the works of God, is a means to knowledge of God. It too is attained either through His works, i.e. empirically, or through inspiration (Kashf); but the latter method is very subtle and defies an easy acquisition. This view of the Shaikh is in conformity with the views of Imam Al-Ghazzali.
Knowledge of the Creation

Quran says, "We shall show them our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth." \[23\]

God has manifested His power in the universe. Being and Not-Being of a thing and the changes in the universe indicate the power of God. The whole creation is subdued, powerless, and determined. Thus the nature of creation indicates that the creator is all powerful and absolutely free. He is one, eternal and possesses the eternal attributes. \[35\]

Tradition says, "One who comes to cognize himself, cognizes God"; "One who comes to cognize himself with humiliation, cognizes God with Honour"; "One who comes to cognize himself as a creature, cognizes God as the Creator".

Man is the model of the universe. As universe includes this world, the after world and the 'Arṣāt (intervals of time), in the same way man is composed of three things: (i) soul (Rūḥ), (ii) Lower soul (nafs) and (iii) body (jābd). Heaven has been symbolized by the 'soul of the individual', Hell by the nafs and 'Arṣāt by the calamities, jealousy, savagery and other states of man. As water, earth, air, and firze are the four elements in the universe, in the same way, phlegm, blood, yellow bile and
black bile are four elements in the human body.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, we find that the human body is the microcosm representing the macrocosm.

Self cognizance means to cognize the changes in the self, i.e., the disease and the cure, sleep and waking, pleasure and pain, life and death, etc. All these changes manifest the intelligence, and power of God, as these changes, in the universe and the body, are not under the power of things in which they occur. Thus, there must be some omnipotent being who brings about these changes, and that being is God.

\textit{Gnosis (Marifat)}: Gnosis is not acquired. It is based absolutely on the grace of God. It is not the fruit of one’s search but it is bestowed on man by God. Imam Al-Ghazzali quotes the Qur’anic verse, “That is the bounty of Allah; which He giveth unto whom He will.”\textsuperscript{37}

Divine light dawns in the heart of a mystic without any cause and condition; this is what is called inspiration (Kashf). Inspiration, in the real sense, is the lifting up of the veil which lies between the creature and the creator.\textsuperscript{38} Man, having inspiration, grasps the things which he was not able to grasp before. Inspiration is of different kinds:

(i) The first kind of inspiration is “\textit{فروض}” or “\textit{كشیب}” (Theoretical inspiration). In “\textit{فروض}” the intellectual vision has been widened and a man knows the secrets of the
rational world. Most of the intellectuals and philosophers are confined to this kashf. But it is not the real end of the inspiration.

(ii) After traversing the path of 'a man attains 'In different sorts of divine light dawn in the heart of the seeker.

(iii) After 'a man attains 'In a man becomes aware of the secrets of the creation and the existence of the created objects.

(iv) After 'a man attains the 'In a man becomes aware of the secrets of soul. He at this stage, knows the place of 'Heaven and Hell'. He sees the angels, hears their voices and talks to them.

When the human soul becomes absolutely pure of all the human infirmities; the endless divine world is revealed to him. He rises above the limitations of time and space, and knows the past and the future alike. After surpassing the limitations of the worldly time and space, the seeker attains the inspiration of the time and space of the after world.

The veils of the directions have been lifted up, he sees his back side as he sees his front side. The Prophet says, "As I see the front side, so I see the back side".

The kashf karāmat (miracles) occurs at this stage. A man having miraculous power walks on water, fire, and air. But karāmat is uncertain. It can be attained both by the believers and the non-believers; it comes after
purification of the heart through mortification. Prophet Muhammad asked Ibn ʿAbdā, "What do you see?" He answered, "I see 'Arāf on water". The Prophet replied, "That 'Arāf is the Arāf of Iblis". It has been said about Dājjāl that he will kill a man and then he will bring him to life again. So, the true karamat, which is the by-product of can be attained by believers only.

Man is the mirror of the Essence and the Attributes of God. When this mirror (heart of man) is clear and bright, God according to His own will, allows any one of His attributes to be reflected in it. If God's attribute of life is reflected in it, man becomes like Khidr and Ilyās who have no death.39

There are two opinions about gnosis (Marifat): (i) Dialecticians assert that one knows God as He should be known. They argue that if one has not the complete knowledge of God, it means that some part of God is unknown. But there can not be any division in God. Therefore, complete knowledge of God is possible.

Sūfis and some other sects of dialecticians affirm that God can not be cognized as He should be cognized. One cognizes God only to that extent which is necessary for his salvation.40 Intellect is helpless in cognizing God, because gnosis is the gift of God. One attains perfection in gnosis in proportion to his own spiritual perfection.
But human beings are imperfect; hence the perfect knowledge of God is not possible for an imperfect being. 41  Shaikh Sharf-ud-din agrees with the views of Sufis and rejects the views of the Dialecticians.

The doctrine of Tawhid is the central point of gnosis, says Shaikh Sharf-ud-din. He further says that Tawhid consists in realizing that there is only one cause, which is the cause of all creation. Tawhid, in his opinion, is of four grades:

(i) The first grade of Tawhid consists in the profession of belief in God, only by the tongue and not by the heart. When one says, "There is no good except the one God," one's heart may remain unaffected and there may not arise any emotion in it. This is the Tawhid of heretics and it is of no use.

(ii) In the second grade of Tawhid a man utters the formula 'There is no god, except the one God', not merely from the lips but there is also an affirmation by the heart. This sort of belief is the belief of the common people and the dialecticians. The common people come to this belief only by imitation. But the dialecticians attain this sort of belief with the aid of rational arguments.

(iii) In the third grade of Tawhid a man intuitively apprehends the truth of the above mentioned formula. The divine light dawns in the heart of the man and the reality of the
many becomes distinct from the reality of the One. He sees only one cause as the final cause.

(iv) The fourth grade of Tawhid is connected with the psychological aspect of the individual. At this stage the seeker after truth sees only one reality. Every thing is affected from his view and there remains for him only one, all comprehensive and all absorbing reality. The individuality of one's own self has altogether been forgotten. This stage in the sufi terminology is called the stage of 'fanā' (annihilation).

In the third grade of Tawhid, though the seeker perceives only one cause, yet the perception of one cause itself implies duality; there is the cause and the effect following from the cause. Without effect, cause is a meaningless term. But in the fourth grade of Tawhid, the seeker does not see any existence, except the existence of God. He even forgets his own existence.

Here a doubt can be raised as to how does one overlook the diversity and see only the unity. It can be explained by an analogy. As in the bright light of the sun, the particles of dust become invisible, in the same way, after the attainment of divine light, the seeker of God completely absorbs himself in God. Due to his deep absorption he even forgets the existence of his own self. This does not mean that things other than God have actually been annihilated or he (the mystic) himself has become non-existent or he has become one with God; but it simply means that he
does not see any thing except God. And 'To be non-existent' is different from 'not to see'.

In this sensual world, these four grades of Tawhid can be symbolized by a nut. The first grade of Tawhid is the first layer of the nut. The second grade of Tawhid is the second layer of the nut. The third grade of Tawhid is the brain of the nut. And the fourth grade of Tawhid is the brain of the nut possessing oil. There is a lot of difference between one grade of Tawhid and another grade of it. Al-Ghazzālī has also discussed the doctrine of Tawhid and there is a close resemblance between the views of Al-Ghazzālī and those of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din. (iv) Love of God

Love of God, says Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, remains in veil for human beings. Man attains it with the obedience to shari'āt. Quran says, "Say (O, Muhammad to mankind): if ye love Allah, follow me". Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, here, is in close agreement with Shaikh Nasir-ud-din.

Gnosis serves as the seed for the love of God. The intensity of the love is based on its perfection. The Prophet has mentioned the following as a mark of love; When God loves his creatures, He subjects them to distress and when the lovers stand firm in love, He makes them 'Iftānā. The meaning of 'Iftānā' is that God matches
the wealth, family members and the children of His lover. When the lover patiently bears these sufferings, God makes him 'Ijtābā'. After 'Ijtābā' the lover attains the stage of 'Istāfā'. The meaning of Ijtābā is that the grace of God dawns upon the lover without his efforts and endeavour. And at the stage of 'Istafā' the heart of the lover becomes free from all doubt. There are three chief characteristics of the friend of God: (1) He prefers the word of God to all sorts of words. (ii) He prefers the Vision of God to all forms of Vision. (iii) He prefers the devotion to God to all other devotions.

According to Shaikh Junaid, the mark of love (of God) is to feel pleasure in the obedience of God. A lover (of God) does not consider the obedience of God as a burden upon him.

Etymologically the word love (Muḥabbat) has been derived from 'Hubbā' (seed). The place of 'Hubbā' is under the ground, and the place of love is in the human heart, when the seed has been sown into the ground it is immune from rain, heat and cold. At due time, the plant comes out of the seed and that plant grows and puts forth flowers and fruits. In like manner, when a lover stands firm in the love of God, the presence and the absence (of the beloved), hardships and calamities, ease and comforts, union and separation do not affect him.
According to some dialecticians, the love of God is only a hearsay. Had it not been mentioned in the Qur'an and the traditions, it would have been difficult to grasp it on the rational basis. Hence, they affirm the love of God, believe in it but they hesitate in practising it.

Love, according to some scholars and divines, is the inclination of the self. It refers to desire, wish and intimacy. These are physical qualities and hence, they are not applicable to God. So the love of the creatures for God is nothing but the obedience to God. It is the quality of the human heart. Man respects God and seeks His pleasure. He becomes restless in quest of His vision and always absorbs himself in His remembrance. And love of God for His creatures is His guidance and His grace. God grants the lover innumerable boons. He rewards him both in this world and in the hereafter. He makes him free from the fear of the punishment of Hell and elevates him to higher positions and sublime states. He turns his heart away from every thing other than Him.

But Shaikh Shafuddin Yahya Munaiti differs from these views. He says that as one creature loves another creature, in the same way, it is permissible that the creatures should love God. The only difference between the two is that the love of God is free from all sorts of sexual relations. But love of God can not be apprehended
with the aid of intellect. It is beyond the ken of imagination and understanding. Love is of two kinds:

(i) — It is the inclination of the self. There is a sexual enjoyment in it for the lover and the beloved and it involves the contact of the lover with his beloved.

(ii) — This love is the love of the attributes of God. The lover of God rests in one of the attributes of His beloved (God).

Shahkhs differ with regard to the nature of love. Some of them affirm that the creatures have love (Ishq) towards God but God cannot have any love towards His creatures. They argue that love (Ishq) is a quality of prohibition (Surah) of the lover from his beloved. Thus the creatures may be prohibited from God but God cannot be prohibited from His creatures. Therefore, it is possible for a creature to have love for God, but not vice-versa.

But others object to this view. They do not believe in the possibility of love towards God. They argue that love is to surpass the limit but God is unlimited. They further say that love can be formed only after perceiving the object. But God can not be perceived in this world with the waking eye. Therefore love (Ishq) with God is not possible.

But again it has been objected to by a third group. They assert that every thing has its own extremity.
When the thing attains that extremity decay begins and the name changes. For example a plant proceeds towards its extremity. Extremity for the plant is to give fruits and flowers. After attaining that stage, the plant begins to dry. The same thing happens to human beings. The extreme point in the growth of a man is his manhood. After manhood decay sets in and old age comes.

The same is true to love. Attachment to God in the heart of a lover, begins at first with the perception of His beauty. This attachment increases at every moment and proceeds towards its perfection. When the lover attains the highest point of love, he becomes free from lusts and sensual desires, and independent of union and separation, nearness and distance, pleasure and pain. He does not rely upon himself but completely relies on God. And this is the stage where the love changes itself into cosmic emotion. Shaikh Shariq-ad-din agrees with this group.

He further says that love (Ishq) can not be attained with the help of imagination and intellect; it can only be attained with inspiration. The divine light dawns in the heart of the lover. It runs like an electric current through the body. It brings light to eyes, hearing to ears, and quickness to action. 49

A lover of God has no fixed destination. He does not find rest in his love. The author or Khair-al-Mahjub writes that God is not limited in space but the lover of God is limited in space; and he can not surpass this limit. Hence, there is permanent pain in the heart of the
lover of God on account of the separation from God. Even in the next world, the lover of God will not attain rest; because God has unlimited beauty and the lover of God will crave for the attainment of that beauty. 50

Fear (Khauf) and hope (Raja) are like the sun and shadow for the creatures. As sun and shadow are essential for the ripeness of a fruit, in the same way 'Khauf' and 'Raja' are necessary for the spiritual development of the human beings. In Raja (hope) the creature should be confident of the mercy of God. If he commits a sin equal to the sins of all the creatures, and it has been announced that only one person will go to heaven, he should hope that he will be that person. And in 'Khauf' a man should tremble at the thought of majestic power of God. If he performs good actions equal to the virtuous actions of all the creatures and it has been announced that only one person will go to hell, he should apprehend that he may be that person. 51

(V) Vision of God

Man will enjoy vision of God in the heaven, says Shaikh Sharif-ud-din Yahya Munairi. Had there been no promise of vision of God in the heaven, no saint would have talked about it. 52 But Vision of God, is not the compensation for any action of the individual, it absolutely depends on the grace of God. It can not be acquired with
man's own effort. Here Shaikh Sharf-ad-din is in close agreement with the thought of all the chishti saints. (VI) Nature of Soul

People differ with regard to their views about soul. This disagreement is clear even from the different names such as jism (body) johar (substance) and 'Arz (attributes) which have been attributed to soul by different groups of thinkers. It has inevitably led to a divergence of views with regard to the nature of soul.

Soul, (Ruh) according to most of the Christian theologians, is eternal. Some philosophers also support this view. The followers of tradition admit the existence of soul but they do not say anything about the essence and nature of soul. Divines and jurists, says Khwaja Junaid, are unanimous on the point that God informed the creatures about the existence of soul. God says, "People ask thee (Prophet Muhammad) about soul". Say, "Soul is the commandment of God". Thus, soul belongs to both 'Alam-i-Khalq and 'Alam-i-Amr and because it belongs to 'Alam-i-Khalq, therefore it is created.

But what is soul? From where has it come? God has said nothing about these things. Therefore, nothing can be said about the nature and essence of soul. These questions are subtle and delicate. Human mind is unable to answer them. That is why God too has withheld explanation."
Nafs (Lower soul) is something other than soul. Critics have formed different opinions about it. A group of people says that nafs like soul is identical with human heart. Others assert that nafs like life, is the attribute of human body. But both agree on the point that good and bad actions flow from nafs. Nafs may be of two kinds: It may be virtuous or vicious. The vicious qualities of nafs such as miserliness, jealousy, hatred and anger can be removed only with mortification.

Dil (Heart) is like the treasury of the king. The treasury gets its worth from its contents. For instance if there are jewels in the treasury, the treasury is valuable; but if there is grass and straw in the treasury, it has no value at all. In the same way the greatness of heart lies in its attaining the 'love of God'. The treasure of the Heaven consists in the bounties of God but the treasure of the heart is the love of God. Therefore, the heart possesses the love of God is more valuable than the heaven. Heaven is guarded by the angels but the heart is guarded by God Himself.56

Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya has elaborately dealt with the nature of soul, nafs and Qulb and there is a close resemblance between the views of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din and those of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Mumiri.57
(VII) Freedom of Will

Some people affirm that the fate of mankind has been sealed from the very beginning. Whether a man performs good actions or bad actions has been determined beforehand in the womb of the mother—way, even prior to it. There is no change in it later on. Therefore a man's action has no place in shaping his destiny.

This view is erroneous, says Shaikh Sharf-ud-din. Man should endeavour in the way of God. As there are conditions for good health and affluence, in the same way fortune and misfortune have some conditions. For example, if a man is ill and does not take medicine he will not be cured. In like manner man can not attain good health without taking nutritious diet. In the same way without knowledge and gnosis, salvation of man is not possible.

The worst disease of the heart is lust and passion. Hence it is but essential to keep the heart free from lust and passion. But this does not mean that sensual desires should be rooted out entirely from the heart, as one section believes. The sensual desires should only be subdued. For example, a dog and a horse are necessary for hunting, but they should be trained; in the same way, anger and sensual desires are necessary for knowledge and love of God but they should be sublimated and subdued by mortification.
When the companions of the Prophet asked the Prophet if they should believe in fate and should abstain from actions, the Prophet answered, "Do not withdraw yourselves from actions, because if you have good fortune in store for you, your action will bring that fortune to you". As the life and the death of the individual depend on his taking or not taking food, in the same way the good fortune and the bad fortune of man depend on his obedience or disobedience to God.

A man who has been destined to die from hunger, is also checked from taking food by God. In the same way, if good fortune has been ordained for a man, his heart will be illumined with the divine light, so that he will believe in Tawhid. He will be inspired to mortification, so that he may ward off the evil qualities. As has been said in the Qur'an, "And whosoever it is Allāh's will to guide, He expandeth his bosom unto the Surrender (Al-Islām)". But man who believes that actions are of no use because good fortune and bad fortune are pre-ordained, is an unfortunate man.

Those statements of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din unquestionably show that God has imposed some limitation on the individual, and there is no change in it; because God says, "There is no change in the word of God." But the individual is free within his limited sphere. He has
been awarded both the good and the bad qualities. Now it is the business of man either to develop his good qualities or to be dominated by his bad qualities. The same determined freedom has been favoured by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din and Shaikh Nasir-ud-din. 64

(VIII) World

World, says Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Mumairi, is that which is not for the sake of God. The Prophet says that any thing which comes under the category of the world, is cursed. Things can be divided into three categories:

(i) A thing is world both in form and meaning if it is not used for the sake of God. This is the source of all evils. A man who indulges in it, does not care for God.

(ii) A thing, though in its form and meaning may not appear as world, yet if there is worldly intention behind it, it also comes under the category of world, i.e., 'thought' (Fikr), remembrance (of God) and the opposition of the lower soul. Apparently they do not come under the category of the world. But if one seeks knowledge only to gain position, reputation and honour, absorbs himself in the remembrance of God only to appear pious in the eyes of people, and opposes the lower soul only to be estimated as a devotee by the general masses, each of these things comes under the category of the world and is to be condemned.
(iii) Sometimes a thing apparently comes under the category of the world, but the intention behind it, is noble, that thing is not world in reality. For example, a man takes food, but the intention behind it is to gather strength so that he may pray to God; it does not come under the category of the world. In the same way, a man marries a woman, so that he may have a son, who may utter, "There is no God but God, Muhammad is the apostle of God" or a man gathers wealth so that he may not be helpless and powerless before mankind and he may be free for the worship of God; such things do not come under the category of the world. According to the Shariat a man who accumulates wealth for self-praise and pride, is the enemy of God, but if he accumulates wealth to be free from dependence on mankind, he is the friend of God. 65

These statements of Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Munairi clearly show that any thing which is not for the sake of God, is world, but if it is for God, it does not come under this category, and this view of the Shaikh is in accordance with the view of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. 66

IX Renunciation of the World

For the spiritual development of the individual it is but necessary to renounce the world, states Shaikh Sharf-ud-din Yahya Munairi. He further says that prayer itself is uncertain without the renunciation of the
world because the heart can seek only one thing at a time; hence the love of the world and the devotion to God can not go side by side. There is a wide difference between the two. If a man is externally absorbed in the world but internally tries to be absorbed in prayer and devotion, it would be very difficult for him.

The world and the after world are on extremes like east and west. If a man proceeds towards the east, he becomes farther and farther away from the west. In the same way, if a man entangles himself in this world, it is very difficult for him to attain comfort in the after world. According to Abu-Darda, the world and the after world and the prayer and trade can not go side by side.67 But Umar, the caliph says that he succeeded in combining the world and the after world, and it was due to divine help. Thus, according to Shaikh Sharf-ud-din it is only the grace of God that enables a man to attain the world and the after world both.

The renunciation of the world has great importance. According to the Prophet, a short prayer of two rikat of the man who renounces the world, is better than the sum total of the prayers of all the pious men, till the day of judgement. Hence it is the duty of the devotee to renounce the world and to understand the meaning of abstinence. Abstinence, according to Divines, is of two
One is that which is under the power of man and the other one is beyond his power. Abstinence which is under the power of man includes three things:

(i) A devotee renounces the search of the things which he does not possess from the world.

(ii) He renounces the things which he possesses from the world.

(iii) He internally intends to renounce the world.

But the abstinence which is beyond the power of man is to renounce the world completely. After attaining the abstinence which is under the power of a devotee he attains the abstinence which is beyond his power, by the grace of God. According to the saints, abstinence is the basis of all the goodness. It is the root of all the honours and high position in the way of God.

Love of the world, says Khwaja Fadal bin 'Ayaz is the cause of all the vices and the renunciation of the world is the source of all the goodness.