insistence on the interconnection between Shari'at, tariqat, and haqiqat (truth), among other things.\(^{62}\)

One similarity in approach can be seen regarding how Shari'at, tariqat, and haqiqat were considered interconnected. Sufis believed in three types of Islamic knowledge: 'ilm-i-mar'ifat (knowledge of God), 'ilm-i-Shari'at (knowledge from God), and 'ilm-i-tariqat (knowledge with God).\(^{63}\) The first is the result of Divine Guidance, the second is the Sacred Law as revealed, and the third is the knowledge of the 'stations' (maqāmat) and 'paths' (tariqat) of sulāk. They affirmed that mar'ifat is unsound without acceptance of the Law (Shari'at) and the Law is not practised rightly until the 'stations' are manifested. As Seyyed H. Nasr suggests, Sufis viewed Islam as a circle, the centre of which formed the haqiqat (Ultimate Truth). Its many radii signify the different tariqahs and the circumference denotes the Shari'at. Individual Muslims are like points on the circumference, whose totality constitutes the ummah (Muslim community). Thus, to reach the Ultimate Truth (haqiqat), one has to stand firm on the circumference (Shari'at) and then follow the path (tariqat).\(^{64}\) Although the privileged knowledge (mar'ifat) had always been the leitmotif of a Sufi's life, Sufis argued that such knowledge could not be attained without a proper grounding in religious texts and exoteric learning as imparted by the 'ulama.\(^{65}\)

'Ali Hujwiri, one of the earliest writers on Sufism, believed that Shari'at and haqiqat were never divided since 'Law is a branch of the Truth: knowledge of God is Truth and obedience to His command is Law.'\(^{66}\) He considered it heretical to believe that once Truth is revealed, the Law is abolished, for 'Shari'at cannot possibly be maintained without the existence of haqiqat and haqiqat cannot be maintained without the

observance of Shari'at... Law without the Truth is ostentation, and the Truth without the Law is hypocrisy.\(^{67}\)

In the eighteenth century, Shâh Kalimullah wrote in a similar tone about the intimate connection between Shari'at, haqiqat, and tariqat:

The pinnacle of haqiqat is tariqat, and the apex of tariqat is Shari'at. Anyone who keeps his eye on the directives of Shari'at will reach the heights of tariqat and haqiqat. The sign of attaining the high stages of haqiqat is this that daily the salah becomes more firm in following the directions of Shari'at.\(^{68}\)

He thus considered Shari'at to be the yardstick for measuring progression or regression on the spiritual path.\(^{69}\) From his letters it becomes clear that every attempt was made to inculcate these values in his disciples. His advice to anyone who received khilafat was to mould his life according to the Sunnat of the Prophet.\(^{70}\) He instructed his disciples to embellish their exteriors by Shari'at, and their hearts by passion for God ('ishq-i-ilāh).

The 'neo-Sufis' also did not claim to break from the established norms of their predecessors, since doing so would have undermined their authority. Bernd Radtke points out that 'neo-Sufis', including Ahmad bin Idris (d. 1837), did not make a complete break with the traditional understanding of law, and rightly concludes that the claims to that effect 'display a lack of understanding of the character and development of classical Sufism which is required before one can proceed to undertake correct historical classification.'\(^{72}\) What 'neo-Sufis' invariably critiqued were customs brought in from other cultures, ideas that had no firm basis in the Qur'ān or Traditions, and those mystics who believed that they had

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\(^{63}\) Hujwiri, Kashful-mahjub, p. 16.

\(^{64}\) Nasr, The Heart of Islam, p. 60.

\(^{65}\) As 'Ali Hujwiri puts it, 'Rejection of the Law (Shari'at) is heresy, and rejection of the Truth (mar'ifat) is infidelity and polytheism': Hujwiri, Kashful-mahjub, p. 139.

\(^{66}\) Hujwiri, Kashful-mahjub, p. 140.

\(^{67}\) Hujwiri, Kashful-mahjub, pp. 383-4; an interesting anecdote narrated by Hujwiri makes this point clear. Abu Ya'qub Bustami went to meet a man reputed to be a wali who lived in another town, where he saw him spit on the floor of the mosque. He turned back and said to himself, 'A saint must keep the religious law in order that God may keep him in his spiritual state (hāl). Had this man [truly] been a wali his respect for the mosque would have prevented him from spitting on the floor...': Hujwiri, Kashful-mahjub, pp. 217-18.

\(^{68}\) Kalimullah, Maktubāt-i-kalim, letter no. 110, p. 85.

\(^{69}\) Kalimullah, Maktubāt-i-kalim, letter nos. 95, p. 83; and 125.

\(^{70}\) Kalimullah, Maktubāt-i-kalim, letter no. 96, p. 85.

\(^{71}\) Kalimullah, Maktubāt-i-kalim, letter no. 128, p. 104.

\(^{72}\) Radtke, 'Jihād and Neo-Sufism', p. 920.
reached a stage in their journey where they were no longer bound by the injunctions of Shari'at.\textsuperscript{73}

The ‘neo-Sufis’ made Ibn Taimiyya their guide and followed his footsteps in creating an atmosphere of Sufi reform. Although historians disagree over the extent of Ibn Taimiyya’s influence on India,\textsuperscript{74} the reformers were indeed following the very principles that he had outlined. Shāh Waliullāh, one of the most influential figures of eighteenth century, was deeply influenced by Ibn Taimiyya’s arguments. In his magnum opus Hujjatullāh al-balīgha and other works, he at times writes almost verbatim from Ibn Taimiyya. In a letter written to Shaikh Mu‘īn Sindhist, an ‘ālim of Thatta, he defends Ibn Taimiyya’s position on several issues. In the same letter, he expresses his great admiration for him when he writes:

There is not a single issue on which he [Ibn Taimiyya] does not have support or evidence from Qurān, Sunnat or traditions of Companions (kitāb-o-sunnat wa aṣār-i-salaf). It is difficult to find a man of his stature in the entire world and none has the audacity to come close to him in the force of his speech and writing. Those who persecuted and harassed him did not even possess one-tenth of his scholarly excellence.\textsuperscript{75}

The adherents of this ‘reformed’ Sufism criticized the practices and customs of those whom they called Sūfīya-i-ḵāhān (‘false Sufis’) or Sūfīya-i-jāhil (‘ignorant Sufis’). Those who called themselves Sufis but did not possess adequate knowledge of Qurān and Traditions were dubbed ‘thieves and robbers of religion’.\textsuperscript{76} Shāh Waliullāh warned against religious teachers who attracted people to themselves but failed to attract them towards Qurān and Sunnat. In a similar tone, Shāh Kāmilullāh censured those Sufis who did not follow Shari’at in their lives as ‘mulhid’ (heretical) and instructed his disciples.

\textsuperscript{73} At times described as be-Shar’a or ‘lawless’ Sufis.

\textsuperscript{74} Nizami, ‘The Impact of Ibn Taimiyya on South Asia’, pp. 120-49. For a different view, see Islam, Sufism in South Asia, pp. 292-5.


These infidels who have parted with Shari’āt, who talk like heretics just to fill their stomachs and taunt religious people for being unrealistic, deserve to be punished. Their taṣāhīf [monotheism, belief in the oneness of God] is futile. They are away from the truth. One should not sit in the company of such foolish people.\textsuperscript{77}

Another Naqshbandī Sūfī, Nāsir ‘Andalib, declared the state reached by qurb-ul-farādā’iz (nearness attained through legally prescribed actions) as the much higher kind of nearness, for this was the state of the Prophet (which is higher than that of mystics).\textsuperscript{78}

In ‘neo-Sufism’ there was little place for Sufi shrines. Mirzā Mazhar instructed his successors in his will that ‘unnecessary and unlawful things should be avoided in the last rites after my death’ and said that ‘a shop should not be erected on my grave for I was far from these things in my life’.\textsuperscript{79} Although visiting shrines was not forbidden, the lawfulness of such visits depended on the intention of the doer. Shāh Waliullāh made this clear by stating:

All those who go to Ajmer or to the tomb of Sālār Maśūd or similar places for something they want from there—that is a sin greater than murder or adultery. Is he not like someone who worships hand-made things or like those who called upon al-Lāt and al-Uzza?\textsuperscript{80} I cannot declare them clearly infidels because there is no text from the Law giver in this peculiar case.\textsuperscript{81}

This passage bears striking resemblance to the verdict of a twentieth-century Chishti Sūfī and scholar, Māulānā Asrāf ‘Alī Thānawī, on the same issue. He once wrote in a letter:

\textsuperscript{77} Kāmilullāh, Maktūbāt-i-kalimī, letter no. 110, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{78} Nāsir ‘Andalib, Nāla-i-‘andalib (Bhopal, AH 1310), vol. 1, p. 272. At another place he writes.

\textsuperscript{79} Abul Khaīr Muhammad (ed.), Khayālat-i-ṣayyibāt (Muradabad, 1891), p. 95; Nāsirullāh Bahrkāchī, Ma‘ālāti-i-mazharī (Kanpur, AH 1275), p. 114.

\textsuperscript{80} Pre-Islamic Arab deities revered by the Arabs as daughters of God. See Qurān, 53, pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{81} Shāh Waliullāh, Tāfṣīrat-i-Ilāhīya, vol. 2, p. 35.
Ignorant and misguided people have vitiated the atmosphere of the shrines of the baṣṣūrūn-i-dīn (the venerable men of religion). They indulge in polytheism and deviance from religion, and label those who try to deter them as opponents of the great Sūfis. Take Ajmer for example: it is the resting place of Hazrat Mu'in-ud-dīn, a great shaykh who all his life served Islam. He preached the unity of God, and intrepidly fought against the infidels. At the present time his devotees and those who claim to adore him are sunk in shirk (polytheism) and bid'at. These so-called devotees and followers of the Shaykh [Mu'in-ud-dīn Chishti] have turned the shrine into a playhouse and a centre of evil and sinful activities [biq-i-fujūr]. Fear of God has vanished from their hearts [...]. These misguided people also bring a bad name to the great Sūfis. Not to speak of the common lot, even educated people are tending to become involved in such polytheistic and heretical activities.¹²

Thus in the eighteenth century, religious scholars and shaykhīs put increasing emphasis on Sharī'at as the yardstick for the acceptability of any action. But doing so, they did not claim to break with their past; rather they were building upon the rich traditions of classical Sūfī scholars. Special attention was given in Sūfī literature to emphasize the close connections that Sufism has with Islamic Law and Traditions. While this trend was the result of the close networking of 'ulamā' and Sūfis, multiple affiliations led to new changes in the outlook of Sūfī orders and brought them to a common platform.

Adjustment in Sūfī Thought and Relations among the Sūfī Orders

The intermingling of Sūfī orders promoted respect and understanding among them and provided a platform from which a mystic could comprehend and appreciate the teachings of other šaykhīs. The extent of this accommodativeness can be gauged by studying the views of different Sūfī orders on some of the more contentious matters such as sāmā' assemblies and adherence to the tawḥīd-i-wujūd doctrine.

The Issue Relating to Sūfī Audition Assemblies

Sāmā' performances have been the most popular expression of mystical experience and at the same time the most contentious practice in Sufism.

Sāmā' (literally, hearing, audition) occasionally involved the use of musical instruments and raqs (rhythmic bodily movements). It was a major target of criticism by the 'ulamā' and also a cause of differences among the Sūfī orders. There were occasions when the 'ulamā had tried to ban the custom with the support of rulers.³³ While the 'ulamā had looked down on the use of musical instruments and rhythmic movements in religious devotional acts, some Sūfī orders like the Naqshbandis followed suit. The defenders of sāmā' were invariably the Chishtis, who saw in it spiritual nourishment and an outlet for religious emotions.

Bruce Lawrence has examined how sāmā' was discussed and its parameters defined in medieval taṣākīrah and maufṣūl. According to him, the primary concerns regarding sāmā' were: a) whether 'listening to music' and 'dancing movement' (raqs) were genuine expressions of mystical states or a form of delectation and sensual pleasure; b) in case of those Sūfī shaykhīs who permitted sāmā' for the elect few, what was the minimal acceptable threshold that Sūfī aspirants should attain prior to participating in sāmā'; c) the guidelines for the conduct of sāmā' gatherings and the manners (adāb) required of participants; and d) the issue of ecstasy (wujūd).³⁴

The classical Sūfī theorists, with the above concerns in mind, evolved certain rules and manners (adāb) for sāmā' and for those who were permitted to take part. It was imperative for any listener to follow these manners.³⁵ Since sāmā' was considered to be a specialized Sufi practice it was commended only for those 'whose hearts had been purified and passions sublimated by mystical discipline'. Novices were often disallowed from attending such assemblies and ecstatic movements were not considered...

³³ We hear of two 'maḥzarā' (meetings to discuss religious questions) held to debate the legality of sāmā' during the reigns of Iltīmāṣ and Ghirāṣ-ud-dīn Tughlaq. For the debate in Iltīmāṣ's time, see 'Abdul Malik 'Isamī, Futūḥ al-as-salām, (ed.) A. S. Usā (Madras, 1948), pp. 117–20. For the discussion during Ghirāṣ-ud-dīn's reign, see Amir Khurd, Siyār-ul-a'dīya (Delhi, AH 1302), pp. 527–31.


³⁵ The eighteenth-century Naqshbandī poet Mīr Dard is reported to have rebuked the Mughal Emperor Shāh 'Alam II for stretching out his legs while attending a sāmā', a posture that was against the prescribed etiquette (adāb): Schimmelman, Pain and Grace, p. 39.

an integral part of listening to sama', but were allowed if they were not willfully induced. Sama' had to be performed under the guidance of a spiritual master, at a place cleared of common people (awām), the singer had to be a respectable person by listening to whom hearts should not deviate towards worldly thoughts, and during the sama' all artificial effort (takalluf) was to be put aside. It was also to be performed not too often so its reverence could be maintained.

In the eighteenth century, Chishti supporters of sama' emphasized that it encourages contemplation and serves a higher devotional purpose. Instead of its outward form, importance should be given to its inner meaning and spiritual purpose, namely to help contemplation of God and escape from materialistic worldliness. Shāh Kallīmullah, though fond of music and sama', discouraged it, believing that mystics of his time did not understand its real significance. He recommended it only to learned and elect disciples and on occasions preferred murāqaba (meditation) over sama'a. His successor Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn believed that sama' should be maintained as authorized by early Chishti masters, and he permitted it only if done according to Chishti traditions—if its purpose was known and if the listener's knowledge (ilm) was preponderant over his feelings (hāl)—so that the listener could remain within the boundaries of Divine commandments and prohibitions. The sama' was thus considered neither good nor bad but something to be judged by its results. This closely reflects the view of an early Sufi, Zun Nūn Miṣrī (d. 861), who believed that sama' is a 'divine influence (wārid-ul-haq) which stirs the heart to seek God', but added, 'those who listen to it spiritually (ha-haq) attain unto God, and those who listen to it sensually (ha-naf) fall into heresy'.

The use of music in such gatherings had also been a key point of contention between Sufi orders. Those who enjoyed music in their assemblies were quick to argue that their listening was not to incite lusts and passions, but for higher spiritual ends. While the Chishtis favoured it, the more 'orthodox' orders such as the Naqshabandis had disallowed it. In the eighteenth century, however, the Naqshbandis softened their criticism and in fact some of the well-known Naqshbandi leaders of Delhi enjoyed listening to sama', considering it helpful at times to overcome spiritual stagnation. Mirzā Mazhar thus used to say, 'Whenever the Chishti influences increase in me, I am attracted towards sama'. He did not involve himself in any controversy about the lawfulness of sama'. For him, sama' was of two types. In the first type which he considered lawful, a person sings beautiful verses with an amazing voice at a particular place which results in sorrow or joy. The second type, he claimed, had been

86 Hujwīrī, Kashf-ol-mahjūb, pp. 416–20 wrote:

Dancing (raj) has no foundation in the religious law of Islam or in the path of Sufism. But since ecstatic movements and the practices of those who endeavour to induce ecstasy (ahl-i-tauwaj) resemble it, some frivolous imitators have indulged in it immoderately and have made it a religion. I have met with a number of common people (awām) who adopted Sufism in the belief that it is this [dancing] and nothing more [...]. Actually it is a state that cannot be explained in words: without experience no knowledge [...]. It is more desirable that beginners (mahbūbd) should not be allowed to attend musical concerts lest their natures become depraved.

87 Hujwīrī, Kashf-ol-mahjūb, p. 419.

88 Kullīmullah, Maktūbāt-i-kaštīm, letter no. 103, p. 93; similar advice was given to 'All Hujwīrī by one of his teachers:

A time will come when the music [sama'] will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The influence of music only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained music has no power. Take care not to accustom yourself to this lest it grow part of your nature and keep you back from higher things.

Hujwīrī, Kashf-ol-mahjūb, p. 171.

89 Kullīmullah, Maktūbāt-i-kaštīm, letter nos. 12, 13, 97, 99, and 103.


91 Hujwīrī, Kashf-ol-mahjūb, p. 404. In a similar way, 'All Hujwīrī likened sama' auditions to the sun which has the capacity to affect things differently: it can burn, illuminate, dissolve, or nurture. He writes [Kashf-ol-mahjūb, p. 406]:

Thus, whatever is heard by penitents augments their contrition and remorse; whatever is heard by longing lovers increases their longing for vision; whatever is heard by those who have certain faith confirms their certainty; whatever is heard by novices verifies their elucidation [of matters which perplex them]; whatever is heard by lovers impels them to cut off all worldly connections; and whatever is heard by the spiritually poor forms a foundation for hopelessness.

92 There had been notable exceptions even among the Chishtis over the use of musical instruments in audition assemblies. Both Naṣīr-u-dīn Chirāgh and Sayyid Gūstā Darāz had disallowed them in sama'.

93 Mir Dārā affirms that his listening to music was not to satisfy his passions. See his Nālā-i-Dārā (Bhopal, AH 1310), p. 7, and Aah-i-sārd, p. 77.

94 Ghulām 'Allī, Maqāmāt-i-mazharī, p. 28.
created by ‘later extremists’ with unnecessary acts (like music and dancing), which were unlawful.\(^95\) Shah Waliullah too permitted sama‘; but he did not allow music to be used in sama‘ assemblies. Mir Dard, although a follower of the Mujaddidi order which had generally opposed the practice, was inclined towards sama‘ and offered a defence of it in his work Hurmat-i-ghina. He studied works on classical Indian music and sang Indian ragas and rāgins. He often gathered singers who performed for him in a prescribed, strict discipline, without any dancing movements.\(^96\) Mir Dard defends his position, saying:

My sama‘ is from God, and God is witness that the singers come of their own accord and sing whenever they want; not that I would call them and would consider it a sort of worship when I listen to them, as others do; but I do not refuse such an act. However, I do not do it myself, and my creed is that of my masters [Naqshbandi tls.]. But since I am imprisoned in this affliction according to the Divine Assent what can I do?\(^97\)

The atmosphere of accommodativeness relating to sama‘ is well illustrated by the fact that whereas in the seventeenth century a Naqshbandi Sufi, Khwaja Muhammad Ma’sum (d. 1668), is said to have urged Aurangzeb to forbid music and sama‘;\(^98\) a century later the foremost Naqshbandi leader Shah Waliullah did not hesitate to organize a sama‘ at his madrasah in honour of Shah Fakhr-ud-Din.\(^99\) It is also important to mark the mutual sensitivity to differences in approach to the issue: a letter written to a disciple of Shah Kalimullah in the Deccan instructs him to refrain from sama‘ as long as Naqshbandi mystics returning from hajj were staying there.\(^100\)

To summarize: what becomes noticeable in the eighteenth century is that while the Naqshbandis tried to accept the auditon assemblies, if performed in a sober fashion, the Chishtis reiterated the regulations put in place by classical Sufi theorists and made sure that the practice remained within the confines of rules and manners generally agreed upon. The intermingling of Sufi orders played a vital role in bringing about this rapprochement. As Chishtis and Naqshbandis were increasingly enrolled in both orders, the former not only became more aware of the Naqshbandi viewpoints on these issues but also appreciated them and tried to reformulate their own attitude accordingly.

**Conflict and Reconciliation between the Sufi Concepts of Tawhid**

On tawhid or Oneness of God, two theories were current in the Sufi circles: Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of wahdat-ul-wujūd and Ahmad Sirhindī's doctrine of wahdat-ul-jawahir. In India, Naqshbandis had mostly accepted the shahādāt proposition and had upheld Sirhindī's criticism against wujūd Sufis. However, in spite of the opposition to wujūd ideas breathing in seventeenth-century India, these ideas remained widely popular, especially in Chishti circles. Sufis under the influence of wujūd ideas often strove to reconcile their spiritual understanding with those of Hindus. Shah Muhibullah, in whom the Chishtis found their greatest defender against the Naqshbandi attacks on Ibn 'Arabi, wrote extensively on the doctrine. His works, particularly the Taswīya, intensified the conflict in the seventeenth century.

The dispute sparked off by the works of Allā-ud-daula Simnān in Persia and Ahmad Sirhindī in India had attracted the attention of scholars in the Hijaz, Transoxiana, and Turkey;\(^101\) even a French traveller to India, Francois Bernier, did not fail to notice it.\(^102\) The accommodating approach inherent in wujūd doctrines cost Dārā Shikoh his life, and Emperor Aurangzeb, under the influence of Naqshbandis, strove to restrict the spread of such ideas. There was also a growing opposition.

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\(^95\) Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), Kalimāt-i-taṣayyub, p. 35; Shaih Muhammad Nizām-ud-Dīn Auliya' had discussed four kinds of sama‘: halāl (fully permissible), hayrām (unlawful), maktārī (permitted, but with distaste), and muddāk (allowable). His discussion was based on the orientation of listeners, their age, moral qualities, the contents of the verses being sung, and other such factors: Khan, Siyāṣ-ul-Auliya', pp. 491–2.

\(^96\) Cited in A. Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 185.

\(^97\) Mir Dard, Nātā-i-Dard, Nābī no. 38, as cited in Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, p. 380.

\(^98\) Muhammad Hāshim Kishmīnī, Zubdat-ul-maqāmāt (Lucknow, AH 1307), pp. 381–2; Ghulam Sarwar, Khazinat-ul-Ashīfa, pp. 639–42; Rahmān 'All, Taqirah-ī-ulama-i-kind, p. 470.


\(^100\) Kāmīnūlāh, Maktubāt-i-kaltūn, letter no. 49, p. 55.

\(^101\) Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India (Delhi, 1978), vol. 2, ch. 6.

writes that the greatest achievement of Shāh Waliullāh in this field was that all discussions after his synthesis of the doctrines were carried on in a sober and subdued manner and debates in the form of divisive controversy were never again revived.\(^{108}\) To start with, Shāh Waliullāh accepted the doctrine of wahdat-ul-wujūd, but avoided the error, regarding the transcendence of God, that he believed the followers of Ibn 'Arabī had fallen into. Instead, he incorporated the transcendental insight of Sirhindī into the wujūdī system of Ibn 'Arabī. He called his thesoposy wahdat-ul-wujūd of the hikmat (‘philosopher Sufī’), to distinguish it from that of other Sūfīs.\(^{109}\)

After Shāh Waliullāh, a noticeable change can be seen in the attitude of the Naqshbandī leadership in Delhi towards wujūdī ideas. Although works continued to be written in favour of one or the other doctrine, the debate never reached the polemical levels of the previous century. Regarding Ibn 'Arabī, Mirzā Mazhar wrote in a letter:

The bigots have written many a tractsie in the condemnation of Shaikh-Akbar [Ibn 'Arabī] [...]. The rejection of tausīd-i-wujūd by Mujaddīd [Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī] is not like the rejection of it by the 'ulamā-i-zāhir. Contrary to [the latter], he affirms and upholds as true the stage which the followers of the principle of wahdat-ul-wujūd, have in view. But he holds that the ultimate stage is still higher [...].\(^{110}\)

He thus disagreed with the 'ulamā who criticized Ibn 'Arabī or his doctrines and pointed out that even a critic like Sirhindī did not reject the wujūdī doctrine in that way. In another letter, he clarified the controversial sections of Mujaddīd's letters which had roused much criticism in the preceding century. In it, he showed a more accommodating approach to controversial mystic ideas and argued that a Sūfī’s life and utterances should be judged according to the Qur'ān and Sunnat:

\(^{108}\) Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, The Mujaddīd's Conception of Tawhīd (Delhi, 1976), p. 144.


\(^{110}\) Abu Khair Muhammad (ed.), Kalimat-i-tayyibat, letter no. 5, pp. 18–19; Ghalam 'Ali, Maqāmat-i-mazhari, letter no. 5, pp. 92–3; see letter numbers 3 and 6 in Kalimat-i-tayyibat and 19 in Maqāmat-i-mazhari for Mirzā Mazhar's views on the two doctrines.
The right thing to do is first of all to examine the character and antecedents of the person who makes unfamiliar statements. If he follows the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and his speech and actions when weighed on the scales of Shar'ah turn out to be correct, his allegorical statements should be interpreted in the light of his unambiguous statements, or left to God, considering the person who made them was beyond help. Sometimes when the Sufis are overpowered by ecstasy words fail them, and often thoughts and ideas are so intermixed with the Sufic revelations that they seem palpably wrong. As a mu'tahid is not accused for making errors of judgement, the Sufi who makes statements which seem wrong also could be excused for his utterances. Sometimes, lack of adequate knowledge of Sufic terminology also raises difficulties. In these circumstances, it is imperative that no objections be raised against Sufis, especially against an outstanding sage such as the Mujaddid whose teachings are based on the Sunnah. The main reason for the agitation against the Mujaddid is that since the days of Muhir-ud-din Ibn 'Arabi up to the time of the Mujaddid, the people's minds have been so preoccupied with the ideas of wahdat-ul-wujud that they are not ready to listen to any other theory. In fact the Mujaddid's basis for the refutation of wahdat-ul-wujud differs radically from that of the 'ulama, for the Mujaddid is in agreement with the basics of the wujud theories. The only difference is that according to the Mujaddid, the true spiritual goal is higher than what is imagined by the followers of wahdat-ul-wujud. To the Mujaddid, it is impossible to identify the Divine Essence with the creation, as is done by the wujudists.111

A similar attitude can be seen in the works of other Naqshbandis as well. Nāsir 'Andalīb avoided any discussion on these differences though he supported shukrā' ideas. His successor Mir Dard had a firm conviction that perfect Sufis do not make any distinction between the two doctrines and those who blame the wujudists for associating the created beings with God are ignorant of the way Sufis view Reality.112 To avoid this controversy, Dard substituted for the word wujud the word 'nur' (light), on the ground that the former does not occur in the Qur'an or in Hadith collections.113

The Naqshbandis also realized that wujud ideas had sunk such deep roots in Indo-Muslim Sufism that they could not be stamped out. In

111 Ghulām 'Ali, Maqāmāt-i-mazhabī, letter no. 5.
112 Mir Dard, Ilm-ul-kitāb (Delhi, AH 1308), p. 106.
113 Dard, Ilm-ul-kitāb, p. 107.
ul-wujūd and Maulānā Asghar ‘Ali Thānwī expounded a conciliatory approach in his al-Tambīh al-t arbī fī tanzīkh Ḭn ‘Arabī. Some of the ‘ul amā also contributed to the dialogue. Maulānā Fazī-Ḥaq (d. 1856) of Khairābād, regarded as the Imām-i-falsafah and a premier philosopher of the Khairābādī School of Philosophy in India, also wrote a treatise in this connection.\(^{120}\)

Relations among Sufi Orders

Although Sufi scholars differed ideologically, upheld different mystic philosophies, and had different views on ritual practices, it is noteworthy that their relations remained more or less cordial during the eighteenth century. This was particularly true for the religious leadership in Delhi. Shah Waliullāh’s synthesis of the wujūdī and shuhūdī doctrines was rejected by Mirzā Mazhar, Khwāja ‘Andalib, and Mir Dard. Mirzā Mazhar, a firm believer in wahdat-ush-shuhūd, instructed his disciple Mauvi Ghulām Yāhā to write a rejoinder titled Kalimāt-ul-haq, refuting Shah Waliullāh’s arguments.\(^{121}\) About the same time, Shāh Rauf-ud-dīn, son of Shāh Waliullāh, wrote Dāmgh-ul-bāstīl as a rebuttal of Ghulām Yāhā’s work.\(^{122}\) In spite of these differences, Mirzā Mazhar had a great admiration for Shāh Waliullāh’s interpretation of the moral and religious values of Islam and his rank as a mystic. He once declared:

Hazrat Shāh Waliullāh Muḥaddīs has given a novel explanation of tarāqūt and is an authority on ma ṣāfīt and knows the subtleties of learning. He has all the knowledge that is possessed by the greatest ‘ulamā. Like him few have passed among the Sūfīs, who have explained with novelty both exoteric and esoteric knowledge.\(^{123}\)


\(^{120}\) Faruqi, The Mujaddid’s Conception of Tawhīd, p. 114, n.1. For biographical details, see Rahmān ‘Ali, Tazkira-i-‘ulamā-i-khind, pp. 382–4; Faqr Muhammad Ḥelamī, Hadāsqa-ul-ḥanafiyā (Lucknow, 1866), p. 480.

\(^{121}\) Shāh Waliullāh, Farsāt-ul wahdat-ul-wujūd wa’l shuhūd; p. 7; Shāh Waliullāh, Taḥfīmāt-i-lāhīya, vol. 2, pp. 56–7, 261–71; Yāhā, Kalimāt-ul-haq.

\(^{122}\) Rauf-ud-dīn, Dāmgh-ul-bāstīl.


In a letter, Shāh Waliullāh reiterated this gesture by writing:

There is none equal to Mazhar either in Delhi or in any other city in the country. One who has a desire to attain spiritual perfection must go to Mazhar.\(^{124}\)

To cite a couple more instances: Shāh Fakhrī (d. 1751), a Chishti Sūfī from Allahabad and a firm believer in wujūdī philosophy, was respected by Mirzā Mazhar, who is reported to have said: ‘although I consider myself better than many elects of the day, yet I feel humbled before Shāh Fakhrī’.\(^{125}\) Shāh Fakhrī-ud-dīn, who is known to have led the funeral prayer over Mirzā Mazhar,\(^{126}\) had cordial relations with Shāh Waliullāh, though they differed ideologically. Shāh Waliullāh used to organize sama’ in Madrasah-i-Rahimī in his honour, and when Shāh Fakhrī-ud-dīn desired music to accompany the sama’, the venue was shifted to a nearby house.\(^{127}\) In order to avoid a clash with the Naqshbandis and the ‘ulamā, Shāh Kalimullāh once instructed his disciple Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn, who practised zikr-i-jāḥr (loud zikr) in the company of 200–300 disciples in a mosque, to stop doing so as ‘the sama’ stress that performance of supererogatory prayer is superior to that of zikr-i-jāḥr, and if a crowd indulges in the latter in a mosque, the supererogatory prayers of other people are disturbed’.\(^{128}\) This mutual respect among the Sūfīs became a hallmark of eighteenth-century Indian Sufism.

The eighteenth century thus stands out in the history of Indo-Muslim mysticism as a period of growing closeness among Sufi orders, resulting in a better understanding and appreciation of each other’s mystic heritage and a concomitant rapprochement at ideological and institutional levels. The uncertain and volatile political situation led both sama’ and Sūfīs to reconsider their differences and come to a common platform. For the ‘ulamā, the Mughal Empire and successor states had provided patronage through revenue-free grants, through appointment to posts and mansabs of importance, through positions such as qāzs, sadrs,

\(^{124}\) Ghulām ‘Allī, Maqāmāt-i-mazhāri, p. 30; Bahābārtī, Maṣūmat-i-mazhāri, p. 133. Some letters are also available in Muhammad Abūl Khāir (ed.), Kalimāt-i-tayyībāt, letter nos. 1–4.


\(^{126}\) Ghāzī-ud-dīn Khān, Maqāmāt-i-fakhriyah, p. 11.


\(^{128}\) Kalimullāh, Mafṣūrat-i-kalimī, letter nos. 6 and 99, pp. 13 and 90.
Muslim political power appeared unrealistic. It was partly because of this view that the religious leaders insisted on providing nashat (moral counselling) and both ulama and Sufis emerged as moral tutors for their followers. They were eager to maintain the political superiority of Muslim dynasties, which could secure the enforcement of religious law and also buttress their own position as religious leaders.

The Expanding Role of a Sufi Shaikh

These trends created a new perception of Sufism and redefined the role and position of a Sufi master in his community, notably as spiritual leader and social reformer. In his religious role, a Sufi master was now more of a 'directing and teaching' shaikh, whose function was not to mediate between disciple and God, but to guide the disciple to draw him closer to God. Sufis and ulama took up the task of defending traditional religious learning, and madrasahs with strong local roots were set up to revive the traditional sciences. These madrasahs ensured a continuous support for religious leadership and served to establish and sustain contact with the masses. Later, with the introduction of lithographic printing, they

129 The Sufis of the eighteenth century were largely unperturbed by the presence of the British until the political occupation of North India began, and they became apprehensive of the growing power of firangs. There is very little mention of British officers in their correspondence until the last quarter of the eighteenth century and most attention is paid to rebuilding the Mughal Empire under a just ruler who should govern according to the Islamic law. One early reference comes from the post-Buxar period (1764) when Shah Ahmad burg wrote to his nephew Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz: 'And the news that the firangi-kafirs have defeated the army of Shuja-ud-Daula deeply grieved us. We pray to God for help. This is the time of calamities and we destitute are weak and honourless. Like the weather worms, whoever comes tramples us under his feet.' Cited in F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints', p. 156. Mirza Mazhar was also grieved by the death of his disciple Mir Kallt at the hands of firangs and the desolation of Amroha. He once wrote to his disciple Qazi Sanullah about the expected arrival of Mir Muhammad Qasim with a firangi named 'Bahelor' (Buehler): Mirza Mazhar, Maktaba-e-Miraz-Mazhar, (ed.) Abdul Razzaq Qureshi, (Urdu transl.) Muhammad Umar (Bombay, 1966), letter nos. 127 and 117. Apart from such infrequent references, it seems that both Shah Waliullah and Mirza Mazhar were mostly engrossed in internal politics and considered Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats as a greater challenge at the time.

130 The Chishtis believed in the dictum, 'As you are, so shall be your rulers': Hamid Qalandar, Khair-ul-majalis, (ed.) K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1959), p. 52. Even a nineteenth-century Chishti Sufi, Shaiq Muhammad Sulaiman of Taunsa (d. 1850), declared that 'your actions are your rulers'. Cited in K. A. Nizami, 'Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State', Islamic Culture (1948–50), p. 68. This view prevailed among the Naqsbandis also. Shah Abul Khair (d. 1923), a successor of Mirza Mazhar, lamented while reorganizing the Delhi khanaqah: 'Nowadays the Muslims are afflicted with trouble. This is all the result of our bad actions [bad a'mal]. The impact of this is such that I cannot explain it [...].' Cited in Warren Fusfeld, 'Naqsbandi Sufism and Reformist Islam', Journal of Asian and African Studies 18, nos. 3–4 (1983), p. 249.

131 Most Sufis from the time of Shah Waliullah were critical of the existing Mughal system, and looked to bring about a 'reformed' Mughal rule. Their political objective was the re-establishment of a 'Muslim State' according to their definition of it; one in which zahir tahliaf (outer caliphate) and batin tahliaf (inner caliphate) would work simultaneously. Khalifa-i-zahir meant taking responsibility for political matters and governing according to Sunnat and Shari'a. Khalifa-i-batin meant providing religious instructions and maintaining religious morals in the society. The ideal government was one where both functions could be carried out simultaneously; F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints', p. 156.
discovered new ways of expanding their constituency and spreading their views. As well as providing spiritual training, a šaykh was also expected to be a ‘saviour and a guide’ of his disciple’s worldly affairs. Their assistance was sought in everyday matters, including illness, family problems, financial difficulties, education, or recommendations. In fact, as Claudia Liebeskind suggested, only those orders that were responsive to these needs succeeded in being relevant to their followers. Letter collections of the period cover a wide range of issues and some are indeed of a personal nature. A very common piece of advice is that disciples should write regularly to their mentors about their spiritual and material needs. The following reflection of Shâh Fakhru’ud-dîn is a telling statement of the expanding role of Sûfis in this period:

Different people come to me with different intentions and purposes. Some come to me believing that I am an ‘alîm, others consider me a Sûfî, and some understand me as an alchemist (kimiyagî); while other people like to meet me because of my disposition. There are also those who come here with concerns about their actions and with worries regarding ‘arâdî [daily round of prayer formulæ]. Hence, I treat them according to their expectations and confidence in me. Though not the primary motive, missionary purpose (tablîgh) can also be seen in some of the Sûfî master’s letters. Shâh Kalîmullâh repeatedly urged his disciples to spread the ‘Word of God’ (kalîmût-ul-Haq/kalîmullâh) as he believed this to be the work of the prophets (kârî-î-buzurg), which would earn the pleasure of God. He wrote to a disciple:

Strive so that the sceptre of Islam should become wide and the number of the praisers of God abundant. Prosperity in the world will not help one to be forgiven in the world to come. Strive to divert the attention of the worldly people to the world to come. The effects of these trends can be noticed in other fields as well: more importance was now attached to the ethical values of Sufism and its doctrinal principles. This led to the revival of a doctrine-based Sufism, putting greater emphasis on external law and Hadîs. Sufism was understood as not just an assemblage of customary observances but as a way to purify the self (nafû) and to perfect morality. For Shâh Kalîmullâh dervîshî meant suffering the trials and tribulations of people and being persevering and patient with them. His mission was to lead people toward worldly and religious good (faîz) and to sacrifice his own peace and comfort to theirs. At a time when religious polemics were rampant, he advised a khâtîfah:

Leaving them all to their work and, following the policy of sulh kûl [peace to all], you should devote yourself to the people whatever comes to you.

Mirzâ Mazhar once advised Qâzî Sanûlîlâh Pânîpâtî that if he was too brutally frank in his criticism and upheld the Law in such a way as to offend people, then he was failing the mystic path and the teachings of his prîs.140

132 Claudia Liebeskind, Piety on Its Knees, p. 4.
133 Many of Mirzâ Mazhar’s letters include recommendations for disciples seeking jobs; others (like those written to Qâzî Sanûlîlâh of Pânîpât) are of a personal nature and highlight their intimacy. These letters have been edited and published by A. R. Quraşî (Bombay, 1966) and Khalîq Anjum (Delhi, 1989). See also, Muhammad Abûl Khâir (ed.), Kalîmât-i-taşyîhî, letter nos. 24, 37, 44, 48, 49, and 50; Ghulâm Mustâfa Khan (ed.), Liwâ’îh khanîqîh-i-mazhûrîyâ (Karachi, 1972), letter no. 3, pp. 52–3; Bahürîcî, MÂ mûlâyîh-i-mazhârî, p. 110.
134 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter no. 7.
135 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter nos. 6, 21, 28, 39, 48, 54, 74, 80, and 115.
136 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter no. 76, p. 70. This does not mean that conversion was a primary objective for Sufis: rather, they were more concerned to preach the message of Islam to as many people as possible. It was suspension and the force of their personal example that, at times, did work converts. For the attitude of medieval Sufis towards conversion, see Bruce Lawrence, ‘Early Indo-Muslim Saints and Conversion’, in Islam in Asia, (ed.) Yohanan Friedmann (Jerusalem, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 109–45. For a different view, see Razîûddîn Àqîlî, ‘Conversion in Chishti Sufi Literature (13th–14th centuries)’, The Indian Historical Review 24, nos. 1–2, (1997–8), pp. 70–94.
137 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter no. 5, pp. 11–12. Shâîkh Nizâm-ud-dîn Àuliyâ’ was known as tabîb-i-dîl (healer of the heart) and is referred to as such by Amir Khursîd.
138 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter no. 75, p. 69.
139 Kalîmullâh, Maktûbât-i-kalîmî, letter no. 80, pp. 72–3; Umar, Islam in Northern India, p. 55.
140 Muhammad Abûl Khâir (ed.), Kalîmât-i-taşyîhî, letter no. 77.
Rather than solitary retreat, living among the people and working for their moral uplift was considered the best form of worship. Shāh Kālmūllāh advised Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn to settle near Burhanpur because 'it is the place by which people of Hindustān and the Deccan travel to and fro and it is also a place through which the pilgrims going to hajj pass and most of the dervishes reside in the city'. There was a planned expansion of Śūfī networks in suburban centres around Delhi. Disciples came from varied strata of society, irrespective of creed, religion, or status, and in fact any person looking for spiritual solace was welcomed at the khāṅqāhs, particularly those of the Chishtis. Shāh Kālmūllāh writes:

Ours and your [Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn's] work is not to collect tankās [coins], cash and goods; rather, our aim is to collect hearts. So that we may collect the hearts of the genuine and real lovers from the distant and neighbouring parts of the world. What is manifest in my eye, I should imitate in them. It may have an effect on any one of them.\(^{142}\)

The author of Māṣir-ul-kirām praised Shāh Kālmūllāh for addressing the problems of both the rich and poor sections of society.\(^{143}\) Shāh Kālmūllāh, in a letter written to Shāh Nizāmuddin, which came to be known as ‘dastār-ul-umāl’ ('Rules of Conduct'), advises that the more people visit, the more one should thank God and regard their visits as a blessing from the Almighty.\(^{144}\)

Thus, during the eighteenth century the challenges faced by many traditional South Asian Śūfī orders in the new socio-political circumstances created fresh opportunities and incentives for them. Their role was no longer restricted to providing spiritual solace; rather, along with the ‘ʿulamā’, they found themselves teaching in madrasahs, addressing

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\(^{141}\) Kālmūllāh, Maktābāt-i-kalimāt, letter no. 61, pp. 61–2.

\(^{142}\) Kālmūllāh, Maktābāt-i-kalimāt, letter no. 34, p. 41.


\(^{144}\) However, this did not mean that anybody could become a khālīfah. This was considered a post of responsibility and due importance was given to their appointment. The letters of Shāh Kālmūllāh reveal that he had very strict rules for granting khilāfat: Kālmūllāh, Maktābāt-i-kalimāt, letter nos. 18, 39, 47, and 96. His khālīfahs were urged not to allow a new disciple to give instructions in mysticism and to grant khilāfat only to the learned ones: Kālmūllāh, Maktābāt-i-kalimāt, letter no. 96; Fakhrī, Fakhr-ut-talibin, pp. 30, 42.
in these traditions when the order moved from Awadh to Amroha, but certain elements of change can also be noticed. New mystic trends which emerged among the Chishti and Naqshbandi leadership at Delhi were increasingly influencing the surrounding qasbahs. As the order came into greater contact with these trends, it had to respond by either disassociating itself from some of its early traditions or by defending and explaining them.

CHAPTER 2

Trends in Eighteenth-Century Sufism in North India

The eighteenth century was marked by trends that emerged within the Sufi tradition and brought about consequential changes in the religious milieu of qasbahs in north India. These trends stimulated a new understanding of Sufism, brought different orders closer to each other, and encouraged a rapprochement on a number of intellectually difficult issues of Sufism. In almost every branch of Muslim religious thought scholars produced a growing body of writings; the cleavage between Sufi and `ulam traditions was minimized, their differences subdued, with both consciously striving to enlarge their constituencies. The century also witnessed, not only in India but worldwide, the emergence of so-called ‘neo-Sufi’ responses to the political challenges faced by the Islamic world and as a result of introspective reform within Sufi orders. There was rethinking, defence and, at times, a rejection of certain Sufi practices. Under such conditions, when ijtihād was increasingly being favoured, the challenge for many Sufi orders was to adhere to their spiritual heritage and traditions and to present their mystic doctrines as legally permissible to religious scholars.
As well as for the Chishtis, Delhi became the focal point of the expanding Naqshbandi order. Pre-eminent among the Naqshbandis was Shâh Waliullah who, while claiming a connection with every mystic order, remained firm on Naqshbandi traditions. His prolific writings covered all branches of Islamic learning, such as Qur'ânic exegesis, Hadis, fiqh (jurisprudence), kalâm (scholastic theology), muqaddar (debates), tasawwuf (Sufism), tasvir (biographies), poetry, and religious and political correspondence. Two well-known Sufi poets, Khwâja Nasîr 'Andalîb (d. 1759) and his son and successor Mir Dard (d. 1785), also resided in Delhi.  

6 Khwâja Nâsir 'Andalîb was the khalîf of Khwâja Muhammad Zubair (d. 1740) and connected through him to the Mujaddidi branch of Shâh Ahmad Sirhindî. He was also the founder of the Tariqat-i-Muhammadia (not to be confused with the movement of Siyayrd Ahmad) and his work Nâl-i-'andalîb inspired his son and successor Mir Dard, a famous Sufi writer and poet who popularized his father's silsilah mainly through his writings: Khwâja Mir Dard, 'Dard-i-dil' (Bhopal, AH 1310), p. 188. For a study of his mystical thought, see Yusuf Husain, Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture (Bombay, 1959); and A. Schimmel, Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth Century Muslim India (Leiden, 1976).


8 Even in the late seventeenth century, two disciples of Khwâja Ma'sûm (d. 1668, a descendant of Shâh Ahmad Sirhindî), Jay Allah Jürjânî (d. 1704) and Murâd al-Bukhârî (d. 1720), spread the order in Mecca and in Damascus and Istanbul respectively. Murâd's travels covered the Hijaz, Bukhara, Samarqand,

In analysing some of these eighteenth-century trends, this chapter highlights their significance for the Muslim religious leadership and their impact on regional and local Sûfī institutions.  

1 Eighteenth-century Delhi saw the resurgence of many Sûfî orders, including the Chishti-Nizâmi, Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, and the Naqshbandi-Mazharî. It was in this period that Shâh Khâtûn (d. 1729) gave the Chishtî-Nizâmi order a centralized leadership, while it expanded into neighbouring areas, particularly the Punjab.  

2 Under him and his successor Shâh Fakhr-ud-dîn (d. 1784), Delhi became a major centre of Chishtî-Nizâmi activity. For his role in its expansion, Shâh Fakhr-ud-dîn came to be hailed as a mujaddidi (renewer) of the Chishtî-Nizâmi branch.  

3 From Delhi, his disciples, led by Maulâna Nur Muhammad (d. 1791), spread to qasabhs and towns such as Taunsa, Ahmadrup, Chachran, Makhad, Jalalpur, Sialy, Golah, Mahar, Rampur, Bareilly, Jaipur, and Ajmer.  

4 Another successor of Shâh Khâtûn, Shâh Nizâm-ud-dîn (d. 1730), after initial training in Delhi, left for the Deccan where he achieved considerable success and popularity. There, his presence attracted a large attendance of people from all quarters, as attested by his biographer Khwâja Kâmâr Khan.  

5 His settling at Aurangabad in Deccan gave an impetus to the order not seen for three centuries (that is, since the death of Saiyid Gesû Darâz in 1422).

6 At those Sufi institutions operating in rural areas unaffected by the reformist trends, the pluralist elements of late medieval Sufism continued, though not without a strict condemnation from the higher echelons of Sufism. Some refused to be cowed by the reformist pressure and continued their 'unreformed' customs while others chose to revise their practices to avoid criticism. For instance, see the varied responses of the Sufi establishments in Awadh during this period by C. Liebeschkind, Piety on Its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times (New Delhi, 1998); and Munawwar Alam, 'Religion and Politics in Awadh Society: 17th and Early 18th c.', in Islam and Indian Regions, (eds) A. Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Ave (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 321-49.


9 Haji Najm-ud-dîn, Manâqib-ul-mahbûbîn (Rampur, AH 1312), pp. 105-6; also see Nizami, Tarîkh-i-ma'shûkh-i-chishtî, vol. 5, p. 203.

10 Khwâja Kâmâr Khan, Ahsan-ush-shama'il (MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh), fol. 67a; also: Najm-ud-dîn, Manâqib-ul-mahbûbîn, p. 47.
Muhammad Murtaza al-Zābīdī (d. 1791) studied at the Madrasah-Rahimia in Delhi and travelled to Yemen and Cairo, where he became a well-known scholar of Hadīs. As noticed by John Voll, ‘He joined together the Neo-Sufism of Shah WaliAllah in India, the Naqshbandiyyah ideas that had developed in both India and the Arabian Peninsula, and the Khalwatiyyah inspired Neo-Sufism of the eastern Mediterranean.’ 9 Perhaps the most consequential spread was of the Khālidī branch of the Naqshbandi order. Its originator, Maulānā Khālid-al-Baghdādī (d. 1826), was a student of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz of Delhi and a premier khalīfah of Shāh Gulkūm ‘Aī. After his training at the Naqshbandi Khānqahs in India, he returned to Sulaimanīya in 1811. He infused a new strength into the order, gained wide popularity in Baghdad, and finally took up residence in Damascus. The Khālidīs spread in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Rumelia, and became the foremost order in Anatolia. From Mecca, they spread into Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, and the Philippines. 10

Maulānā Khālid was only one of the many disciples who had spent time at the Naqshbandī Khānqahs in India. Shāh Gulkūm ‘Alī’s Khānqah at Delhi was a particular attraction for visitors from Syria, Baghdad, Egypt, China, Ethiopia, Turkistan, Yemen, Qandahar, Ghazni, and other places, and we come across names like Shāhīkh Ahmad ‘Kurdī’ and Saiyid Ismā’il ‘Madan’ among his disciples, indicating the international impact of the order. 11 Some of the disciples, like Shāh Gulkūm, were sent to Bukhara while others worked in Turkistan, Sabzwar, Ghazni, and Constantinople. 12 Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān’s family had close ties with this Khānqah to which his father and elder brother were frequent visitors. 13

An equally important role was played by the growing contact of Indian religious scholars with those in the Hijaz. The emphasis on the study of Hadīs had already revived by the early eighteenth century as a result of this contact, which became more frequent due to improvement in sea transport. As Azīz Ahmad points out, the change in pilgrim route from land to sea had a deep impact on theological developments in British India. 14 The growing insensitiveness towards Persianate elements and a revival of Arab traditions can be linked, to some extent, to this change of route. After the suppression of the Wahhābi movement around the year 1813, Mecca became a centre for Sūfī orders in the Muslim world and hajj pilgrims were often initiated into one or other of these orders.

Besides this transnational expansion and impact of Sūfī orders, the religious scholars at Delhi also created networks and familial links with the ‘ulamā and Sūfīs of neighbouring ġasābāhs. These contacts opened a healthy dialogue between the city and suburban areas and helped in the proliferation of revivalist ideas. The Delhi madrasahs and Khānqahs, which trained a significant number of students from ġasābāhs, helped to spread their understanding of Sufism to local seminaries and hospices. It

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11 According to the account of one of his disciples, ‘Abdul Ra’ūf, people flocked to his Khānqah from Samarqand, Bukhara, Ghazni, Tashkent, Hisar, Qandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Multan, Kashmir, Lahore, Sirhind, Amroha, Sambhal, Bareilly, Rampur Lucknow, Juis, Bahraiha, Gorakhpur, Azimabad, Dacca, Bengal, Hyderabad and Pune’; Ra’ūf Ahmad Mushaddīdī, Durr-ul-ma’ārif (Bareilly, AH 1304), as cited in S. A. A. Rizvi, Shāh ‘Abd al-Azīz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad (Canberra, 1982), pp. 549–50.
12 Mushaddīdī, Durr-ul-ma’ārif, pp. 56, 107, 125; Shāh ‘Abdul Ghanī, Zamīma maqāmāt-i-mazhart (Delhi, AH 1309), p. 3; the list of his disciples is given by Muhammad Umar in his Islam in Northern India During the Eighteenth Century (Delhi, 1993), p. 90, based on Zamīma maqāmāt-i-mazhart and Ghulām Sarwar’s Khazinat-ul-ṣafīya’. See also: Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān, ‘Āṣūr-us-sanadīd, (ed.) Khaliq Anjum (New Delhi, 1990), vol. 2, p. 17.
13 Saiyid Ahmad showered high praise on the Shāh and referred to his Khānqah activities in his Āṣūr-us-sanadīd. See Shāh Gulkūm ‘Alī’s account in Āṣūr-us-sanadīd, pp. 15–21.
is, therefore, necessary to understand the trends that emerged in the Sufi tradition of Delhi and then became widespread among the Waliullahi legatees. It was these trends that influenced the Sābīs during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and led to a significant change in their thought and practice.

These trends may be distinguished into two kinds—those affecting institutional or organizational structure and those affecting the ideas and rationale of Sufism. Different factors (political and intellectual) gave birth to these trends. The general waning of political power in the Islamic world and growing contact with the West was already so evident as to create anxiety and alarm among Muslim intellectuals. While the most extensive of the Islamic empires were witnessing decline, many other parts of the Islamic world were experiencing the expansion of European colonial power. The Sufis, who perceived this as a decline, invariably attributed it to religious failings. For them defective adherence to Islam had led to this situation and could only be remedied by going back to the fundamentals of the religion. As a result, movements of renewal and revival (iḥyā‘-al-dīd) sprang up worldwide. The very global nature of some of these movements, like the spread of reformed Sufi orders (‘neo-Sufism’), and their very similar objectives suggest that the underlying anxiety was shared within the wider Islamic community. Even though the movements in different countries had their peculiar characteristics produced by local conditions and traditions, their broad objective remained the same, namely to strengthen the Muslim community through strict adherence to Scripture and Law. The general flow in the eighteenth-century Indian politics changed the basic assumptions of major Sufi orders vis-à-vis state and society. The fast shrinking of Mughal dominions, with whose fortunes many Muslim religious classes had identified for centuries, created an unprecedented situation, since it was considered vital by the Sufis to have a temporal authority at the centre to endorse traditional values and Islamic principles.

It may be mentioned that in some cases these trends were not new to the eighteenth century. For instance, although it is true that emphasis on Hadīs became a hallmark of this period, there had been significant contributions made by Indo-Muslim Sufis to Hadīs studies even in the preceding centuries. Muhammad Ishaq, a modern scholar, has shown that some of the earliest Sufis such as Bahā’-ud-dīn Zakariyā of Multan, Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā’ of Delhi, and Shafī-ud-dīn Yahyā of Maner studied
Hadis literature and introduced it in their khānqāhs.15 By the sixteenth century, several madrasahs emerged in Agra, Jaunpur, Lucknow, and other places to further the cause of Hadis learning. One of the best known traditionists was Shaikh `Abdul Haq Dihlawi (d. 1642), whose training at Mecca determined his future career. His Khānqāh-i-Qādiriya at Delhi was a seat of Hadis learning and housed a rich library of works that he had procured from Arabia.16 In Deccan, the Bāhrmāni Sultanate became a cymysource for Hadis scholars who came all the way from Egypt and the Hijaz. Indeed, the ports of Gujarat came to be known as bab-i-Makkah (the Gateway to Mecca) because of the frequent contact.17 With the improvement in Western navigation over the eighteenth century, this contact was bound to increase and with it, the stress on Hadis learning. In many khānqāhs of eighteenth-century Delhi, knowledge of Prophetic traditions came to be considered imperative and was taught as a distinct subject alongside tasawwuf.

Trends at the Institutional Level
Sūfī-‘Ulamā Linkages

Religious scholars approach Islam from two directions: the ‘outward’ (zāhir) and the ‘inward’ (ba‘in). The Qur‘ān itself can be understood at different levels of meaning, and it has been explained with different emphasis on the outward (tafsīr) and inward (ta‘wīl) styles of commentary.18 Based roughly on these distinct emphases, there was an established distinction between exoteric and esoteric approaches. The ‘ulamā dedicated to the former had often criticized Sūfis for their free thinking and neglect of the ritual aspects of religion, while the Sūfis, as champions of esoteric learning, had blamed the ‘ulamā for excessive formalism and over-intellectualism. The Sūfis regarded the ‘ulamā as those who knew merely the verbal expression without knowing or experiencing its spiritual reality, and considered themselves to be the possessors of true, real religious knowledge, that is, knowledge not empty of spiritual experience. The separate, even contrasting development, on the one hand, of khānqāhs (Sūfī lodges and teaching institutions) and, on the other, of madrasahs (schools led by ‘ulamā), which prior to the eighteenth century in India had served dissimilar purposes, illustrates this distinction.19 The madrasahs dealt with the zāhir aspects of Islam; they taught the Shari‘at as a way of everyday living, and their scholars were regarded as possessors of knowledge (‘ilm) transmitted through isnāds of Hadis, as people who looked to the Prophet for outward rules of conduct. On the other hand, the Sūfī khānqāhs were concerned with the ba‘in side of Islam and taught the tariqāt (way of spiritual life). They were regarded as possessors of knowledge acquired through personal, spiritual experience and training (ma‘rifat), as people who looked to the Prophet for inward grace. While there are points on which the two traditions coincided, they were differently oriented and produced religious leaders and exemplars with different roles in the community. The authority and prestige of the established posts held by the ‘ulamā were too jealously clung to, to permit any compromise with the Sūfī shaikhs.20

19 This distinction is also indicated in the term ‘ulamā-o-mashā‘īkh, and by the designation ‘ulamā-i-sāhibīn (scholars of the hereafter, i.e., mystics) and ‘ulamā-i-dumā (this-worldly scholars), found frequently in medieval sources.
20 There are perhaps two reasons for this. Firstly, the virtual monopoly of the ‘ulamā as recipients of state benefits could be threatened by the authority of the Sufi masters. Amir Hasan Si‘īzi, the compiler of the famous ma‘āris of Nizāmid-dīn Auliya', held that by virtue of their piety, exemplary life, devotion to God, and service to mankind, the Sufis broke the defences of ‘orthodoxy’ manned by the ‘state-sponsored’ ‘ulamā: Ḥa‘īd-ud-dīn Auliya' (Lucknow, AH 1302), p. 182. Secondly, the spiritual license that Sufism encouraged in its followers was regarded by the ‘ulamā as potentially undermining the outward forms of religious practice. They feared that Sufism would encourage people to neglect or deviate from the zāhir aspects of religion and its obligatory rituals. In some of the heterodox sub-orders, such neglect of religious ordinances was serious enough for the ‘ulamā to become hostile to Sufism in general. For instance, an offshoot of the Juna’ah order, known as Rifais or Gurzmars, carried maces and inflicted wounds on themselves; an offshoot of the Suhrawardi order, called Jalalis, consumed hashish as well as snakes and scorpions, and they allowed sexual promiscuity to their leader; a number of Muslim mystic sects (developed mainly outside India) believed in metempsychosis. Some Sufis, whom Eaton calls Sufis of ‘narcotic exhilaration’, had nothing...
Since the early centuries of Islam, individual attempts had been made to reconcile the two approaches to show them as potentially complementary, rather than contradictory. For example, some tried to prove that Sufi doctrines were not abstruse speculations but a permissible outlet for intellectually gifted Muslims. Imam Ghazali looked for some continuity of purpose between `ulamā'-i-zāhir and `ulamā'-i-bātin by suggesting that the former proceeds from knowledge to action and the latter from action to knowledge. In eighteenth-century India, such attempts at harmonizing the two approaches became recurrent and persistent and the perceived dichotomy between them diminished substantially. Many `ulamā, unable to associate themselves with any strong temporal power, turned to mysticism or at least nurtured a sympathetic tolerance for it. The doctrines of Sufism came to be taught in madrasahs, while Sufis came to respect the superiority of the `ulamā in matters relating to law. This change was brought about in part by the repercussions of British rule on a religious leadership sustained for centuries on imperial patronage. In the words of Francis Robinson:

British rule removed `ulamā from the privileged position in state and society: their revenue-free grants were resumed; their learning was phased out as a requirement for state service; their Sharia law was superceded by Anglo-Muhammadan law in whose working they had no place; their Unani tibb was replaced by bio-medicine etc. ...’

They were compelled to look for alternate means of support, and alternate means to revive their authority in society. To do this they had to root themselves among the people and find new ways of communicating
dissecting religious instructions. One of the ways in which they responded was to establish themselves as popular religious guides. For this, a rapprochement with Sufis proved helpful, since the latter already had active support from the local masses.

The intermingling of Sufi and `alim traditions is best represented by the emergence of joint khangāh-madrasahs, with a resulting emphasis among Sufis on the study of Hadis and fath. There was increasing interaction between madrasahs and khangāhs; in many places `alim and Sufi were housed in the same building, from which they looked after the spiritual and intellectual needs of different sections of Muslim society. Outside India, this trend seems to have begun much earlier. Richard Bulliet draws attention to the establishment of joint Sufi khangāh-madrasah complexes in the eleventh century in the Khurasan region. In North Africa, many zāwiyās (small Sufi establishments) had Qur'an schools and some even developed into educational establishments where Islamic disciplines were taught. Similarly, the tomb-khangāhs of Central Asia served multiple functions.

In the eighteenth century, three renowned madrasahs operated simultaneously in Delhi, and were controlled by leading Sufi scholars of the time. The earliest and probably the most well-known was the Madrasah-i-Rahimia of Shah `Abdul Rahim (d. 1718), which later became associated with his famous son Shah Waliullah and grandson Shah `Abdul `Aziz. It played a major role in propagating the philosophy of the Waliullah school and as a centre for study in exoteric sciences. In this madrasah, study of fath, Hadis, fatāsir (exegesis), tazawwuf, and kalām (theology) were given equal importance. Besides Shah Waliullah, some renowned religious

21 K. A. Nizami, Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century (Delhi, 2002), p. 57.
22 Francis Robinson, `Ulama of South Asia from 1800 to the mid-Twentieth Century', in his Islam, South Asia, and the West (Delhi, 2007), p. 59.
Trends in Eighteenth-Century Sufism in North India

eighteenth-century Delhi, was dedicated to both aspects of Islamic learning and busied himself 'in the work of his khānaqāh and madrasah'.

The students who studied at these madrasahs became masters of both ‘ulāmā-i-bāltini and ‘ulāmā-i-zāhiri and helped to bridge the gap between an ‘ālim and a Sūfī. Sūfīs came to recognize the importance of both branches of Islamic learning, although spiritual training continued to have a higher value in their eyes. A student who displayed a greater interest and aptitude for mysticism was given spiritual training, while one who did not, was given training in Islamic Law and Scriptures. Hence, on realizing his mystic potential, Shāh ‘Nūr Muḥammad Māhrāvi was told by Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn to devote himself to ‘ulāmā-i-bāltini.

The main objective of these seminaries was to provide moral purification and religious renewal (iṣrā) by concentrating on the scriptures and Islamic sciences. With the introduction of Western education, the system of education was bifurcated into dīnī (religious) and dunyāwī (temporal/worldly)—all the religious sciences were clubbed together into dīnī and the modern education into dunyāwī. During the eighteenth century, the madrasahs and khānaqāhs emerged as autonomous dispensers of dīnī taḥlīm (religious education). Insulated from imperialist political and cultural intrusion, they sought to maintain their autonomy in this regard and may thus be seen as a ‘cultural resistance to protect the “inner world” from Western intrusion’.

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13 Khodr R. Khudr, Nasir Naqib and Khaleed Serferi, (eds) Bindrababu Das Khushgu, Sufiyya-i Khushgu, (ed.) Shah Muhammad Ata-ul-Rahman (Patna, 1938), p. 302; cited in Umar, Islam in Northern India, p. 266. His madrasah was also closed after the uprising of 1857. Qāzī Sanā‘ullāh of Panipat, a premier disciple of Mirzā Mazhar and Shāh Waliullāh, was a well-known jurist and ‘ālim. He wrote a commentary on the Qur‘ān in 10 volumes, tafsīr-i-mazhari, named after his spiritual master. Nairūr ‘Rahbâr, Bahādur-i-mazhariyyah (photograph, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University), fol. 104b.


16 Hasan, ‘Madaris and the Challenges of Modernity in Colonial India’. In the constitution of Dārul ‘ulam (Deoband), it is mentioned that as long as the madrasah does not have a regular source of income, it will exist; if some permanent source is found, i.e. landed property or a factory, the purpose

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The residence of Khwāja Nāsir ‘Andalib, a Naqshbandī Sūfī-poet, at Barāmdā kā nāla, served to impart less legalistic and more spiritual training.29 Mirzâ Mazhar, another leading Naqshbandī Sūfī of

tafsīr, and faṣāhī also were prominent. For comparison with the Dari-nizāmī syllabus, see Francis Robinson, ‘Scholarship and Mysticism in Early 18th c. Awadī’, in Islam and Indian Regions, (eds) A. Dallipicola and S. Zingel-Ave (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 393.


30 After repeated invitations from Aurangzeb’s daughter-in-law Mehrpurchar Begum during the unsettling years of Nādir Shāh’s invasion, a house was built for the family inside the fort walls, which included a mosque, a meditation room, and a large gathering place which remained with Dār’s descendants for some time.
Madrasahs, like those mentioned above, established an extensive network of pupils and links with the learned families of gāsbaks in Upper Doab. These contacts proved decisive in spreading their message of reform to a wider audience in rural towns. The local madrasahs that dotted the landscape of Upper Doab carried forward the task of disseminating Waliullāhī traditions on a smaller scale, but no less effectively. So successfully did they enthral themselves in rural towns that many madrasahs continued to function even after state patronage was withdrawn. The madrasahs in the gāsbaks of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts owed their basic ideals to these high seminaries of Delhi, although they differed in certain respects.35

A trend resulting from the joint khānqāh-madrasah system was the growing emphasis among Sūfis on study of the Prophetic traditions and jurisprudence. Students in the khānqāhs who learnt the secrets of mysticism were now also taught Islamic scriptures by leading scholars.36 It was the devotion to the cause of Shari'at which permitted some Sufi

of the madrasah will be defeated ... The participation of government and wealthy people in madrasah affairs is harmful ... Donations of anonymous persons are blessings; the sincerity of these persons is the permanent source of income.


Dissociation from the rich and royalty had been the watchword for many Sufi orders and it is noteworthy that the 'ulama who had always been closely associated with the rulers came to hold a similar view.

35 The local institutions were more inclusive in their character, had firm roots and links in society, and served purposes relating to everyday life, namely marriage, Shari'at issues, education of the poor, law-giving, and even providing medical treatment through Yāndāi medicine. Occasionally these madrasahs received patronage from the Mughal emperor or local governors. The Madrasah-i-Sandīā founded by a Qādiri leader Maulvi Hamdullāh (d. 1747) was patronized by Emperor Muhammad Shāh, who granted a few villages for the expenses of students. See Maulvi Rahmān Ali, Tāzākāh-i-ulama-i-hind, (Urdu transl.) M. Ayyub Qādiri (Karachi, 1961), p. 169. This madrasah operated until 1808.

36 This tendency seems to have begun early. When Emperor Aurangzeb ordered the compilation of Fatwā-i-Ālamgīrī, nearly four out of its twelve compilers had Shāfiʿi prefixed to their names and belonged to the category of Sufis: Muhammad Shafiʿ, Fatwā-i-Ālamgīrī aur uske muʿallafīn, Zamīma Oriental College Magazine (August–November, 1953), pp. 25-42. In the list is included the renowned mystic Shāh Ṭabīb Rahīm, the father of Shāh Waliullāh.

orders, especially the Naqshbandīs, to recruit the 'ulama to their ranks. As mentioned earlier, direct and growing contact with the Hijaz by sea, supersedes the land route via Persia, had significant consequences. The Hijaz was particularly noted for the study of Hadis and it is not surprising, therefore, that Shāh Waliullāh, on his return from the Hijaz, started teaching the six 'canonical' collections of Hadīs (the Sahīh of Bukhārī and Muslim, the Sunans of Abū Daūd, Ibn Mājāh, Nāṣīr and Tirmīzī) in his madrasah.

It was not only the Naqshbandīs who laid stress on Hadīs learning; the Chishti also made it a pre-requisite in their mystic discipline. They were now trained by leading Hadīs scholars and received sanad (certificates) from them. To cite some instances, Shāh Kamīlullāh had received khilafat from Shaikh Yahiya Madānī, a renowned ʿalim and Sūfī of Medina. Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn was taught by leading 'ulama such as Miʿān Muhammad Jān and Málañā ʿAbdul Hakīm, and was often referred to as 'Maulānā' because of his excellence in exoteric sciences.37 Hadīs collections including Sahīh Bukhārī, Sahīh Muslim and Mishkāt were taught in his madrasah.38 Khwāja Nūr Muhammad, his premier khālifah, received a certificate (sanad) in Hadīs and was taught Qurʿān (a work on logic or mantiq) by him. So much emphasis was laid on Hadīs studies at Delhi that it came to be known as Dārul Hadīs in the eighteenth century.39 Among the Qādirī Sūfīs, Mullā Nizām-ud-dīn, a disciple of Shāh ʿAbdul Razzāq, became a renowned ʿalim who instituted the Dars-i-Nizāmī—a curriculum widely used in Indian madrasahs.40 The trend soon spread to other areas in the nineteenth century. Chishti Sūfīs of Khānqāh-i-Karimī at Salon, such as Shāh Muhammad Mahdī ʿAtā (d. 1900) and Shāh Muhammad Naʿīm ʿAtā (d. 1966), were recognized as authorities in Hadīs, grammar, prosody, and literature by their contemporaries, even though they had never

37 The former taught him Futures-ul-hikam, Shams-i-bāzīgha, and Sadra, and the latter taught ʿĪdāyāh: Khwāja Gul Muhammad, ʿĪdkhālāsh Sīyāṣāt-ul-aiyāh (Delhi, AH 1312), pp. 106-7; Ghazal-ud-dīn Khān, Munāqib-i-fakhriyāh (Delhi, AH 1315), p. 10; Nizām-ud-dīn, Munāqib-ul-mahbūbīn, p. 49.
38 Nāz-ud-dīn Husain Fakhrī, Fakhr-ul-tābīn (Delhi, 1315 AH), pp. 15-16.
40 For details, see Muhammad Rizā Ansārī, Bānī Dars-i-Nizāmī (Aligarh, 1973).
ventured outside the four walls of their khānqāh for any formal training in these disciplines.\textsuperscript{41}

The rapprochement of 'ālim and Sufi traditions ensured a wider social appeal for both and gave cohesion to Muslim religious thought. Sufis generally stayed in close connection with common people, their khānqāhs were open to members of all classes and religions, travellers and visitors, who seldom left unsatisfied. The 'īslāmī, regardless of their social origins, had by their legistactic training become alienated from the spiritual needs of the Muslim masses. It was felt that only by the active collaboration of both traditions could the structural and spiritual aspects of Muslim religious life be revived. Its effects became noticeable in the growing emphasis on adherence to Sharī'at by Sufis, in a campaign to strip mystic thought of many of its customs and ecstatic expressions and in the spread of organizational networks of Sufi-scholars in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries.

Multiple Affiliations

Besides the rapprochement of Sufi and 'ālim traditions, another development brought the different Sufi orders closer, making their institutions more cohesive. This was the practice of multiple affiliations whereby a person was allowed to be initiated into a number of Sufi orders at the same time, though his primary connection remained with one Sufi order. Multiple affiliations not only did away with the distinctions that had kept the Sufi orders apart but also provided a broader base for them to work in society and penetrate towns hitherto untouched. It imparted greater understanding among different silsilahs and also increased their membership in numerical terms. Adherents of the Chishti order gave up their earlier belief in the principle of 'hold on to one door and hold it fast'\textsuperscript{42} and the rigidity among different Sufi orders were softened as disciples were allowed to be initiated in as many orders as they required.

The decline of the Mughal Empire created a situation in which the mystic orders were able to overcome their differences: the Suhrawardis no longer had a strong Muslim power with which they could align; the Naqshbandi anxiety to establish a true 'Islamic State' was being felt in varying degrees by other Sufi orders, and the Chishti criticism of rulers came to be more widely accepted.\textsuperscript{43} Shāh Waliullah instructed that one should not distinguish among Sufis because of ideological reasons as they differ due to varied mystic experiences and that Sufis of various orders should be respected as they were 'the lovers of the Almighty'.\textsuperscript{44} He often quoted his own verse, 'Our signs are different but Thy beauty is one, and everything points to that beauty', in support of his position.\textsuperscript{45} There were conscious attempts to subdue differences and cohere on a common platform.\textsuperscript{46}

Even before the eighteenth century, there had been Sufis affiliated to multiple orders,\textsuperscript{47} but the process now gained momentum and became fairly widespread. It can be noticed among Sufis of different orders. Thus, Mirzā Muzhar, besides being a Naqshbandi, was also affiliated to the Qadiri, Chishti, and Suhrawardi orders. Shāh Waliullah claimed his connection with almost every Sufi order.\textsuperscript{48} In his work al-qawl-ul-jamīli, he describes the paths a Sufi has to traverse in Qadiri, Chishti, and Naqshbandi traditions. Among the Chishtis, Shāh Kālīmullā received khilafat in the Qadiri, Suhrawardi, and Naqshbandi orders, although he preferred to be known

\textsuperscript{41} Saiyid Zahiur Husain Jafri, 'Religious Plurality in the Chishti Tradition: A Case Study of the Khānqāh at Salon in Awadh', in Religious Pluralism in South Asia and Europe, (eds) Jamal Malik and Helmut Reifeld (Delhi, 2005), p. 79.

\textsuperscript{42} Sījī, Fawā'īl-ul-fu'ūl, p. 47.


\textsuperscript{44} Shāh Waliullah, Ta'hkimats-i-Ilāhiya (Delhi, 1910), vol. 2, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{45} Shāh Waliullah, Ta'hkimats-i-Ilāhiya, vol. 2, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{46} Nehemia Levtzion has offered an alternate view. He suggests that prior to the eighteenth century, Sufis were initiated into several orders. But reformists such as Mustafa Bakri (d. 1749), who inspired reform in the Khalwatiyya order of Egypt, demanded that his disciples should withdraw allegiances from all other orders. Levtzion writes, 'Exclusivity gave a greater cohesion to a tanqīd and added to the commitment of its adherents'. He notices that the Tiqaniyya, an offshoot of the Khalwatiyya, was even more exclusive. Therefore, he suggests that multiple initiation came to an end in the eighteenth century, when Sufi orders became more exclusive and competitive: Nehemia Levtzion, The Dynamics of Sufi Brotherhoods, in The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies, (eds) Miriam Hoexter, S. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (Albany, 2002), p. 114.

\textsuperscript{47} For instance, Shāhīkh Ahmad Sirhindī joined the Qadiri order under Shāh Kamāl. His father Shaikh 'Abdu'l Ahad trained him in the Chishti silsilah. Later he joined the Naqshbandi order under Khwāja Bāqī Bāli while.

\textsuperscript{48} Shāh Waliullah, Al inīsāb fi sulūl alvāfi' allāh, (Urdu transl.) Mian Aziz Ahmad and Sufi M. Faruq (Karachi, AH 1344), p. 41.
as a Chishti.\textsuperscript{49} He believed that it was the need of the hour that one should avail oneself of the teachings of whichever order one wished to join. In one of his letters he instructed his disciple to read 
*Ruṣḥul-i-Naṣḥbandiya*, a work frequently referred to at the Naṣḥbandi khangās.\textsuperscript{50} He himself initiated people in the Shāzīlī, Qādirī, Shattārī, Naṣḥbandī, Firdausī, and Chishti orders. Shāh Kalimullāh’s readiness to initiate disciples into the Naṣḥbandī order attracted a considerable number of Central Asians, among whom the Chishti order had earlier not been so popular. While Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) was in the Deccan, his own inclination towards Naṣḥbandī traditions had created a situation when people began to avoid Chishti khangās. Shāh Kalimullāh, seeing the problem, instructed Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn, his khalīf al-‘Arang badī, to initiate people in whichever ṣūlā they wished to join and he was given permission for the Naṣḥbandī, Suhrwardī, Gızrūnī, Kubrawī, and Shattārī orders.\textsuperscript{51} Likewise, at the Qādirī centre in Phulwaria Sharīf, Shāh Muḥtarrullāh Qādirī received ijāzāt (certificates) in almost every known mystical order from eminent mystics of his time.\textsuperscript{52} In the Phulwaria Sharīf khangā, many of the practices followed to this day are essentially those of the Chishtīs.\textsuperscript{53}

No doubt, the difficulties of an individual embodying different Sufi traditions in his life cannot be considered trivial, and the Chishtīs seem to have been aware of it. A random mixing up of the teachings of different orders could create confusion in the spiritual life of the follower and jeopardize his spiritual journey. The Chishtīs took some care to ensure that the teachings of one order not be mixed with those of another in such a way as to disturb one’s devotional life.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{49} His own sons were initiated into the Qādirī order: Gul Muhammad, 
*Takmilah sīyar-ud-nawīs*, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{50} Shāh Kalimullāh, *Muḥtarrullāh-i-kalīmī* (Delhi, AH 1301), letter no. 99, p. 91.


\textsuperscript{54} For this reason, Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn was not always in favour of multiple imitations and used to say:

\textit{كمال مراعى الاست نقل بيد بيد روجار ده جهان ك بيدنا داد ار را بهد و شی بود و را ار}

\textit{آن مخلوط نکد.}


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**Trends at the Ideological Level**

The emergence of ‘neo-Sufism’ was perhaps the most significant development which influenced many orders in the eighteenth century. ‘Neo-Sufism’ is an often-used term, coined by Fazlur Rahman, to describe a reforming tendency within Sufism in response to pressure from the ‘orthodox’.\textsuperscript{55} It became a movement to distinguish a shrine-centred customarily Sufism from the one that operated within the parameters of Islamic law and emphasized Sufism’s intellectual doctrines. ‘Neo-Sufi’ opposed practices that had crept into the spiritual life of Islam over its long co-existence with other faiths. They sought to renew the original self-purifying moral discipline of Sufism at the expense of popular ecstatic Sufism. The beginnings of ‘neo-Sufi’ consciousness are linked to pioneers like Ibn Taimiyya (d. 1327)\textsuperscript{56} and his disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Sufi reform movements spreading from Morocco to Malaya came to be clubbed together under this term.\textsuperscript{57} Following Fazlur Rahman, other scholars have also


\textsuperscript{57} This movement of Sufi reform was in no way restricted to the Indian subcontinent in the eighteenth century. The situation in India—described as a ‘cultural failure’ of the ruling classes—was shared by the entire Islamic world during this period. The Tijāniyya order of Ahmad al-Tijāni (d. 1815) in Morocco, the Daqīqīyya order of Abū Hamīd Daqīqī (d. 1823), the Samnīsī Brotherhood of Muhammad Ibn al-Samnīsī (d. 1859) in North Africa, and the Idriṣi order of Ahmad ibn Idrīs (d. 1837) in Arabia were similar politico-religious movements, each claiming to have based its practices solidly on the Qur’ān and the Sunnat.
used the term extensively in their writings, including J. S. Trimingham, John O. Voll, B.G. Martin, and Ira Lapidus. However, the experiences of reformist Islam differed and the revivalist patterns took different forms in different localities. The term 'neo-Sufism', when used, should be applied to the experiences of a particular order within a defined environment and location. In their critique, O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke have suggested that the term needs to be applied with caution to describe the rich and complex tradition of Sufism and its use should be restricted to the organizational innovations of Sufi orders.

In eighteenth-century South Asia, some of the features indicative of 'neo-Sufism' existed among the religious elite, but only to a certain extent. For instance, like the 'neo-Sufis', they opposed the shrine-based Sufi-cults, placed an increasing stress on the study of Hadis, defended many of their practices in the light of scriptures and, while remaining 'other-worldly', were willing to take active measures to prevent intrusion into their religious spheres. However, the critique of O'Fahey and Radtke stands for the Indian case as well. There was no marked break from early traditions, but only a rethinking and defence of some practices based on varied interpretations of Islam. As will be discussed elsewhere, the Chishti-Sabriyya in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries carried on the core practices of their silsilah, remained adherents and defenders of Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy, remained active practitioners of sama, and maintained the close and intimate relationship between pir and murid as before. 'Neo-Sufism' should thus be seen not as the emergence of a new type of spiritual movement but rather as a process of rethinking of Sufi practices and the defence of them necessitated in the eighteenth century, with the rise of Wahhabism and growing opposition to customary Sufism. Bruce Lawrence has differentiated this trend from early Sufi movements not so much on the basis of doctrinal shifts but rather on account of a gradual accommodation—at once complex and local—of the multiple challenges of the colonial order. He includes new trans-regional mobility, new local institutions, new multilingual forms of education, and also new print networks as examples of the emergence of 'neo-Sufism'.

John Voll also highlights the need to revisit the debate on 'neo-Sufism', particularly the role of Ibn 'Arabi, the rise of vernacular religious literature, and organizational changes in Sufi orders.

'Neo-Sufism' and the Centrality of Sharī'at

The co-existence of pir and 'ulamā was a movement of reform within Sufi tradition. Sufis who now operated alongside 'ulamā became increasingly conscious of the Sharī'at as the outer form of religion, and came to share concerns similar to those of the 'ulamā. Sufi scholars tried to preserve the inner (haqeqi) aspect of Islam (rejected outright by puritanical movements) while fully accepting its exoteric (zāhirī) aspects and condemning those accretions that they felt had debased the orders. They wrote to highlight the close connection between the way of the Law (Sharī'at) and the mystic path (tariqat), the deeper meanings and realities of Sufi practices, and the importance of moulding one's life according to the Sunnat. They tried to embody in their own life-styles the approved models of holiness in Islam and became exemplars of Prophetic piety. The vigorous denunciation of bid'at, shunning unauthorized accretions in mystic life, and adhering to a spiritual discipline closer to the spirit of the Sunnat were other results of this tendency.

However, it should be noted that these developments did not intend to create a new form of Sufism as the term 'neo-Sufism' may imply. The ideas of the so-called 'neo-Sufis' were very similar in spirit and substance to the approach of classical Sufi theorists. The works of 'Alī Hujwīrī, Imām al-Qushayrī, al-Ghazzālī, and others are replete with advice to strictly follow Islamic Law, criticism of intoxication as a mystic state (ḥāl), and
