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# Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Islamic Thoughts

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## Abstract

The Naqshbandi Sufis had been in a very strong relationship with Mughal Empire. In spite of it, when Akbar introduced his Deen -i- Ilahi, they faced religious problems in this scenario, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi played an important role and opposed innovations in the form of Deen -i- Ilahi . According to the teachings of Sirhindi, an innovation (Bid'at) in Deen is contrary to the Sunnah. He was not only a religious scholar and mystic but also a reformist leader and his teachings are purely based on Sunnah. This article aims to highlight the teachings of Sirhindi regarding the responsibilities of a Muslim ruler, the limitations of Shariah for man as well as his view that there is no contrary between "Tariqah and Shariah". This research also deals with the expertise of Sirhindi that how he condemned the theory "Wahdat-ul-wajood" believes in the oneness of Allah Almighty and the mortality of all the living beings except Him. Sirhindi's school of thought is as important today as it was in the 17th century.

**Keywords:** Tasawwaf, Islamic mystic thought, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.

## Introduction

The tazkia-e-nafs or purification of soul which described by the Qur'an (1) is a pasture of mysticism (2). The significance of the reality of this term is much more important than its development. Regardless of giving it the very name or the other, its reality is to follow the religion in true spirit (3). The concept of Mysticism in Islam is subjected to the obedience of Allah and His Messenger Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Thus the Subcontinent is grateful to the important role played by a mystic saint Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564/971 A.H.- 1624/1034 A.H.) (4) popularly known as Mujaddid (5) Alf-e-sani He emphasized the reformation of the individual as well as society. The basic purpose was the implementation of Islamic laws and Shar'iah.

He was born at Sirhind (6), a famous city of India. His father was a renowned religious scholar and saint. He completed contemporary Islamic education at the age of seventeen. He made good relations with the courtiers. However, in his personal meetings with Abu al Fadal and Faidi he talked on the educational problems but this couldn't continue for a long time.

As he inherited the mystic taste, therefore in 1599/1008A.H. he became a mureed (follower) of a well-reputed personality of Naqshbandi chain Khawaja Muhammad Baqi Billah (7). He possessed such great capabilities that he had got Naqshbandi status in just two and a half months (8). His letter no. 11 to his Shaykh are the proof of his being high spiritual genius. After Khawaja Baqi Billah's death (1603-4/1012 A.H.) Sirhindi held the reins of Khawaja's school of thought. The time has proved that only the Mujadadi movement and his school of thought could prove a success in the development and existence of Islamic ideology. In this respect Sirhindi played a vital role.

The numbers of Sirhindi's publications are eight, which consists of seven magazines and maktubat (letters) (9) in three volumes. It is concluded that the number of his publications is more than eight. Unfortunately many of his scholarly researches were destroyed during the devastation of Sirhind, yet the fame enjoyed by the letters of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi known to be as "The Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani". The numbers of these letters are 536 found in three volumes. The first volume consists of 313, second of 99 and third of 124 letters. These letters not only reflect the social and religious history but also Sirhindi's thought.

Moreover, the correspondents which are 129 in number, are based upon different rationales, which describes not only about Sirhindi's peer (spiritual guide) "Khawaja Baqi Billah" but also his sons and caliphs, scholars, general mass and the courtiers of the king.

Chronically, these letters (10) were written in a long period of twenty six years which reflects Sirhindi's ideology, analysis and research. This accumulated his debates on Shari'ah and mysticism in the form of an organized book. (11)

If someone tries to derive conclusions from these letters, he will find his puritanical thrust and this lead to remove many doubts about his great attempt of the great religious figure. His character, his general temperament about Shari'ah, his unshakeable trust in Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and his belief in the importance of following Prophet Muhammad's teachings are the key points to comprehend his school of thought. The letters of his sons, autobiographies and the contemporary historical data should also be kept in view. It is also a wrong approach deriving the conclusions by studying the half letter and leaving the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of it to get an understanding about Sirhindi's personality, it is necessary to have a brief analysis of his contemporary religious circumstances.

Sirhindi was born in the age of Mughal emperor Akbar (1596/1014A.H.- 1542/949A.H.). At the time of Akbar's death, Shaykh was 43 years old. We can trace out a glimpse of the religious thinking of king Akbar's age. The initial time span was totally different then the later one. In the beginning, Akbar was a complete religious man who turned himself into a mujtahid (religious administrator) (12) but latterly he considered that Islam had been passed away one thousand years and now there was no need to keep any relation with Mohammedan Prophethood.

Hence every step was taken to disconnect the strong bond with Mohammedan Prophethood. Likewise using the name of Muhammad and Ahmad were banned and the mosques were closed. (13)

Sirhindi has labeled this age as “the age of the Islamic poverty”. The establishment of “Din-e-ilahi” (14) was wrapped by the enmity against Islam on the intended name of enlightenment and moderation. Akbar assumed name of “Ummi” (15) to describe his compatibility of the rank with that of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). These were the circumstances in which Shaykh debuted his work. King Jahangir also belonged to the same category of kingship of Akbar but keeping in view the public response against Akbar, but the attitude of King Jahangir was changed (16). The aristocracy, which had strong bonds with Shaykh, was involved in maintaining the sovereignty of king Jahangir. Shaykh spent 20 years of his life in king Jahangir’s age. During this whole period, the epicenter of his educational zeal and ideological zest were the key points. These points draw an exact picture about his services for the teaching of Islamic ideology. Shaykh condemned emphatically the innovation in religion (Bid’at).

For the revival of Islam Shaykh’s condemnatory remarks about innovation in religion (Bid’at) could be found in all the three volumes of his letters. We can find bitterness in his views about innovation in religion (Bid’at) because he was well aware of the importance of following the true teachings of Islam to get proximity of Allah and to avoid the contemporary tense situation. As the benefits of Prophet Muhammad’s Sunnah were hidden from the king’s eye that’s why he called that one thousand years of Prophet Muhammad were completed and there was no need of it now. According to Shaykh the innovation in religion was such practice that had no linkage to the age of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) and his followers (Sihabas). He maintained that the customary and habitual things are not included in innovation in religion because he was well aware of the pace of the age and also of the fact that there would be so many new inventions on the scene due to the man’s endeavor to conquer nature (17). The scholars have divided innovation in religion into two kinds.

- 1) Bidaah tul Hasana
- 2) Bidaah tul Siyyah

Shaykh opposed that division of innovation. He considered that there could never be any beauty in the innovation in religion (Bid’at). The reason for this division of innovation in religion was chaos of Bid’at. The evil affects of innovation were not evident because of the evil darknesses prevailing those days, but what ever the situation was; innovation was not acceptable at all. Shaykh has cited these verses of Holy Quran and the sayings of Holy Prophet (PBUH) regarding the issue of Bid’at as:

- 1) “Today I’ve perfected the religion for you and have completed my favour upon you”. (Quran)

2) “He who invents something false which has no linkage with the religion of Islam is forbidden”. (Hadith)

3) “The best discourse is the discourse of Allah and the best way is the way of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the worst things are the inventions and every innovation in the religion is misleading”. (Hadith)

4) “I advise you to fear Allah Almighty and to hear you ruler and obey though he is a Negro slave. So it is a compulsion upon you to follow my Sunnah and my caliphs and demonstrate it strongly and avoid the innovations because every new thing is the innovation in religion and innovation is a misleading (18)”. (Hadith)

By the above-mentioned Ahadith (sayings of Holy Prophet), Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi has given clarity to his point of view. He considered innovation in religion the opposite of Sunnah and he has rejected innovation in religion. To prove innovation in religion the opposite of Sunnah and to exalt Sunnah he has given some examples.

“A nation which invents innovation in religion is deprived on the analogy of sunnah.”

These examples of Shaykh elucidate that they are in connection with religious matters and the customary innovation are not included in it (19).

Shaykh considered it extremely harmful to obey the ruler who believes in any kind of innovation in religion. According to him it is a virtue to exalt Sunnah instead of innovation in religion. (20)

He was also of the view that such novelties in religion should be ruled out of the society but the method of bringing it to an end should not produce more evils from the lap of the virtues instead it should be dealt carefully and wisely. It is not the duty of every individual to cope with the innovation in religion rather it is the responsibility of the rulers (21).

It is evident from Shaykh’s views about Bidaah that he wanted to see the practical application of Sunnah. As far as the mundane affairs are concerned, should be dealt according to customary habits by retaining the limits of Shariah.

We find from his views on innovation in religion, the anarchy of India, the malpractice on the name of Islam and the deviation of the masses from the real and pure Islam. Moreover Shaykh’s political views are also hidden in it in which Shaykh emphasizes the need of rulers who could bring to an end all the novelties in religion. If we are unable to find such an aul-al-umar; the society will fall a prey to anarchy.

Shaykh has condemned the wrong way of thinking about the saints. A separate portion of his letters explains this philosophy. In this respect he has dealt mostly with “Wahdat-ul-wajood”. He is also an admirer of Shaykh Ibne Arabi. Shaykh has presented his admiration of the works of Shaykh Ibne Arabi as well as his theory of “Wahdat-ul-shahood”.

“Wahdat-ul-wajood” believes in oneness of Allah Almighty and the mortality of all the living beings except Him. Besides, it also demands to believe and understand Allah Almighty’s miracles and demonstrations. It is a kind of “Ilmul-yakeen” while “Toheed-i-Mashoodi” is to believe in oneness of Allah Almighty, It is called “Ain-ul-yakeen”. (22)

Shaykh has called “Toheed-i-Wajoodi” a basic requirement for the destination and “Maqam-e-abdiyat” as a destination, which is an outcome of “Toheed-I-Shahudi”. After going through a deep study of Wajoodi philosophy, he has explained its impact on the individuals and collectively on the society that a man is not free from the restrictions of the Shariah and there is not any system contrary to “Tariqah and Shariah” but it is an interpretation by implementing the spirit of Shariah. Shaykh has elaborated forcefully sharah-o-bast about the drama of Hulul (Incarnation) of the saints of his age. (23)

Usually “Wajoodi and Shahudi” philosophy is not given much importance than mere a philosophy and school of thought by the researchers. If Shaykh’s philosophy and school of thought is analyzed, one thing is very clear that this is not only a theory but also a hidden power that has its effect on the thinking and actions of a man. Shaykh was well aware of the political and social deviation on the basis of “Wajoodi philosophy” that is why he has struck a heavy blow on this philosophy.

He has paved the way for a positive change on both levels in it. The importance of logic is an accepted fact but due to its shrewdness, it disguises and focuses on the individual interests while the revelation of God always focuses on the collective interests, this is why the philosophers who consider themselves to be the whole rationalistic / wise are yet unable to gather one focal point. Although they are contemporaries but as far as the prophets are concerned, there is found to be the same philosophical structure though there was a long difference among their respective ages. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi learnt the philosophical debates in his childhood while taught them later on. The new religion was formed keeping in view the demands of the worldly facts and King’s interests, neglecting God’s revelations. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was well aware of the conspiracies of the philosophy of new religion so he opposed the new religion on the basis of two reasons. (24)

- 1) The denial of the orders of Allah Almighty as well as the good news (Basharats) told by Prophets.
- 2) The arguments presented by them to attain the wicked interests are false. Because these bits of information have no importance whatsoever with the hereafter (Akhrat) that’s why a criticism on some points or an emphasis on their unnecessary in his writings is also found. However there is no objection if this knowledge is studied to fulfill the mundane pursuit, that’s why writing about the medical science and astrology, Shaykh writes that the philosophy has stolen them from the discourse of Prophets of God (25). He has raised his school of thought on the basis of Sunnah that carries the peace of hereafter and the harmony of the society. This

methodology produces belief instead of raising doubts; that's why Shaykh made Islamic teachings the epicenter of all his efforts which practically explains the Sunnah. It is evident from the above discussion that Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi criticized harshly the philosophers, scholars, vicious men of knowledge and the invention in the religion because he considered that the Sunnah was the only key to success of an individual as well as for the society collectively. For this purpose, he wrote many manuscripts and books and sent them to his caliphs for the training of the people of the different parts of the country. The two most important points of this school of thought are as under:

- 1) The people started opposing it who were directly affected by it, both the scholars and mystics belonged to this category. There were some people who were against this theory only on the basis of wrong judgment. The reason for this opposition seems to be as under:
  - a) Some people turned against him only on the basis of jealousy. It was unbearable for the people whose aim was only gross materialism. The people who either belonged to King's chair or to the rustic scholars and mystics turned against him because he was calling them to return to the ways told by the Holy Quran.
  - b) Many mystics considered "Wahdat-ul-wajood" as a collectively accepted belief and belonging to the needs of the religion. Many people turned against him because they considered that Shaykh has rejected the collectively accepted belief. Shaykh proved it wrong by his experience and observation.
  - c) The terms used by Shaykh in his writings are the same as used by Ibn-e- Arabi and Philosopha. Although there was compatibility on the surface level yet there was huge difference of meaning between Shaykh's and the other two mentioned above. This is the reason of the opposition of the followers of Ibn-e- arabi and philosopher. Allama Muhammad Iqbal has admitted that the psychology of this age is unable to render a translation to the Mujadadi discourse (26). A disparity in his researches is also found with the passage of time because he developed relations with the common people. Some people found misconceptions on the basis of his early researches. This fact should also be viewed that there is not any other source available on Mujadadi school of thought instead of his manuscripts.

There is not any detailed book in this concern. The events and circumstances, the rank and status of "Maktoob-e-alaihum" and the feelings of the writer while composing these manuscripts should also be viewed (27). If these things are kept in view there will be no ambiguity at all. Some people also committed deliberate efforts tehreef (i.e. to change the meanings) from his manuscripts, some spread its wrong translation in Arabic and some very sincere fellows misunderstood it but the reality dawn to them very soon (28). It is a fact that the revolutionists always have to face the music. Shaykh himself brought to an end these misunderstandings about these manuscripts; his offspring and his caliphates

also answered them. It is not comprehensible that why are such objections being raised till today. Shaykh attempted to make the Ummah revolutionary and to bring them out of the decay; it could also be one of the reasons for its opposition. Shaykh's school of thought is as important today as it was in the 17th century. This is the reason why an attempt is made to hide the dimensions of his personality.

- 2) Not only should Shaykh's relations with King Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Alamgir be kept in view but also it has to be seen in the context of the ancient history. His spiritual relationship, which was inherited to King Babur from his father, should also be viewed. Perhaps the Naqshbandi scholars had a deep and historical relationship with Mughal family which later on appeared in the form of Naqshbandi Mujadadi.

King Babur's father had love and devotion with "Khawaja Abaidullah Asrar (29)". King Babur's maternal grandfather did taubah (30) (i.e. committed renunciation) in front of this personality of Naqshbandi chain. King Babur was eight years old when Khawaja Abaidullah Israr died(1491/896 A.H). but King's devotion for him didn't dwindle. It was King Babur who translated a magazine under the title of "Waladiya" in Turkish language (31). King Babur had devotion for Maulana Muhammad Qazi (32), a caliph of Khawaja Israr. Two of King Hamayun's daughters were married to the sons of Naqashbandia family (33). In the beginning King Akbar also loved the Naqashbandi chain. It is historical reality that Jahangir had relations with Naqashbandi chain in his childhood (34) also King Shah Jahan was deeply affected of Naqashbandi chain (35).

The arrest and release of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi has a particular political and religious background (36). It is clear from Shaykh's manuscripts that when the army arrested him, he met King Jahangir several times to preach Islamic teachings to him (37).

King Aurangzaib Alamgir had relations with Khawaja Mujadadi while he was prince as well as king. Khawaja Mujadadi supported and enticed king Aurangzaib to fight for the throne. He was a disciple/follower (i.e. mureed) (38) of Khawaja Masoom Sirhindi. Allama Muhammad Farrukh ibn-e-Khawaja Muhammad Saeed taught King Aurangzaib the book of Ahadith "sahi Bukhari" (39). Khawaja Saif-uddin taught king Alamgir the teaching and the way of Naqashbandi chain (40). These people were invited frequently with honour and respect in the royal gatherings and ceremonies (41). King met them with honour and respect (42). Khawaja Naqashbandi Mujadadi had deep association with royal family (43). This relation was strengthened through correspondence. Khawaja Masoom wrote letters to 6, Khawaja Saif 19, Khawaja Saeed 9, Khawaja Muhammad Naqashband 15, and Khawaja Abdullah 9 respectively (44). Besides, some letters to the other members of the royal family are also included in the manuscripts (45). Aurangzaib called for a doctor for the treatment of Khawaja Masoom (46). Without the active participation of royal family it was almost impossible to strengthen the religion.(47) and this relation was developed in this concern. It is clear from the manuscripts that the personalities of Mujadadi chain never got mundane benefits.

These letters were a connection with king through which king was informed about his religious responsibilities. The people, who reject these letters, are basically unaware of the relation between a religious guide and his follower. They are also unaware of the aspect of reformation of these mystics. It is evident from the above discussion that Shaykh was not only a religious scholar and mystic but also a reformist leader. He founded his teachings on Sunnah, that's why his political and social reformist efforts are hidden from our very eyes.

This is why many western historians believed the political impact of Shaykh (48) and the people who rejected it couldn't help accepting them partially (49). While analyzing the age, it should also be kept in mind that it was not an age of political anagram like today's politics, which is entirely based on the protests and processions. That's why Shaykh adopted the most proper way to correspond with the King. There is an inseparable bond in his personality as Sufi and "scholarly silent political role". Julian Baldick has rightly called him the champion of the main line Islam in 20th century (50).

## **Conclusion**

One of the western scholars Youhanan Friedman has derived the false conclusions on the basis of the particulars of "Khaweshgi". In this respect I am going to elucidate authentically about "Khaweshgi". Ghulam moeen-ud-din Abdullah Abnadi Khaweshgi qureshi used the title of Moin-ud-din at the start of his name due to his devotion with Khaweshgi chisht. He was a Persian poet. His teachers were of the view of "Ghali Wajoodi". One of his famous books is Maarij-ul-Walaya fi Madarij-ulhadayah, which was completed in 1684/1096A.H. This book is based on the circumstances and life history of 456 Mashaikh (patriarchs) of Indo Pak. It consists of 10 chapters. This book is based on the ancient way of expression. Unauthentic and samayi (traditional) views have been written without criticism. While quoting references of the text, it isn't kept in view that either that book belongs to that saint or not. The birth and death year are also ignored. The years of birth and death of the Mashaikh have been included which are derived from Shaykh Abdul Haq's "Akhbar-ul-akhiar" this book is empty of all the research on way of expression which is founded by Shaykh Abdul Haq. Khaweshgi wrote orders of all the mystics but neglected Mujadadi chain, which shows his disgust for this particular chain.

The book, which is written by such a writer and is the copy of another (sar-ulumukhalifeen) of Mujadadi chain can't be used for research. Actually Khaweshgi has not read Shaykh's books impartially. For instance, he wrote that Shaykh had done takfeer (expiated a crime) and followed zandeeq (Zoroaster) of Mansoor Halaj and Ibne Arabi but in the manuscripts of Shaykh there was not even a simple derogatory remark. With reference to the King Khaweshgi has quoted a letter that is also copied by Friedman. Khaweshgi has called it fake and fictitious in "Rawadatul qayyumiyya".on the basis of Such a doubtful and unauthentic letter, how can we believe that Aurangzaib must have banned the manuscripts of Imam Rabbani which was even not done by Jahangir. One can believe it If Jahangir had ordered for its ban. The royal orders of Jahangir have been



published but there is not such a letter in that. There might be some reasons for the opposition of Mujadadi chain by Khaweshgi.

- i. Khaweshgi had relations with rebellions of Allah's existence (Ghali Wajoodi) mystics. As a result of their company, he got the enmity against Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. Khaweshgi visited the members of Mujadadi family and its opponents who resided in Aurangabad. This was another reason of his enmity against Shaykh (51).

It is clear from the above discussion that Marajul Walayah is an unauthentic book for the research on Mujadadi chain. It is also a wrong assumption by the study of this book that Aurangzaib banned the manuscripts of Imam Rabbani.

## References

- 1) Al Quran 2:129, 2:151
- 2) For mysticism, its importance and definitions.
  - a) Kashf-al-Mahjoob pp:161-266
  - b) Encyclopedia for Islamic spirituality vol: 1
  - c) Islamic Sufism A Short History by Alexander Kynsh.
  - d) Islamic Sufism its saints and shrines by Subhan P: 6-16
  - e) Mysticism in Islam by Dr. Omer A. Farrukh
- 3) The term used in different religions of the world are quite different from those of Islamic term. Smith has defined it in these words:  
"The word mysticism itself comes down to us from the Greeks and is derived from a root meaning "to close". The mystic was one who had been initiated into esoteric knowledge of Divine things and upon whom was laid the necessity of keeping silence concerning his sacred knowledge."  
(An introduction to the history of mysticism P: 1)  
Look at the following to get an overview of the concept of mysticism in other religions of the world:
  - a) Mysticism in the world's religions by Edward Geoffery.
  - b) An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and Mystery religions by Jhon Ferguson.
  - c) The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Text and Commentary by Oliver clement.
  - d) A Handbook of Christian Mysticism by Michael Cox.
  - e) Judiasm and Mysticism according to Gershom Scholem by Eliezer Schweid.
  - f) Hindu mysticism by Mahendranath Sircar.
  - g) Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism by Gershom.
  - h) Mysticism East and West by Rudolf Otto translated by BerthaL.Bracey.
- 4) Please have an overview of the following for the life history, teachings, thoughts and achievements:
  - a) Hazrat ul Quds by Badar ud Din Sirhindi.
  - b) Zabatul Maqalat by Hashim Kishmi.
  - c) Jahan-e-imam-e-Rabbani edited by Dr. Muhammad Masood Ahmad in 11 volumes.

- d) Sufism and Shriah by Muhammd Abdul Haq Ansari.
- e) Contribution of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi to Islamic thought edited by Abdul Ali and Zafarul Islam.
- f) A history of Muslim philosophy edited by M.M.Sharif vol: 2 P.873-83.
- g) A Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic philosophy edited by Oliver Keaman vol: 2 P: 282-4
- 5) Renewer of the second millennium. This title has a historical and spiritual background
- 6) For Sirhind see:
  - a) Sirhind through ages.
  - b) The Mughal empire, R.C.Majumdar (general editor) P.705
  - 7) For his biographical sketch see Zubdatul maqamat P.137-84
  - 8) Ibid P:195-6
  - 9) There are no clues about the historical beginning of letter, still there is some proof about it that a queen of Persia wrote the first letter to her father. See for the history of letter writing, the paper used for it, the ink, pen and for the means of posting them.  
Roberts, William, History of letter writing from earliest period to the fifth century n.d. London.
- 10) Letter writing is a common culture all over the world in all spheres of life. Some collections of the letters are given below as examples:
  - a) A life in letters by Gabriel Faure.
  - b) The letters of Mozart and his family by Mozart.
  - c) Correspondence of Karl Max and Friedrich Engels by Karl Marx
  - d) The correspondence between the prince A.M. Kurhsky and Tsar Ivan iv of Russia by Kurskii.
  - e) An Epistle of comfort 1587-88/ Robert soputhwell (A poem declaring the real reference of Christ in the blessed sacrament,1606) by Robert Southwell.
  - f) The Brownson-Hecker correspondence edited by Joseph F. Gawer and Richerd M.Leliaert.
- 11) Sheikh's epistle are the center of the attention of the eastern as well as western scholars. His letter are translated in different languages. Sheikh wajihuddin translated them into English. Its first volume has been published from Lahore. He worked diligently for this translation. He stayed on the shrine of Khawaja Baqi Billah and established his own terms in English. Other volumes of these letter are under process (this information is collected from Sheikh Wajihudin's letter to Mr. Amjad U.K.). The mystics preached these manuscripts to their followers. Their different Sharoooh (explanatory notes) have also been written. An incomplete sharah was written by Allama Saeed Ahmad Mujadadi which was published from Gujranwala (Pakistan). Jhon Renard opines about the letters: "some two centuries later a little further to the west lived the famous Indian Naqshbandi Sufi Ahmad Sirhindi(d.1624). Most of his 534 Persian letters were written for broad circulation with only a few addressed individuals. He addressed to nearly six

dozen bureaucrats and officials in the Mughal government, often confronting them boldly. Since most of Sirhindi letters function as treatises rather than as massives, they provide one of the more comprehensive overviews of a single spiritual authority's thought expressed in correspondence. M. Ansari has translated a selection of Sirhindi's letters that offers an excellent cross section of his central themes. They retain only hints of an epistolary style. Here and there Sirhindi calls his correspondent "my dear" or "my son; and several pieces have preserved elements of what was presumably their original form, as in the following example with its rather brusque tone. The opening remarks suggest that it was written with a group of correspondents in mind".

- 12) Montakhab al Tavarikh vol. 2
- 13) To have a brief information about King Akbar's Din-e-Elahi and his religious beliefs see:
  - a) Akbar and religion by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.
  - b) The commentary of father Monserrate, by S.j.Hoyland.
  - c) Akbar the Great Mughal by Vincent A.Smith P:214-21
- 14) Maktubat, Vol:2,Lettyer No.23
- 15) Prophet Muhammad is believed to have no education from any educational institution of the world. The means of His(PBUH) knowledge of merely the revelations of God therefore, He is called with the name of "ummi"
- 16) Jahangir wrote at the end of his Nasihat Nama--- " Follow the Islamic Shariah so that you may be saved on the doomsday". Hirwi,Khawaja Niamat Ali, Tarik-e-Khan Jhaani wa Makhzin-I- Afghani P.514, Also see , Maktubat Vol. 1, letter No.65
- 17) Maktubat vol.1, letter No. 186
- 18) For detailed information see Maktubat vol. 1,letter No.231,255,105,54,186,157, Vol. 2, letter No.23
- 19) Maktubat vol.1,letter No. 131,168,231,288
- 20) Maktubat vol. 3,letter No.105 Vol.2,letter No.23
- 21) Ibid vol.3, letter No. 105 Vol.2, letter No. 15
- 22) Ibid vol.1 letter No.43
- 23) Vol.1, letter No.43 Vol. 3,letter No.89
- 24) Ibid vol. 1, letter No.266,259
- 25) Ibid vol. 3, letter No.23 Vol. 1, letter No.266
- 26) Muhammad Iqbal, Religious Reconstruction of Islam P.192,298,299
- 27) For this see the following lines of Mabda wa Maad:

If there is any contradiction or discrepancy in this author's description of the states, reptures and ideas(ahwal, mawajid, 'ulum, ma'arif), then it should be predicted to the difference in times and context. It is also because each and every moment has its own state (hal) and ecstasies(mawaajid). And for each context, the knowledge ("ulum va ma'arif) is different. Therefore there is no contradiction or discrepancy.

For example, It is analogous to an injunction of the Shariah which seems to reverse after it has been replaced (mansukh) or changed. However we consider that the times and the

contexts are different, then that contradiction or discrepancy vanishes. Mabda-wa-maad Minha No. 61

- 28) Abbas, Hamayun, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's contribution in Tafseer and Fiqah, Thesis of Ph.D Bahaud din Zakarya University Multan, Pakistan
- 29) Masood Ahmad, Dr. Sirat-I-Mujaddid Alif Thani, P.316-63, Mujaddidi, Muhammad Iqbal, Ahwal wa Athar, Abdullah Khaweshgi P. 159-61
  - a) Netton, Ian Richard, Sufi Ritual, P.64
  - b) Cambridge History of Iran vol.6, P. 117
  - c) Memoirs of Zehir-ed-Din Muhammad Babur P. 31
- 30) Daughlat, Mirza Muhammad Haider, Tarikh\_I\_ Rashidi P. 97
- 31) Memoirs of Babur vol . 2, P. 347-8
- 32) Ibid vol.1 P.92-3
- 33) Maaqamat-I- Masumi vol.1, P.115
- 34) Asher, Catherine B., and Tabot, Cynthia, India, before Europe P. 226
- 35) Ibid P. 227,294 Maaqamat-I-masumi vol. 2, P.261
- 36) King Jahangir arrested him due to his jealousy, misunderstanding and Shaykh's political impact but soon he released Shaykh when he came to know his fault. Shaykh's arrest and release is more important than his political impact .Dr. Beni Prasad is against the arguments that are presented against Sheikh that he begged padon. Here are words from the book The Mughal Empire:

"He confined Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in the Gwalior prison, first, because the Shaykh was accused of considering himself equal to the pious Caliphs and, secondly, because he refused to perform the Sajda(i.e. prostration) to the emperor. Jahangir later on realized his mistake and released the Shaykh and made amends for the punishment meted out to him. Similar treatment was meted out to Sheikh Ibrahim Baba. In both cases the punishments were due to the envy and fear excited by these Muslims divines amongst the less important members of their profession and influence which they wielded on their devoted Afghan and other Muslim disciples. Dr.Beni Prasad is wrong in asserting that Ahmad Sirhindi repented or promised loyalty. It was Jahangir who realized his mistake".

The Mughal Empire P.194
- 37) Maktubat, vol. 1 Letter No.43
- 38) Maqamat-I- masumi vol.2 P. 202,245,648
- 39) Ibid P.531
- 40) Maktubat-I-Masumiyyah vol.3,letter No.220,242 Maktubat-I-Sufiyyah letter No.148
- 41) Khawaja Saifuddin participated in the wedding ceremony of the eldest prince on January 3, 1669. This ceremony took place after the death of Khawaja Masum and it was a proof of the strong ties between the Royal family and Mujaddidi Chain and hence the statement of Yohanan Friedmann that this relationship was a matter of controversy proved worthlessness. (Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi- an outline of his thoughts P.95)
- 42) Saqi Mustad Khan has described the meeting of Khawaja with Alamgir and the warm welcome for Khawaja in these words.

“On Thursday, 3rd June 1669/13th Muharram emperor visited the porter’s lodge which was assigned for residence of saint Shaykh Saifuddin Sirhindi. After an hour spent in talking with the saint and honouring him, he returned to palace”. (P.53) there is detailed description on emperor’s religious views on page 312-3 of this book. 43)

- a) Princess Roshan Ara Begum the daughter of King Shahjahan wrote a letter to Khawaja Masum in which he showed her devotion for Khawaja.(Maqamat-I-Masumi vol.2’ P.317), The princess also built the shrine of Khawaja Masum(Maqamat-I-Masumi vol.2, P. 332)(Rawadatul-Qayyumiyyah vol.2 P.281)
  - b) The sons of King Auranzaib were also the followers of Khawaja Siafuddin (maqamat-I-masumi vol. 2, P. 650)
  - c) Farrukh Sair was the follower of Khawaja Muhammad Sadiq.
  - d) For the relationship of different members of the royal family with Mujaddidia family see Maqamat-I-Masumi vol. 1, PP.147-51
- 44) This information is impated by Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi in his book A history of Sufism in India. See Vol.2, PP482-91

But his conclusion is not right-Khawaj Saifuddin has described the relationship with king just to bring to an end the malpractices. Then what was the motive of writing the letters? Was its aim just to waste the time. (Maktubat-I- Saifia letter No.4) Doesn’t this sentence show that it’s aim was to establish justice. Isn’t this aim one of the most important aims of Islamic nation.

- 45) Rizvi Saiyid Ather Abbas, vol.2 P.482-91
- 46) The name of the doctor was Sikandar Beg. (Maqamat-I-Masumi vol.1,P.152/vol.2 P.313)
- 47) Maktubat-I-saifia letter No.162
- 48) Some references are as under.
  - a) “The order played an important role in the religious and political history of Mughal India as leaders of movement of reaction against the syncretist Din-I-ilahi (Divine religion) of the emperor Akbar.An important figure in this reaction Ahmad Sirhindi who was initiated the order into by its Shaykh Khawaja Baqi Billah in1600. The order remained involved in political developments”. Jhoms, A.H. and Lewis F.D., Encyclopedia of Religion vol.13 P-9010)
  - b) Ian Richard Netton wrote. “It was from the intellectual morass thus engendered that Sirhindi is credited as having rescued Muslim India. He is also said to have been the inspiration behind the reforms of the Mughal emperor Aurangzaib(1617-1707) whose devotion to Shariah was rather than that of his heterodox predecessor. (Netton, Ian Richard, Sufi Ritual P. 65)
  - c) Frances Pritchett has written with reference to the importance and impacts of Maktubat-I- Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in these words.

“His forceful and eloquent letters addressed to the leading nobles at Jahangir’s court, calling on them to rise in defence of Islam and uphold the dignity of their religion, have great power and effectiveness. These letters were meant not only for the individuals to whom they were addressed; they were really “open letters” and were no less forceful than the poems with which Byron tried to engender enthusiasm for the cause of Greek

independence, or with which Hali tried to reawaken Indian Muslims. Copies of them were supplied to the Shaykh's disciples and admirers, and given wide circulation".

He has described the policies of Aurangzaib in the following words. "Even more remarkable than these historic links between Aurangzaib and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's family is the fact that almost all the steps which are forcefully by the Shaykh in his letters". Aurangzaib's policies for Shias are described in these words.

"Is it more coincidence that the attitude which Aurangzaib had toward Shias-at least during his early days-was identical with that of Shaykh Ahmad"?

Pritchett, France, South Asia Study Resources available on the web. [www.columbia.edu/itc/meal/Pritchett](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/meal/Pritchett) P4,5

d) Jhon P. Brown has described very carefully the aspect of reformation of Naqshbandia.

"In the truth the Naqshbandi Khawajas seem to have sought to give new life to the old idea, that beside the secular king should stand a divinely guided adviser, the keeper of his soul and his conscience and the interpreter of the spirit, not merely of the latter, of the formal laws". (Brown, Jhon P., The Darvishes, P.446)

e) John Renard has described Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's political role in the following words.

"Major religious scholar and mystical author from Punjab, Pir of the Naqshbandiya under Mughal dynasty. As a Sufi leader he was politically active, offering advice to the rulers concerning needed religious reforms". (Renard, Jhon, Historical Dictionary of Sufism P.244)

f) After describing Youhanan Friedmann's views, Alexander Kynsh described his views in the following:

"he did seem to have struggled hard to bring about a change in the outlook of the ruling classes."

After a few lines he writes:

"The Naqshbandis played an important role in replacing the policy of reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism instituted by Akbar, by anti-Hinduist attitude that characterized Aurangzaib's region" (Islamic mysticism P.231)

g) Kashwant Singh couldn't understand the meanings of the term "Mujaddid Alif Thani" but he admitted the Political role of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.

"This hand of Sufias, though small in numbers, had influence in the court and with the Muslim aristocracy". (Kashwant Singh, A History of Sikhs P. 59)

Friedmann also admitted the influence of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi in Hindi society which is also admitted by other researchers. But he has rejected this very point in the words below:

"Most of scholars of medieval Muslim India maintain that Sirhindi performed a crucial role in the history of India. (Encyclopedia of religion vol.12 P.8413) it is also very strange that Naqshbandi chain with reference to Khawaja Ihrar is described in the 3rd volume of this Encyclopedia :

It was his conviction that, "to serve the world, it is necessary to exercise political power". A critic, criticizing this sentence, says:

“In other words, it is necessary to maintain adequate control over rulers in order to ensure the implement the divine law in every area of life”.

49) Ibid vol. 13 , P. 9010.

Also see the statement of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, about the importance of king:

“Well being of the king is the well being of the world; his corruption is the corruption of the world”.

50) Baldick, Julian, Mystical Islam, P.121

51) these details are derived from “Ahwal wa Athar Abdallah Khweshgi Qusuri”, a book of Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi.