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*Chosen Saints
of God
and the
Bigoted Mullas*

by

MAULANA DOST MUHAMMAD SHAHID

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Chosen Saints of God and the Bigoted Mullas

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MAULANA DOST MUHAMMAD SHAHID

*“No game—no beast of the field nor fowl of the air—
has escaped thy arrow; even the weather-cock is seen
fluttering in its nest”.*

Introduction

The sages of God, His beloved servants and His chosen saints did have to pass through the grinding mill of trial so that the world might know that, in spite of all the tribulations and sufferings, they remained steadfast in their love of Allah and that the severity of their sufferings and afflictions and the mockery and the jeerings of the vulgar, could not shake them away from the path of truth and perseverance.

*“True lover is he who always remains steadfast and
goes through the days of calamity with fidelity and love”.*

That was why the Promised Messiah said, “Trials through which prophets and saints have to go in the early days of their

ministry in spite of the fact that they are His chosen ones, while the world considers them to be forlorn and abandoned, and despite the fact that they are really very dear to Him, their enemies mistakenly consider them to be out of favour with God and rejected by Him. But that is not true. It could not, even for a moment, be imagined that God the High and the Mighty has begun to hate those who love Him and that He would destroy His loving and faithful servants with infamy and dishonour. The real fact is that these trials, which may bear resemblance to a springing lion and look like utter darkness, are sent to them to enable them to reach the pinnacle of God's love and His favour. These are also sent to teach them the secret of Divine knowledge. This has been a Divine tradition from the earliest times with all His beloved servants.

The humble call of David as mentioned in the Psalms and the urgent supplications of Jesus as described in the Gospels, also point out to this very tradition of God. The invocations and the solicitations of the Holy Prophet that are mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Traditions, do also come under the same rule. It would not have been possible for the prophets and the saints to reach the highest rungs of the ladder of God's pleasure in the absence of these trials, which verify and put a seal to their faithfulness, determination and their power of endurance. These trials also serve to prove their tenacity of purpose and the depth of their love and fidelity for their Creator. They face violent storms of opposition; they go through periods of helplessness and embarrassments; they suffer humiliations and are called cheats, liars and pretenders; and for a short period of time it appears as if God's succour has deserted them completely and that they have been left uncared for and undefended. It appears as if God's support, which is always their mainstay, has hidden its face under dark clouds of tribulations. Outwardly it would seem as if God has, for no apparent reason, suddenly withdrawn His favours from them and has left them in the lurch. He appears to be displeased with them and does not take any interest in their affairs. Nay, it looks as if He is rather inclined towards their enemies. This period of trials stretches considerably and disaster after disaster fall upon them like a shower and storm in a dark night.

But the Chosen Ones of God always remain firm and do not shirk in their resolutions. As a matter of fact the more disasters they face, the more resolute they become in their behaviour and continue to plod on in their paths of virtue. The more hardships they face the more steadfast they become in their missions; the more they are threatened the more anxious they appear to meet the threats undaunted. In the end they surmount all difficulties, overcome all obstacles and emerge out successfully from the dark clouds of trials and on the strength of their fidelity and truthfulness they gain success and are crowned with glory and honour. All the odium, the denunciations and the casting of aspersions by the ignorant theologians fade away like the water-bubble as if their disparagements have carried no weight at all.

In short the prophets and the saints are no exception to trials and tribulations. As a matter of fact they have to face these much more than any other person. It is only the strength of their faith and the power of fidelity and endurance that can stand these tests.

The general public and the man in the street do not recognise and understand God. And they also fail to recognise the special favourites of God. They fail to appreciate the true worth of the saints when they are undergoing trials and rush to a hasty conclusion by looking only at one side of the picture. The simpletons are not aware of the fact that God does not prune the trees that He has planted to destroy them. He does the pruning so that the trees may grow more rapidly and flower profusely and bear plentiful fruits.

To state it more concisely, it is of the utmost importance that, in order to give them a training and to make them spiritually perfect, it is necessary that prophets and saints must face a period of trials. For this group trials serve like a uniform of godly soldiers so that they may be easily recognised". (Sabz Ishtihaar—Green Handbill: p. 11-14)

Discussing the philosophy of trials the Promised Messiah threw more light on the subject in a subtle and very scholarly manner. He said, "It has been the experience of millions of holy men that blessings of God descend upon those who follow

the Holy Quran. The result is that a supernatural connection is formed between them and the Gracious Allah. Revelation of God and His Light descends upon their hearts in consequence of which they exhibit much wisdom and understanding and they are granted a special trust in Allah. They feel in their hearts a very strong conviction about Allah and are filled with an ecstasy of love and communion with God, and even their bodies be crushed to mincemeat in the mortar of affliction and are tortured at the pillory and stocks, nothing but the essence of love of God could come out of their bodies. The world does not know them and they are far away from and far above the world. God treats them in a most extraordinary manner. It is only they that can provide the proof of existence of God, and it is only they who feel that the door of God is quite open to them. When they pray He listens to their supplications; whenever they call Him, He replies to them in return; whenever they want a refuge of safety, He rushes towards them with open arms. He loves them more than their fathers, and showers His blessings on their dwellings and those who reside therein. They are, therefore, recognised from His hidden and manifest help that they receive; from the material and spiritual aid that they receive from Him and He helps them in each and every field because they belong to Him and He belongs to them". (Surma Chashm-i-Arya: Footnote: 23-24)

Heresy-Framing Mentality and the Holy Saints of the Umma

The All-Wise and the All-Knowing God, glorified be His Name and most Sanctified is His person, in order to give a test to the saints and the holy sages of the Umma has so ordained that a synod came into being even in the earliest period of Islam that possessed heresy-framing mentality. This group, this conclave, weighed down by their perverted mentality left few holy sages in Islam whom they did not brand as heretics and infidels. Every beloved man of God suffered at their hands. The following well-known verse aptly describes their attitude towards those godly persons:

"No game—no beast of field no fowl in the air—has escaped thy arrows; even the weather-cock helplessly flutters about in his nest".

This spirit of branding saintly persons as heretics and apostates, caused many a renowned personality and notable sages of the front rank to perish under the sword of the executioner. Many distinguished thinkers, famous commentators, reputable scholars, distinguished philosophers, splendid orators and eminent sages became the prey to this perverted mentality of the bigoted Mulla. Men, in their time held up the torch of truth and were the embodiments of the Islamic way of life, were pronounced as heretics, renegades and apostates and, therefore, ruthlessly murdered.

This heresy-framing institution has been a continuous cause of heart-rending episodes demanding patience and perseverance from the truth-loving and peace-promoting torch bearers of true Islam—the sincere devotees of Allah and the true followers of the Holy Prophet. They came out of these trials with flying colours upholding the banners of truth. The Gracious Allah crowned their efforts with His pleasure of acceptance and granted them the highest places of honour among His own elite.

We shall now give a little detailed account of this doleful aspect in the history of Islam which is heart-rending as well as faith-inspiring.

The first century Hijra

(1) ABDULLAH IBN 'ABBAS (born 3 H. and died 68 Hijra) is known to be a very brilliant scholar and an authentic commentator of the Holy Quran. He was also a notable companion of the Holy Prophet who used to call him an 'Interpreter of the Quran'. History of Islam proves that he became a prey for the heresy-framing priest class. But he paid no attention to them and continued making progress in attaining the pleasure of Allah. It is mentioned that some of his contemporaries used to call him a heretic and an infidel. (Weekly 'Khursheed': Sandela: 25th February, 1938)

(2) THE PRINCE OF MARTYRS, IMAM HUSSAIN (born 4 H. martyred 61 Hijra), the grandson of the Holy Prophet and the son of his daughter Fatima, was the first person from the holy

family to be denounced by the Mullahs as a heretic and was subsequently murdered. It is reported that when Yazeed, the accursed, demanded from his Mullahs to furnish him with a ruling of Hussain's apostacy, they, like the Mullahs of the present day, readily obliged him. Consequently Yazeed, on the strength of this ruling, caused the noble Imam, his family and supporters, to remain without food and drink for many days and eventually martyred him in the field of Karbala". (Afzal-ul-'Amaal Fi Jawaab Nataaej-ul-'Amaal: p. 22)

In his book "Jawaahar-ul-Kalaam", Aqaae Haji Mirza Hassan wrote, "The Kharjites had pronounced a ruling of apostasy against Hazrat Ali, but the Prince of the Martyrs (Imam Hussain) has the distinction that one hundred Qazis and Muftis of the Umayya court signed their names and affixed their seals on the said document. This verdict was headed by Qazi Shureeh. This Qazi was sent for by Ibn-i-Ziyaad the Governor of Basra and demanded a verdict of apostasy against the noble Imam. Hearing this the Qazi took up the pen-and-ink holder and hit his own head with it in exasperation and walked out of the court, lamenting that he could not do such an heinous thing".

"In the evening Ibn-i-Ziyaad sent a few purses of gold coins to the Qazi's house. Next morning when the Qazi came to the court and the question of the verdict was again raised by the Governor, the 'venerable' Qazi said, "Your Excellency, last night I pondered over the matter very deeply and have arrived at the conclusion that Imam Hussain was, without any doubt, a confirmed apostate and wrote the following verdict of his death with his own pen and under his own seal.

'It has been proved that Hussain son of Ali has gone out of the pale of Islam for which reason he is liable to death punishment'. (Jawaahar-ul-Kalaam: p. 88: 1962 Hijra edition: Matba Ilmi, Tabrez, Iran)

About this Holy Imam, the Promised Messiah wrote, "Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him) was holy and pure and, without the least doubt, was from among those whom God Himself purifies with His own hands and fills them with His love.

Undoubtedly he is among the Chiefs of the paradise and to entertain even a grain of enmity against him is bound to destroy one's faith. This noble Imam serves us as a model for piety, love of God and for patience and perseverance; devotion and prostration. Most certainly we are among those who also follow the guidance that was given to him. The heart that harbours enmity against him shall, undoubtedly, be ruined; and the heart that assimilates love for him and in which his noble qualities like faith, high morals, bravery, piety, perseverance and love for Allah are reflected like the image of a man in a mirror, shall achieve his cherished goal. Men like Hussain remain hidden from the sight of worldly men. Who can truly appreciate their real worth except those who are like him? The eyes of the world cannot recognise them because they are far away from the materialistic world. The real cause of martyrdom of Hussain was that world did not recognise him (may Allah be pleased with him). But when did the world really acknowledge godly men and the Chosen ones of God so that Hussain could also be loved?" ('Badar', 13th October, 1905)

(3) ASAD ULLAH, THE DOMINANT HAZRAT ALI (martyred 40 Hijra) was also declared to be a heretic. It was during the battle of Siffain that the Khaarjites proclaimed him to be an apostate when he had deputed Abu Musa Ash'ari as an Arbitrator from his side.

Ibn-i-Taimiya has, therefore, recorded that "All the Khaarjites were indeed unanimous in declaring him to be a heretic and an infidel". (Minhaaj-us-Sunnat-un-Nabwiyah: vol. 3: p. 3: First Edition: Egypt)

And Hazrat Ali was martyred by these very Khaarjites.

"May God bless these lovers who have left an excellent pattern, and toss and writhe on dirt in their own blood".

The second century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT JUNAID OF BAGHDAD (died 207 Hijra) is universally acknowledged as the leader of mystic saints. He was admittedly a great saint of his age. In the last years of his life

he also had to face the trials and the accusations of the bigoted Mullas. It is mentioned that "evidence was given against Junaid several times about his apostasy". Al-Yawaqeeet-Wal Jawaahair: vol. 1: p. 14: Egypt Edition)

But this verdict of apostasy failed to shake him from his stand and he passed away without shirking from the beliefs that he held throughout his life". (Nazm-ul-Darar Fi Silk-us-Seeyar, by Mulla Saifullah: printed at the Farooqi Press, Delhi. Hijri 1296)

(2) HAZRAT MUHAMMAD-AL-FAQEEH (died before 193 Hijra). Abu-ul-Rabee Muhammad bin Laith was a notable jurisprudent, a literary giant, a fine calligrapher, a sermoniser, an excellent orator and a most venerable person whom the Barmaki family held in great esteem. He also was accused of being an apostate. (Mu'ajjam-ul-Mu'allifeen; compiled by Umar Raza Kahala and printed at Progress Press, Damascus).

(3) HAZRAT IMAM ABU HANIFA (born 80 H. and died 150 Hijra) was the founder of the Hanifite School of Jurisprudence and undoubtedly a jurisprudence par excellence. His followers hold a great majority in Islam which shows how high a position he holds among Muslims.

Maulana Abul Kalaam Azaad giving reference from "Majalis-ul-Momineen", has written, "This letter happened to fall into the hands of Mansoor Waaneeqi which caused him to turn against him (the Imam). He inflicted such tortures on him which ended in his death. People are bound to be dismayed and look at it with horror when they read and hear of the vile treatment meted out to this loyal devotee of the Family of the Holy Prophet. Qazi Nur Ullah Shustari has stated, "Shah Ismail ordered the tomb of Abu Hanifa of Kufa to be dug, his bones exhumed and burnt and ordered a dog to be buried in their place. He commanded to make that place a public lavatory in Baghdad".

Maulvi Abu-ul-Qaasim of Benaras has written a book called 'Cross-Examination Over Abu Hanifa'. A few extracts from this book have been included in "Abaateel-i-Wahhaabiya". We quote some of these here.

- (a) Abu Hanifa re-laid the foundation of idolatory and was, therefore, a heresiarch.
- (b) Abu Hanifa was a Murjia and a Johniya apostate; and the Murjiah are out of the pale of Islam. Therefore all the Hanifites also are out of the pale of Islam.
- (c) Abu Hanifa was the 'Horn of Satan'.
- (d) Abu Hanifa openly stood against the Holy Quran.
- (e) Abu Hanifa was a rebel and he died in rebellion.
- (f) Abu Hanifa's date of death according to the "Abjad" reckoning is "SAG" (dog).
- (g) There is no more contemptible and ill-omened person in Islam than Abu Hanifa (p. 17 of Cross-Examination).

According to Maulana Shibli Nomaani, Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa (mercy of God be upon him) was thrown into prison and was poisoned there. When he realised that he had been poisoned and felt the poison working in his system he fell down in prostration and died in that position. (Seerat-al-No'maan by Shibli, p. 63 and Taareekh-ul-Khulafa, p. 141, and Tatheer-ul-Auliya, by Mir Mudathar Shah Gilani: p. 13-14)

In one of his letters Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk wrote, "What the bigoted people did to Abu Hanifa is so shameful that one feels ashamed of putting it in black and white. Some called him ignorant; others said that he was an innovator and there were some others who declared him to be an apostate". (Lahore Weekly: July, 1974: p. 10)

(4) HAZRAT IMAM MAALIK BIN ANS (born 93 H., died 179 Hijra) was a saint and a scholar of very great fame and was very much devoted to the Holy Prophet. In his age he had no equal in piety and in faithfully following the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. He was the author of the famous "Mo'attaa" which is considered to be a very authentic collection of the Traditions. His concepts became more popular in Spain and the countries in North Africa. It is mentioned in his biography, "When Ja'far went to Medina, he forced people to take the oath of initiation

at his hand. He sent for Imam Maalik and commanded him that he must not publicly give his views against the validity of 'forced divorce'. But Imam was not the man to be cajoled or coerced to act contrary to the true teachings of the Holy Quran and continued to preach the truth. At this Suleman got infuriated and had him brought to the court like an ordinary criminal, his clothes were removed and was given seventy lashes on his back. His back was lacerated and both his arms were forcibly dislocated. Not being content with this, the tyrant ordered him to be taken round the city on the back of a camel. While sitting there on the back of the camel the Imam called to the people and said, "O ye who know me well, do understand my views, but those who do not know me, must hearken to me. I am Maalik, son of Ans and I do declare that 'forced divorce' is not valid and is unlawful".

The Imam then went to the sacred mosque of the Holy Prophet in his blood-stained clothes and offered two 'raka't' prayers. Then he turned towards those who were present there and said, "When Saeed son of Musayyab was also chastised like me, he came to this mosque and offered prayers. I have also done the same. "This chastisement was inflicted upon the Imam to disgrace him in the public eye. But the reaction was quite the opposite. People began to hold him in greater esteem. This incident occurred in the year 147 Hijra". (Seerat-i-A'emma Arb'ah by S. Raees Ahmad Jaffari: p. 293-294: 1955 edition)

(5) HAZRAT IMAM SHAFI'EE (born 150 H., died 204 Hijra) was greatly renowned for his scholarship. He ranks among the top rank Muslim scholars of all times. His knowledge of Traditions and jurisprudence was exceptional and extraordinary and his "Kitaab-ul-Umm" is indeed unique. For quite a long time the state religion of Egypt had been the concepts as interpreted by him. Due to the ignorance and fanaticism of his opposing Mullas, he also had to face very grave charges. But he remained steadfast and did not budge an inch from his stand. Always with a smiling face he met all his trials. It is reported that the bigoted Mullas called him "even more dangerous than Iblees" (Satan). He was accused of conniving at Shia, views for which crime he was sent to the prison. The Mullas of Iraq and Egypt

were deadly against him and on account of their allegations he was brought from Yaman to Baghdad. This inglorious journey entailed great hardships and humiliations for the venerable Imam. He was subjected to a shower of taunts, sarcasms and invectives. While on the road the mobs jeered at him and this chosen servant of God listened quietly". (Harba-i-Takfeer: p. 23, printed 9th April, 1933)

The third century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT IMAM BUKHARI (born 195 H., died 256 Hijra), was the greatest collector and compiler of the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. His "*Saheeh Bukhari*" is incomparable and is generally acknowledged as the most authentic book next to the Holy Quran. In spite of all his learnings and piety the Mullahs caused him to be exiled and he was also declared to be an apostate.

A distinguished scholar, Al-M'otasim Billah Safi Ullah, has stated, "They banished him from Bukhara and sent him to Khartang. But even at Khartang he could find no peace. Three thousand reprobates came out with overwhelming evidence of apostacy against the Imam. Engulfed in this manner in the sea of hatred and enmity and seeing no avenue of escape, he fervently prayed to Allah saying, "O Thou the Redeemer of Thine servants, Thou art Thyself a witness to the treatment these erring and misguided people are giving me. They have made it impossible for me to move in Thine wide world. Thou art the Creator and the Lord of all that exists, do please grant me space in Thy own neighbourhood". This ardent prayer was accepted and the angels soon caused him to die and carried his soul to the place reserved for the Chosen friends of God". (Nazm-ud-Durr, Fin Silk-us-Seer: p.167)

(2) HAZRAT ZUNNOON MISRI (died 245 Hijra), was an acknowledged sage of his time, greatly revered and loved by the people. He was also accused of apostasy.

Hazrat Abdul Wahhaab Sh'eraani has written, "Zunnoon Misri was brought from Egypt in chains and a host of witnesses

came along with him accusing him of heresy and apostasy". (Al Yawaaqet Wal Jawaahar: vol. 1: p. 14)

(3) HAZRAT SEHL TESTARI (born 203 H., died 283 Hijra). Sehl Testari was a widely known scholar and saint of his age. But the heresy-framing mentality of the bigoted Mulla did not leave him alone and dragged him into the fold of the so-called apostates. It is mentioned in the famous book "Al Yawaaqet Wal Jawaahar" that they exiled Sahal bin Abdullah and brought him down to Basra and accused him of all sorts of heinous crimes. In spite of his learning and piety he was also denounced as an apostate". (p. 13)

(4) HAZRAT AHMAD BIN YAHYA (born 205 and died 298 Hijra). Umar Raza Kahhaala, a renowned scholar, on page 200 of his book, "Mu'ajjam-ul-Muallafeen" wrote, "Ahmad bin Yahya bin Ishaq of Baghdad, better known as 'Rawindi', was a greatly renowned man of letters and a great orator. He was also accused of apostasy and heresy".

(5) HAZRAT ABU SAEED KHARAAZ (died 285 Hijra). Hazrat Abu Saeed Kharaaz, a most renowned sage was given tribute by a great sage and a poet of very high fame, Sheikh Fareedud Deen 'Attar in the following words, "He lived in Baghdad and was a great reformer. It was he who wrote a scholarly treatise on the very difficult subject of 'Existence and Non-Existence' and did full justice to it. He also wrote a book entitled "Kitaabus-Sirr" which deals with very intricate and complicated problems of mysticism and which a layman cannot easily understand. As the subject-matter was far beyond the mental reach of the heresy-fabricating Mullas, they pronounced him to be a heretic". (Tazkerat-ul-Auliya: chapt. 45: Al-Yawaaqet Wal Jawaahar, vol. 1: p. 14)

(6) HAZRAT IMAM AHMAD BIN HAMBAL (born 164 H., died 241 Hija). Imam Ahmad bin Hambal holds a very high position among the greatest in Islam of all ages. Imam Shaf'ae acknowledges him as a very brilliant scholar of the highest rank and an undisputed authority in Traditions, Jurisprudence, Lexicology and

as a great commentator of the Holy Quran. He was also a great mystic and a very pious devotee". (Tabqaat-ul-Hambalia Li Ibn-i-Abi Y'ala)

This most venerable Imam, the sage and the admitted saint of the age, also had to face the disreputable conclave of the bigoted Mullas to prove to their satisfaction whether he was really a true Muslim. They tried their best to bring him round to their own way of thinking, but he would not budge an inch and stuck fast to his own logical interpretations.

Writing about this venerable Imam, Maulana Raees Ahmad Jaffri has stated, "The faith brought down by the Holy Prophet for this world now stood in need of fresh sacrifice for which the venerable Imam was the only suitable victim. Because, he being the spiritual monarch of that age, would not bow down to the worldly kings and their lackeys; he would not yield to the sycophant Mullas. In order to uphold the true teachings of the Holy Quran and to point out the true path for those who were to come later he boldly intervened between the true faith and the pedantry in power at the court. The venerable Imam, acting upon the Quranic command which says:

"Have patience, then as had the Messengers of strong determination . . . (46: 36), firmly opposed the conclave".

He was thrown into the prison and, bowed down with the weight of four heavy chains, was brought from Tarsus to Baghdad on foot. He could move only with the greatest of difficulty. But no one took pity on him. During the month of Ramadhan, while he was with a fast, he was made to sit in the burning sun and given lashes on his bare back in the most barbarous manner. It is reported that as one executioner got tired he was relieved by another who continued the beating. Every time the lash fell on his back, the Imam said, "Quran is not a creation like the rest of His creatures",—the very subject of contention. We must also remember that the beating was given during the 'last ten-day period' of the holy month. The Imam himself later said that they continued to beat him mercilessly until nature took pity on him and he fell down and lost consciousness". (Seerat-i-Aemma Arb'ah: p. 613-615)

(7) HAZRAT IMAM NISAAEE (born 215 H. died 303 Hijra), once in a gathering described in detail the exalted position of Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law and the cousin of the Holy Prophet. He tried to impress upon the listeners that Hazrat Ali held an enviable position among the companions and also in the eyes of the Holy Prophet himself. A section of the congregation got flared up at this. In a great rage they stood up and started beating him, accusing him to be Shia at heart. Shah Abdul Aziz describing this incident said, "The people attacked him, shouting 'he is a Shia', 'he is a Shia'." (Bustaan-i-Muhaddithen: Ref. Musallifen-i-Sihaah-i-Sitta: p. 67: Naashir Idara-i-Uloom Asria, Lyallpur)

(8) HAZRAT IBN-I-HANNAAN (died 297 Hijra) The weekly "Khursheed" Sandela of 25th February, 1938 wrote, "Hazrat Ibn-i-Hannaan, a godly saint and a renowned scholar was also denounced as a renegade".

(9) HAZRAT ABUL ABBAAS BIN 'ATAA (died 309 Hijra), was also reported to be a great sage of his time. He found no escape from the bigoted Mullas who declared him to be a renegade and an apostate. (Weekly 'Khursheed' Sandela of 25th February, 1938)

(10) HAZRAT ABUL MOHSIN AL-NOORI (died 295 Hijra), was known in his time to be a very pious Sufi who tried to walk in the true path of Islam. He was, admitted in his time to be a specialised scholar in mysticism and all the people who met him, knew him to be most regular in his mid-night devotions and was held in such high esteem that people very often called him "The Moon of the Sufis".

Ghulam-ul-Khaleel reported to the king about Al-Noori and a few other sufis of his time, such as Abu Hamza, Riqqam, Shibli and Junaid, that they were all heretics and renegades. If they were not put to the sword and were left free, they would be a very bad influence on the general public whom they would lead astray. The reporter thought that if the matters were not amended soon there was every danger of atheism taking root in the land. The king, therefore, ordered that all these sages be arrested and brought to the court for execution.

When the executioner, with a drawn sword, advanced towards Riqam, Abul Mohsin Al-Noori quickly stepped forward and said, "My creed believes in self-sacrifice and service to our fellow-beings. I would, therefore, request the king to command that I may be beheaded first so that my friends here may get a few more moments to live in this world. This is because I hold that a moment's life in this earth could not be replaced by a thousand years in the hereafter".

The king was greatly impressed at this selflessness and asked the Qazi of the court to go over the case of these men again and give his personal views about them.

The Qazi after questioning them all in detail said, "Your Majesty, if these men are condemned as atheists, I very much fear that we shall not find better believers in the Unity of Allah on the face of the earth than these venerable sages".

On hearing this view of the Qazi the King apologised to the sages profusely and sent them all back to their homes with much honour and gifts". (Tazkerat-ul-Auliya: Chapter 45)

The fourth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT MANSOOR HALLAAJ (born 212 H., died 309--martyred). We have so far recounted the noble sacrifices, the piety, the obedience to and the firm faith in Allah and the patience and perseverance manifested by some Chosen saints of God of the first three centuries of Islam which was its 'golden period'. We have also told you how loathsome was the attitude of the bigoted Mullah towards these noble saints and devoted sages. Now we shall throw some light on the treatment meted out to the sages and saints of the later centuries and how these venerable devotees were maltreated by the so-called custodians of the Islamic Sharia and how these noble sons of Islam held high the banner of truth and the real teachings of the Quran. They suffered great trials with fortitude and perseverance so that the future generations might cultivate true love of Allah in their hearts and know the correct interpretation of the commands of God and how the Holy Prophet translated them into practice by setting his own

noble example. They valiantly opposed the narrow-minded, mercenary and time-serving egotistical Mullas so that they might not misguide and mislead the general public.

The first noteworthy saint to suffer at the hands of these self-seeking Mullas was Hussain Mansoor Hallaaj who was a great saint of his age and at whose hands people had seen many signs and miracles. He was a true devotee and a great Sufi who had, so to say, submerged himself in his Creator so completely and perfectly that he felt that he had become one with Him. In the height and intensity of love and in the state of ecstasy he would utter the words, "I am the Lord".

This was a matter which the narrow-minded Mullas could never understand and conceive in their minds and considered it a very great blasphemy. A great storm of opposition was raised against the holy man on account of these unorthodox utterances. They declared him to be a renegade and a seasoned heretic under the Law of God and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet as interpreted by them.

For a number of years the venerable saint was made to rot in the prison and eventually under the royal decree of the Caliph Muqtadar of Baghdad he was executed. (Qaamoos-ul-Mushaaheer: vol. 2: p. 234 compiled by Nizami Badaayooni)

Maulana Raees Ahmad Jaffari stated that, "Under the verdict given by Daood-al-Asphahaani Al-Zaahiri he (Mansoor Hallaaj) was first arrested in 297 Hijra... The second time he was arrested in the year 301 Hijra and was kept in prison for eight years continuously. In 309 Hijra, a sentence was passed against him saying that he was first to be given lashes on his bare back; then his hands and feet be dismembered and then his head was to be cut off. All the severed parts of his body be scorched in fire and then thrown into the river Tigris. No one could stop the execution of this barbarous punishment.

Hallaaj was tortured to death in such a brutal manner because he, sometimes used to utter "I am the Lord". By this he only meant that he was so much engrossed in the love of his

Creator that he thought that he had become one with Him and in ecstasy of superhuman love he imagined that he had become a part of Allah". (the Book 'Anwaar-i-Auliya' p. 180-181: under the heading "Hussain Mansoor Hallaaj" and under the heading: "Was Mansoor an apostate?")

(2) HAZRAT IMAM SHEIKH ABUL HASSAN ASH'ARI (died 324 Hijra). Sheikh Abul Hassan, the saint, had not played a mean part in undoing the harm done to Islam by the free-thinking Mu'tazalia sect and their spurious philosophy. In this art he was a past master and an excellent orator and a fine exponent. Over and above all this he was a very pious man of exceptionally good manners. He was a highly advanced sage in spiritual matters. He was imbued with great enthusiasm for propagating Islam and the teachings of the Holy Quran. Because of his exceptional power of oration he was lovingly called the "Tongue of the Nation".

Allaama Abu Asfaraaeni was generally accepted as a great scholar and a distinguished jurist that his own knowledge as compared with the knowledge of Abul Hassan Bahili, one of Ashari's pupils, was like a drop in the ocean". (Taareekh-i-Déawat-o-'Azeemat": part 1: p. 87-91)

Even this highly praiseworthy and distinguished scholar of his age was not exempt from the attack of the heresy-framing mentality of the Mullah class of his time. He was also pronounced as a heretic and an apostate. (Weekly 'Khurseed'; Sandela: 25th February, 1938: p. 6)

(3) HAZRAT ABU BAKR SHIBLI (born 267 H.; died 364 Hijra). Hazrat Shibli was the most leading figure of his age in mysticism. In fact he was incomparable in this line. His fame had reached far and wide because of the miracles he had worked. He received a lot of troubles at the hands of the ignorant and the riff-raff. Several times he was denounced as a heretic as is mentioned in 'Al-Yawaqet Wal-Jawahar, "Several times the verdict of heresy was pronounced against him". (p. 15: vol. 1)

(4) HAZRAT ABU UTHMAN MAGHRABI (born 302 H., died 373 Hijra). Hazrat Abu Othman Maghrabi was also a great

mystic, a devout and a very saintly person. He was a great thinker and an authority in mysticism and a notable writer on these subjects. It is mentioned about him that "Abu Othman Maghrabi, who had, in his time, no one like him in learning, was taken out of Mecca and accused of heresy and apostasy". (Nazm-ul-Durrar Fi-Silk-us-Siyar: p. 168)

The fifth century Hijra

(1) **HUJJAT-UL-ISLAM, HAZRAT IMAM GHIZAALI** (born 450 H. died 505 Hijra). The venerable Imam Ghazali needs no introduction being one of the top-most leaders of Islam of the middle ages. Leaders like him could be counted on fingers. To his credit are his famous works like the 'Ahyaa-ul-'Uloom', 'Keemiya -i-Sa'adat' and several others besides these. His works are indeed a great credit to the Muslim nation.

Even an Imam renowned like him was not immune from the notorious 'renegade-branding' mentality of the bigoted Mullah. About him the notable writer of Pakistan, Maulana Raees Ahmad Jaffri has written, "Many a jurisprudent and worldly-minded scholars hated him and kept their enmity smouldering in their hearts. To oppose him was considered to be a great honour and a personal achievement. They taunted and ridiculed him and cast aspersions on his teachings and created very many doubts in the minds of many". (Anwar-ul-Auliya: p. 198)

Imam Ghizali wrote a book called "Manhul", which dealt with the subject of jurisprudence. This, his opponents, contrived to make their starting point for inventing allegations against the Imam for apostasy and backsliding. Referring to this book Maulana Shibli writes, "For the opponents of the Imam, this book was a windfall which they produced as documentary evidence. They took this book to the court of King Sanjar and painted a highly exaggerated picture of the supposed ill-effects of this book on the minds of the general public. In addition to this they also referred to his other writings and misconstrued their meanings in the same vein so that they could allege that the Iman's views were unorthodox and un-Islamic. On these grounds they accused Imam Ghizali of being an athiest and an apostate". (Al-Ghizali: by Allama Shibli Nomaani: p. 56)

According to Ejaaz-ul-Haq Quddoosi, the background of all these nefarious activities was that the venerable Imam was rapidly gaining popularity in the districts all around and far-off places and was, indeed, doing a very great service to Islam. But as is the way of the world that it always places obstacles in the way of well-intentioned, good and pious men, the self-seekers in this case also became active. That was the reason why so many enemies of Imam Ghazali came out in the open to oppose him. They were, as usual, the time-serving religious leaders and the wilful money-grabbing Mullas of his time who, feigning to be the pious champion of Islam, misled the common Muslim. But Imam Ghazali unveiled all their tricks and deceits and laid them all bare before the public eye. He disclosed all their guile and exposed, in his books, all their errors, misconceptions and falsehoods. As a result of this, the Mullas realised that they shall soon lose their hold on the general public and no one would ever listen to them". (Imam Ghizali: p. 42-44: Publishers Ferozsons).

It is mentioned in "Ghizali Naama" that Yusuf bin Taashfeen, (born 496 Hijra and died 537 Hijra) the king of Andalusia and Morroco was a follower of Imam Maalik and a very staunch believer in his creed. He was strongly prejudiced against all philosophers and free-thinkers. The jurists belonging to the sect of Imam Maalik began to misinterpret the views of Imam Ghizali and accused him to be a free-thinker and said that all his concepts were the production of his own brains which had nothing to do with the basic teachings of Islam. Ali bin Tashfeen, therefore, ordered that every copy of "Ehyaa-ul-Uloom" and all his other books be confiscated and burnt. He further ordered that all the supporters of Imam Ghizali that lived in his domain should be arrested and beheaded'... And Qazi 'Ayaada, who died in 544 Hijra had also given his verdict after the death of Ali bin Taashfeen to the effect that all the works of Imam Ghizali be burnt... Ibn-i-Hazaam who was considered to be the greatest Jurisprudent of his time in that area, also gave his ruling that to read "Ehyaa-ul-'Uloom" was an act of heresy and recommended that all its copies be burnt.

"In the year 558, Yaafa'ee wrote that during the time when the works of Imam Ghizaali were made a target of all sorts of

accusations, the Jurisprudents of the *Naahiya-i-Jibaaal* had declared that it was incumbent upon all good Muslims not to read any book written by Imam Ghizaali and that these books should be burnt". (Ghizaali Naama: Urdu Translation by Maulana Raees Ahmad Jaffree: p. 360-361)

The marvel of marvels is that the very books which the bigoted Mullas wished to efface, have gained such a miraculous popularity that a few centuries later are considered to be the best books ever written by Muslim scholars. This, in fact, is a miracle in favour of Imam Ghizaali that he was a holy and pious saint whose prayers, patience and perseverance have worked these wonders.

(2) HAZRAT IMAM IBN-I-HAZM (born 384 and died 456 Hijra). Imam Ibn-i-Hazm is universally acknowledged as a great scholar of Traditions and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet and his Companions. He is also known to be a first rate historian and a master of philosophy. He was a notable orator, a man of excellent literary taste, a great jurisprudent, a grammarian, a lexicographer, a fine poet and a very able physician. The distinctive feature of his writings is that he bases all his arguments and deductions on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. This was the thing which caused great embarrassment to the so-called scholars of his time and his bigoted contemporaries. They, therefore, united themselves in giving a verdict of apostacy against him.

It is mentioned in "Mu'ajjam-ul-Muallifeen" that "He used to deduce his arguments from the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet and his Traditions. He used to criticise strongly, the priests and the jurisprudents of his time which caused them to unite against him and pronounced a ruling of apostasy against him. They also informed the King and other persons in authority about his "mischiefs" and succeeded in obtaining an official proclamation that the general public should keep away from such a renegade. He was exiled in a most disgraceful manner. He was, therefore, obliged to spend the rest of his days in a wilderness called 'Labla' in Andulusia (Spain), and he died there". (Mu'ajjam-ul-Muallifeen: vol. 7: p. 16: printed in Damascus)

The sixth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT GHAUTH-I-AZAM, SAYYAD ABDUL QADIR JEELANI (born 470, died 561 H.). Hazrat Sayyad Abdul Qadir Jilani is the most popular and well-known saint and sage of the Sunni sect. He was the founder of the Qaadiriyya school in Islamic mysticism. He was an incomparable scholar and a humble godly person. He wrote a number of books out of which "Ghunyat-ul-Taalibeen", "Futooh-al-Ghaib" and "Bahjat-ul-Asraar" are widely known. Another book "Al-Fath-ur-Rabbaniya" is a collection of his discourses.

This prince among the sages and saints was also made a target of heresy and apostasy:

"No one in the eyes of the Beloved ever gained the position of the 'Truthful' unless and until he had not been made a renegade and an apostate in the eyes of the ignorant enemy".

It is very well known that Allama Abul Farah Abdul Rahman Jauzi with his band of two hundred supporters pronounced their verdict of heresy and apostasy against this godly scholar and saint of the age. The so-called scholar named above, in his book, "Talbees-i-Iblees" (False colouring of Satan) has adversely criticised the mystic system and has at several places indirectly and at others directly attacked the noble saint popularly known as "Ghauth-i-Azam".

In the book "Haalaat-i-Janaab-i-Ghauth-ul-Azam" that: "Some stupid and narrow-minded persons...gave a verdict against him like a pack of faithless and worldly-minded irreligious people". (p. 1: edited by Ibn-i-Waseem: Maktaba Azizia, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore)

(2) HAZRAT KHWAJA FAREED-UD-DEED 'ATTAAR (born 513, died 627 Hijra). Khwaja Fareed-ud-Deen was an exceptionally brilliant scholar of the Sharia and mysticism. The very famous book concerning mysticism, "Tazkerat-ul-Auliya" is his work. He was accused by his enemies of being a Shia for which reason he preferred to live a retired life.

(3) HAZRAT ALLAMA IBN-I-RUSHD (born 520, died 595 Hijra). Allama Ibn-i-Rushd could easily be likened to a Sun on the horizon of learning and knowledge. He was a master of Philosophy, Religious learnings, Medicine and the art of healing. He was a renowned mathematician. He has written more than 40 books on diverse subjects which have been translated into Latin, Hebrew and other languages. The modern philosophy of Europe is, to a great extent, based on his writings. He is considered to be next to the great philosopher Aristotle.

The zeal for turning pious men into renegades worked also in his case and the bigoted Mullas declared this illustrious star of knowledge and wisdom to be heretic and a renegade.

Writing about the heresy of the said venerable sage, Maulvi Abdus Salaam of Nadwa wrote, "The allegations which the enemies of Ibn-i-Rushd (Aviros) brought against him became, at that time a burning question for the whole nation—it really did become a national matter. The Mosque at Cordova became the scene of a very large congregation where gathered all the noted scholars and philosophers of the time. The main object of the gathering was to acquaint the general public with the back-sliding and apostasy of the most renowned scholar Ibn-i-Rushd. In this gathering was also called Qazi Abu Abdullah Bin Ibrahim-ul-Usooli because of some of his utterances which were alleged to be tainted with apostasy".

"The proceedings started with the speech of Qazi Abu Abdullah Bin Marwan who said that most things had two aspects namely of benefit and harm. Where the benefits over-weigh the harm advantage must be sought from such things. Otherwise these should be left alone".

"When the Qazi sat down, Abu Ali Bin Hujjaj, the Khateeb or the priest of the mosque, stood up and completing his harangue, at the end of which he pronounced his verdict declaring the above-mentioned sages to be heretics and apostates. They were given the punishment of banishment and Ibn-i-Rushd (Aviros) was also placed under house arrest in Buseena—the Jewish quarters near Cordova. This was because some people

had given evidence against the sage that he had some Jewish blood in his veins". (Hukama-i-Islam: Pt. 2: p. 120-121)

(4) HAZRAT SUFI SHU'AIB BIN HASSAN AL-MAGHRABI (Abuma-deen) (died 594 H.). He was a distinguished sage of his time. His book 'Ans-ul-Qaheed was Nazhat-al-Mureed' is a very valuable work on the subject of the Unity of God. He also got entangled between the wheels of heresy and apostasy. He passed away after encountering a lot of trials and adversities because of his views. Writing about him Allama Abdul Wahhaab She'raani says, "The Ulema (scholars) of his time declared him to be an apostate". (Al-Yawaqeeq Wal Jawaahar: vol. 1: p. 15)

(5) HAZRAT SHEIKH-UL-AKBAR MOHYI-UD-DEEN IBN-I-ARABI (born 560, died 638 H.). Sheikh Mohyi-ud-Deen Ibn-i-Arabi tops the list of the most renowned personalities of the Muslim Spain. He has left an indelible mark on the pages of Islamic History. He revolutionised many branches of learnings. He shines as a great scholar of Philosophy, Mysticism, Religious Concepts, Jurisprudence, literature and the Commentary of the Holy Quran. He has written a considerable number of books and each of these is a masterpiece. He also holds the distinction of discussing the question of 'Khatm-i-Nabuwwat' in a masterly manner without leaving any doubt or ambiguity. His opinion and findings in this very touchy matter will serve as a torchlight for all times. Even such a great scholar, like Ibn-i-Arabi, was also made a target of heresy-coining attacks of the bigoted Mullas. Not only was he declared to be an infidel and backslider, he was dubbed as an 'apostate the Great'." (Ibn-i-Arabi by Abu Javed Niazi: Publishers: Ferozsons, Lahore, 1969: p. 73)

Though the Mullas rejected this great saint yet God accepted him and blessed him with His pleasure. So many notable sages and sufis came after him who openly acknowledged him as a great reformer and praised his services to Islam in very glowing words. We quote below what a great sage like Allama Qutbud-Din of Shiraz wrote in praise of the great saint Ibn-i-Arabi:

"The great saint was past master in the Sharia and also in the concepts of mysticisms. He was indeed incomparable in both

these branches of learning. Those who criticise his writings are not to be blamed very much. Because his writings were beyond their understanding. Those who talk against him could be likened to those who criticise and deny the prophets of God”.

In the opinion of Hazrat Imam FakhruDin Razi, the illustrious Imam MohyiudDeen Ibn-i-Arabi was a great saint and the Master-Sufi of his age. Allaama JalaludDin Siyooti considered him to be a patron of saints and the one who walked in the shoes of the Holy Prophet.

Imam Ibn-i-Sa’ad Yaaf’ae used to say that Imam Ibn-i-Arabi had reached the pinnacle of sainthood.

Imam Sabki used to consider him a Sign from the Signs of Allah and that he was the one who held the key of learning in his own hands.

The Sheikh of the Sheikhs, Hazrat Shahaab-ud-Deen Suhrawardi and Hazrat Sheikh KamaaludDeen both acknowledged the exalted position of the Sheikh (Ibn-i-Arabi), who in their eyes was a saint who had reached perfection and performed many miracles”. (Mashaahir-i-Islam: vol. 1: p. 187: Sufi Printing & Publishing Co., Mandi BahaudDin)

(6) HAZRAT SHEIKH-UL-ASHRAQ, SHAHAAB-UD-DEEN SUHRAWARDI (martyred 585 H.). Sheikh Suhrawardi is considered to be one of the greatest saints of his time. He is generally called the “Martyred Saint” or the “*One Martyred for Allah*”. The Sheikh had to face some jurisprudents at Halb who failed to answer his logical reasoning and his very convincing arguments. They, therefore, gave their verdict of apostasy against him, and condemned him to death. On the strength of this verdict Malikuz-Zaahir, a son of Sultan Salah-ud-Din Ayoobi (Saladin) ordered him to be thrown into the prison. The Sheikh was, therefore, shut in the dungeon of the fort at Halb and was strangled to death”. (Mu’ajjam-al-Muallafeen: vol. 13: p. 189 and Anwar-i-Auliya: p. 193 and Hukama-i-Islam pt. 2: p. 55-57)

The seventh century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT SHEIKH ABUL HASSAN SHAAZLI (died 654 Hijra). Sheikh Abul Hassan lived in the country formerly known as "Al-Maghrib". He was an acknowledged saint and a distinguished man of letters. He was also declared to be a heretic". (Al-Yawaqet-Wal-Jawahar: vol. 1: p. 13)

(2) HAZRAT 'IZZ-UD-DIN ABDUL AZIZ BIN ABDUS SALAAM (died 660 Hijra). Sheikh 'Izz-ud-Din was the author of "Shajrat -al-Ma'arif" and a very holy sage. He was also declared to be heretic. (Al-Yawaqet)

(3) HAZRAT NIZAM-UD-DIN AULIYA (born 634 H., died 750 Hijra). Hazrat Nizam-ud-Auliya is also called "Sultan-ul-Auliya"—the King of Saints. He is very well-known throughout the sub-continent of India. His tomb is at Delhi. He was a disciple of the famous saint Hazrat Baba Ganj Shakar and the renowned poet Amir Khusro was his disciple. About him "Anwar-i-Auliya" mentions:

"Carpets were laid in front of the royal palace and in the centre sat the king surrounded by his army officers—all properly dressed and armed. On the right hand of the King was the row of the Ulema (priests) in the centre of the Sharia (religious law)."

"The Mufti asked the Sheikh", Are you a Muslim?"

The Sheikh replied, "God be praised, I am a Muslim".

The Mufti: "Are you a Hanifite?"

The Sheikh: "Yes, I follow Imam Abu Hanifa".

Mufti: "Do you listen to music?"

Shiekh: "Yes, I do".

Mufti: "Have you anything in support of this practice of yours?"

Sheikh: "There is a saying of the Holy Prophet mentioned in the 'Saheeh Bukhari' to the effect that the girls of Medina sang accompanying their drumlets, while the Holy Prophet sat listening".

The Sheikh then recited the Sayings and explained its meanings which he said Khwaja Sayyad Imam had told him. He further added that while the Holy Prophet sat listening to the songs, Hazrat Umar happened to come there and promptly stopped the girls from singing. At this the Holy Prophet said, "Do not stop the girls from singing. It is their festival today. All the people have their festivals".

When the Chief Mufti heard this Saying of the Holy Prophet he got into a rage and said, "What have thee to do with Traditions and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet? Thou followeth Imam Abu Hanifa. So let us have an evidence from Abu Hanifa in your support".

The Sheikh replied, "God alone is Holy. I have brought an evidence from our Master. But you want me to bring an evidence from his servant—a follower. Who is Abu Hanifa to supersede the Holy Prophet? How could I give preference to Abu Hanifa over his master the Holy Prophet? Those who prefer the saying of a follower over his master must fear from the curse of banishment. They could be punished by famine and are in danger of their cities being laid waste and coming to ruins".

Hearing this, the Chief Mufti and Sheikhzada Farhaam, in order to excite the King and all those who were present, said, "We take refuge in God. This man has the audacity to belittle the Upholder of the Sharia (Abu Hanifa) and insult the Supporter of Abu Hanifa's Jurisprudence (the Chief Mufti). He says, 'Who is Abu Hanifa?' and only a few moments before this he had claimed to be a follower of Abu Hanifa".

The Mufti succeeded in exciting all the Ulemas (Mullas) who began shouting, "Oh! he is insulting Imam Abu Hanifa". "This man is a backslider". "He is most insolent". (Anwar-i-Auliya: p. 297-8)

(4) HAZRAT IMAM IBN-I-TIMIYA (born 661, died 728 H.). Imam Ibn-i-Timiya was a highly distinguished scholar and a very

zealous worker in the cause of the faith. He was known to be a very pious devotee. His wisdom and sagacity was admitted by all.

Such a dauntless exponent of Islam also had to suffer at the hands of the notorious Mullas. Being shut in prison for quite a long time and being made a victim to torture, he died there. Some details of this have been given in the well-known book named, "Fawaat-ul-Waafiyaat", which says, "The Ulema and their comrades, the seekers of gain, realising that Ibn-i-Timiya does not hold the same concepts as their own, and fearing if he became powerful he might prove very dangerous, banded together to oppose him. They prepared memorials and legal documents accusing the Imam of very grave and serious infidelity. In this they also sought the help of the man in the street and the ruffians in organising protests against the pious Imam so that the matter could be taken to higher authorities.

The Imam was, eventually, brought to the court of the Caliph of Egypt, who, on the assurance given by the Ulema (Mullas) ordered that the sage be sent to prison. The opposition propaganda was so successful that even the school teachers and the recluse living retired lives came out in support of the bigoted Mullas and formed societies of action against the Imam.

The trials of the Imam and his difficulties did not end soon. He had to face charges after charges until his case was handed over to a Qazi who ordered that the Imam should not be freed from the prison. Therefore, the Imam remained in the prison until death rescued him from the tyrannies of the so-called custodians of justice and faith, and the noble Imam entered paradise". Taareekh-i-Ahl-i-Hadeeth: p. 159-160 by Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim of Sialkot)

A few hours before the venerable Imam died, the Minister of the court of Damascus came to beg forgiveness from him. The holy Imam had faced all the tyrannies simply for the sake of his love for God. He said "I forgive you and all those who were my enemies because they knew not that I was right. I also forgive King Nasir who gave the order for my imprisonment because he was being advised by men who knew not the truth".

Just imagine the large-heartedness of the noble Imam and let us praise God who created such noble souls among the followers of our glorious master, the Holy Prophet. (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

(5) HAZRAT SHAMS TABREZ (died 645 Hijra). Hazrat Shams was a noble saint of his time. Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi was one of his disciples. He was accused of heresy because he said that singing of hymns were quite lawful. It is said that he was skinned alive and that his body was thrown into a well. (Maulana Rum by Intiaz Muhammad Khan: p. 44-45 and Qamus-ul-Mashaahir: vol. 2: p. 23-24)

(6) HAZRAT MAULANA JALAL-UD-RUMI (born 604, died 672 Hijra). Maulana Rumi was the founder of the Jalaali school of thought in Sufism. This school became very popular in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Iran and Arabia. His monumental poetic work 'Mathnavi Maulana Rum' is a famous work of poetry looked with admiration and love by everyone and is one of the most popular works in the literature of Islam. Even he, a person of world-wide fame could not escape the octopus-grasp of the heresy-loving Mullas who went to the length of declaring that anyone who does not think the noble Maulana to be an apostate is himself an apostate. (Weekly 'Khursheed'-Sandela: 25th February, 1938: p. 6)

The eighth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT IMAM IBN-I-QAYYUM (born 691, died 751 Hijra). Imam-Ibn-i-Qayyum was a great writer and a renowned orator. In his biography it is mentioned that "He also, like Imam Ibn-i-Timiya, was greatly tortured. He was made to sit on the back of a camel and taken round the whole town. He was cruelly beaten with lashes and then thrown into the prison along with his teacher. The allegation brought against him was that he did not believe in making a show of special preparation with zeal and eagerness for visiting the tomb of Prophet Abraham like one did for the Hajj and the visit to the sacred tomb of the Holy Prophet". (Life of Hafiz Ibn-i-Qayyum: p. 107)

(2) HAZRAT TAJ-UD-DIN SIBKI (born 727, died 771 Hijra). Hazrat Taj-ud-Din was a renowned sufi, an able jurisprudent, a fine historian and a great literary man. He also was declared a heretic as is mentioned on page one of Al-Yawaaqeat Wal Jawaahar, vol. 1.

The ninth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT MAULANA ABDUL RAHMAN JAMI (born 817, died 898 Hijra). Maulana Jami is an admitted master in all branches of learnings. He was a great saint and a most popular writer. From his writings "Sharah Kaafiya" and "Sharah Mukhtasir-ul-Waqaaya" are very popular. He also came under the axe of heresy. (Weekly 'Khursheed'-Sandela: 25th February, 1938)

(2) HAZRAT SAYYD MUHAMMAD JONPURI (born 847, died 902). Hazrat Sayyad Muhammad of Jonpur was the founder of Mahdaviya school in mysticism. He was a great thinker and an acknowledged saint. He claimed to be the Mahdi of his time for which he was branded as an infidel.

In his 'Tazkera' Maulana Abul Kalaam Azaad writes, "In those days every one talked about the Mahaviya sect and for the Ulema (Mullas) of the court this claim proved to be a windfall. Because they all revelled in dubbing godly persons as infidels and renegades. This was their fruitful and favourite pastime. They are always in search of controversial amusements and love contentions between the Muslim sects. Because it is through these polemics that they gain popularity among the masses and acquire a hold over the ignorant laity. For them these are the means of widening their circle of influence. And nothing was more appropriate than the sincere exhortations of Sayyad Muhammad of Jonpur, for it is said that he claimed to be a Mahdi".

"In one of his letters Shah Abdul Aziz has mentioned the views of Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah describing Sayyad Muhammad as a great religious scholar and a saint who had direct communion with God. He failed to correctly interpret some of his

Divine Revelations and inspirations. For this reason he laboured under a misconception about his own status. He did not make this claim on purpose, nor with deceitful intentions. Hazrat Mujaddid and Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Jaanaan also report to the same effect. This is what the truthful scholars have said about it. But the Ulema (Mullas) girded up their loins to implicate Sayyad Muhammad and based their allegations on his claim of being the Mahdi". (Tazkera: p. 44-60: extracts)

(3) HAZRAT SHEIKH 'ALAAEE (martyred 955 Hijra). The "Mahdi Movement" became very popular in Bengal through the untiring efforts of Sheikh 'Alaee. Thousands of men joined the fold. In order to determine the validity and truth of these views a meeting of the Ulema was called, but they failed to arrive at any positive decision. All this happened during the reign of Salim Shah and Makhdum-ul-Mulk. Mulla Abdullah of Sultanpur had a firm hold over the court. He decreed capital punishment for Sheikh 'Alaee. The decree said that the sheikh should first be chastised and then beheaded". (Rod-i-Kauthar by Sh. M. Ikram M.A. p. 26-29)

According to the 'Muntakhib-ut-Tawaareekh', the Mulla Makhdum-ul-Mulk gave the following verdict, "The accused claims to be a Mahdi and since Mahdi is going to be the ruler of all the world, this man is thinking of rebellion and is, therefore, liable to be killed". vol. 1: p. 400)

The tenth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT AHMAD OF BIHAR. This sage also became another victim of the sadistic spirit of the bigoted Mullas. It was in the time of King Firoz Tughlaq that this venerable sage was martyred at Delhi on the allegations of blasphemous writings and his irreverent criticism of the innovated Islamic dogmas. (Aab-i-Kauthar: by Sh. M. Ikram: p. 498)

(2) HAZRAT SUFI BAAYAZEED SARHADI (born 932 died 980 Hijra). Sufi Baayazeed of the Frontier Province is regarded as a great sage and a sufi of not a little fame. When he came to Peshawar to propogate his views he was declared to be a rene-

gade and a backslider. (Tazkera-i-Sufiya-i-Sarhad: p. 149, by Ejaz-ul-Haq Quddoosi: Markazi Urdu Board, Lahore)

The eleventh century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT MUJADDID ALIF THAANI (born 971, died 1034). Hazrat Sayyad Ahmad was the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the eleventh century of Islam who started a crusade against all innovations that had crept into the Faith. He zealously worked with his pen and his speeches. His 'Maktoobaat' (letters) are a veritable treasure of knowledge and wisdom and serve as an excellent guide in religious problems and mysticism.

During the course of his zealous work, the Mujaddid had to face innumerable trials and hardships. He encountered considerable opposition, especially from the priest class of his own faith when he expounded the true teachings of Islam and the Holy Quran. The most disappointing of these was the report made against him to the Court of Emperor Jehangir that a sage living at Sarhind was expressing views bordering on heresy.

It is mentioned in "Khazeenat-ul-Asfiya" that some of the Ulemas had even pronounced their ruling of capital punishment for him and raised a storm of opposition against him throughout the length and breadth of the sub-continent. Like Prophet Joseph he also spent about a year in prison at Gwalior Fort. (Rod-i-Kauthar: p. 222-226)

(2) HAZRAT SARMAH THE MARTYR (born 1002, died 1070) Hijra). Hazrat Sarmad was a poet who originally came from Armenia where he had accepted Islam in his early youth. He is generally known by his nom-de-plum "Sarmad". He came to India from Iran during the reign of Emperor Shahjehan. Owing to intense love of God and austere mystic exercises he got deranged and lost his reason. He used to go about stark naked.

The bigoted Mulla found him an easy prey for heresy. They produced one of his quatrains which said, "Whosoever acquires the knowledge and understands the truth of '*His Existence*' shall assimilate expanses greater than the Space: The Mulla says that

Ahmad (Holy Prophet) went up into the heavens: but Sarmad says that the heavens got transmuted into the person of Ahmad”.

It is mentioned in “Tazkerat-ul-Khiyaal” that the Mullas based their allegations against him in this question and said Sarmad has denied the physical ‘Meraaj’ (ascension to heaven) of the Holy Prophet. The Mullas who persecuted added another allegation to it. They asked Sarmad to recite the ‘Kalima’. Sarmad recited “La Ilaha” (there is no God) and then kept quiet. He refused to say any more. When the Mullas insisted on his reciting further, he replied, “So far I am engrossed in the above denial. I have not yet reached the affirmative stage. When I shall reach that stage I shall then recite “Il-Allah” also”.

The worldly and mundane Mullas suddenly jumped at this and immediately declared Sarmad to be a confirmed infidel whose immediate murder was a dire necessity for Islam. They declared that unless Sarmad retracted he should be beheaded. This Sarmad was not prepared to do—being fully immersed in the love of God. The next day he was taken to the place of execution near the Jamia Mosque, Delhi. When the executioner came towards him with a drawn sword, Sarmad recited the following verse and laid his head on the block:

“On account of an uproar we got awakened from the sleep of non-existence and opened our eyes. We saw that the night of tribulation has not ended, so we again went to sleep”. (Rod-i-Kauthar: p. 390-391 and Qaamoos-ul-Mashaheer: vol. 1: p. 287-288)

Imam-ul-Hind Maulana Abul Kalam Azaad, describing this tragic incident writes, “During the last thirteen hundred years of Islam, the pen of the Jurisprudents has always acted like a drawn sword and the blood of thousands of the chosen one’s of God has stained their persons. If one takes up a history book of Islam of any period, he is bound to find that wherever the king was inclined to tyranny, the pen of the Mufti worked simultaneously with the tyrant. These murders were not limited to only the Sufis and the free-thinkers, even the fair-minded Muslim scholars had to suffer equally at the hands of these jurisprudents

and got rid of them only by surrendering their heads to the fall of the executioner's axe. Sarmad was also martyred by the same sword". (Mashsaaheer-i-Islam: vol. 1: p. 151: Sufi Printings & Publishing Co., Mandi Baha-ud-Din)

(3) HAZRAT MUHAMMAD BIN IBAHIM OF PERSIA (died 1050 Hijra). Muhammad bin Ibrahim was an acknowledged master of philosophical and related subjects. He used to write in a very easy and simple style and no one could surpass him in this. He was declared an infidel only because his writings could easily be understood by all. (Hukama-i-Islam: vol. 2: p. 315, compiled by Abdus Salaam Nadvi)

The twelfth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT MA'SOOM ALI SHAH MEER (died 1215 Hijra). M'asoom Ali Shah was the disciple and Khalifa of Sayyad Ali Raza of Deccan. He was the founder of a new school of thought among the Sufis. As usual the bigoted and purblind Mullas gathered round him with their talons ready to kill and tear the prey. They reported to King Ali Murad Khan that the Sayyad was a backslider and a rebel to Islam as well as a traitor to his kingdom. Acting upon this misguided report the King ordered the the ears and noses of all the important members of that sect be cut off and the beards of all the followers be shaved. On receiving this royal command the King's men mercilessly butchered Sayyad Ma'soom Ali Shah to death. (Qaamoos-ul-Mashaaheer: vol. 2: p. 224)

(2) HAZRAT HAKIM-UL-MILLAT SHAH WALI ULLAH OF DELHI (born 1114, died 1171). Shah Wali Ullah, Muhaddith of Delhi was a confirmed Mujaddid of the Twelfth century. He is the first Muslim scholar of India who translated the Holy Quran from Arabic into Persian. This was done after more than eleven hundred years after the same was revealed. Later, other people also followed his example and began to translate the Holy Word of God into other languages. Those who have the sense of appreciation applaud this great service to the Faith done by the venerable Shah Sahib. But the so-called Ulema (Mullas) opposed him bitterly and tried to arouse a feeling of hatred against the

noble Shah Sahib. They actually accused him of opening a vista through which the Muslims shall go astray. They said that the laymen who read the translations of the Holy Quran will desert Islam and declared the translation of the Shah Sahib to be an unholy innovation in the established faith. They added that no one before had dared to commit such a regrettable blunder. Therefore, the man guilty of such a heinous crime deserved no punishment less than being beheaded.

It was only due to the personal enmity, hatred and jealousy of his opponents that gave an entirely false colouring to a service which ought to have been proclaimed from the house tops. Instead they lost no time in trying to excite the people against the holy Sayyad and started a campaign of false propaganda in the city. They stooped down so low that once when the venerable Sayyad was coming out of the Fatehpuri Mosque at Delhi after saying the late afternoon prayers (Asr), they pointed him out to a few ruffians who were waiting outside and who surrounded him from all sides with the intention of slaying him. But it was a miracle that he came out of them totally unhurt and even without a single scratch. But this opposition gradually died down and today every Muslim in the sub-continent feels indebted to the venerable Sayyad for his first translation of the Holy Quran. (Deebaacha Al-Balaagh-ul-Mubeen: p. 18-19: Deoband)

(3) HAZRAT MIRZA MAZHAR JAN-I-JAANAAN (born 1110, died 1195 Hijra). Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janaan was a famous poet and a great Sufi who had renounced the world and devoted his life to mysticism and literature. In the Urdu language he is considered to be a literary gem. His death and martyrdom also lies at the door of the bigoted Mulla. He died instantly after receiving the bullet wound. (Rod-i-Kauthar: p. 637)

(4) HAZRAT MUHAMMAD BIN ABDUL WAHHAB (born 1115, died 1206 Hijra). Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab was a great Reformer in Islam. He was an Arab having been born in Njad in Arabia. He is the Founder of the Movement commonly called the Wahhaabi Movement. He worked most zealously to re-establish the Unity of God and the true traditions of

the Holy Prophet. But, alas! this noble son of Islam was also declared to be a heretic.

The Mufti and the Imam of the Holy K'abah gave his verdict against this illustrious son of Islam. This verdict could be seen in the book, "Al-ddarar-al-Sunniya Fee Radd-il-Wahhabiya". (The truth about the Wahaabi Religion, edited by Maulana Muhammad Zia Ullah Qadari: publishers Qadri Kutub, Khana, Sialkot: p. 5 and 20-21)

The thirteenth century Hijra

(1) HAZRAT SAYYAD AHMAD OF BARELI (born 1201, died 1246.)

AND

(2) HAZRAT SHAH ISMAIL SHAHEED (born 1196, martyred 1246). The above-mentioned venerable leaders of Islam were, no doubt, the reformers of their age. They now lie in peace at Balakot.

About these two great sons of Islam, Maulana Masood Ahmad Nadwi wrote:

"It was quite likely that the whole of the Punjab and the Frontier Province would have again shone with the bright lustre of Islam and the world would have again witnessed the noble and unforgettable days of the time of the "Upright Khalifas" of the earliest Islam . . .

"The perverted Ulema (Mullas) and the worshippers of graves and tombs gave their verdicts of heresy and infidelity against these brave and true soldiers of Islam; The Khans in the Frontier Province betrayed their own master and benefactor. The result was that the venerable Sayyad was martyred at Balakot. His Khalifa, Sayyad Ismail, also achieved his heart's ardent desire and achieved martyrdom at the same battlefield . . .

"On the one hand we look at and admire the wonderful deeds and sacrifices of these respected and time-honoured true sons of Islam, our hearts are filled with pride. But we are

dismayed and hang our heads with shame when we look at the scurrilous and reprehensible verdicts of these so-called custodians of Islam and their ignoble literature extending over a century and published throughout the whole of the sub-continent from Badayun to Madras. And alas, this still continues . . .”

“The most regrettable and unfortunate part of it is that these ill-starred enemies have not even yet forgiven these chosen servants of Allah. These worthy sons of Islam died more than a century ago, yet the detestable taunts and attacks still continue”.

We quote here a verdict given against Hazrat Maulana Ismail Shaheed,

“There is not the least doubt about his apostasy nor in his backsliding and that of his associates and his helpers. He who entertains the least doubt about their apostasy, is himself an infidel”. (‘Bhonchaal Bar Lashkar-i-Dajjaal’: p. 102: ref: Weekly ‘Khursheed’: dated 25th February, 1938: 5)

“O ye that sleep in the tombs at Balakot! may God’s peace and mercy be upon you”. (Hindustan ki Pehli Islami Tahreek’: p. 38-40: published by Maktaba Nash’at-i-Thaaniya, Hyderabad, Deccan, 1952)

(2) HAZRAT MAULVI ABDULLAH GHAZNAWI (born 1230, died 1298 Hijra). Hazrat Maulvi Abdullah of Ghazni had no parallel in his time in piety and devotion. He was dauntless in the propagation of the Unity of God and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. He was strictly against any kind of innovation in Islam. He would not allow the least encroachment upon the attributes of God in any kind or form. That was the reason that for a very long period he had to face lots of trials and opposition at the hands of the semi-educated Mullas. He was exiled from his home during the reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan of Afghanistan. Mulla Mushki and Mulla Nasrullah, both gave a verdict of apostasy against him. Later, on the instigation of Muhammad Afzal Khan and Muhammad Azam Khan, the Ulema (Mullas) decreed that he be chastised and be taken

round the city of Kabul on the back of a donkey. After this humiliation he was thrown into the prison together with his sons. But he remained steadfast till the end of his life and did not budge an inch. He continued preaching the Word of God and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet". (Tareekh-i-Ahl-i-Hadeeth: by Maulana Meer Ibrahim of Sialkot: p 445-447)

(4) HAZRAT MAULANA MUHAMMAD QASIM NANAUTWI (born 1268, died 1297 Hija). Maulana Muhammad Qasim of Nanauta was a disciple of Shah Abdul Ghani of Delhi and the Founder of the famous Seminary at Deoband which was recognised as the best institution in the whole of the sub-continent for imparting religious education. Maulana Muhammad Qasim was a formidable debator and he came out to oppose many Christian Priests and Hindu Pundits of great repute. On account of his defence of Islam against these antagonists, he became very popular amongst the Muslims of India. He has left after him his writings of very great merit which gained popularity after their publication. His meritorious book "Tahzeer-un-Naas" abounds in emphatic arguments on every subject that he dealt with. He has based his discussions on conclusive arguments and historical facts. But this very praiseworthy book was made the target of attacks of the opinionated and stiff-necked fanatics for their verdict of apostasy. The verdict of 'apostasy' from 'Ulemas' of the holy cities (Mecca and Medina) was also based mainly on the opinions and concepts contained in this book—"Tahzeer-un-Naas". The gist of the verdict is:

"... 'Nazeeriya' refers to Nazeer Hussain of Delhi and 'Qasimiya' refers to Qasim of Nanauta and who is the author of the book 'Tahzeer-un-Naas' and who has in this book said, "But even supposing that there appeared a prophet in his time, even then he (Holy Prophet) shall continue to be the "*Khatam-un-Nabiyyeen*"; and even if a prophet does appear after the Holy Prophet, his status of being the "*Khatam*" still remains unchanged and intact..."

"All these people, everyone of them, are apostates and renegades and are out of the pale of Islam". (Husaam-ul-Haramain-i-'Alaa Manharil-Kufr-i-Wal-main: p. 100-113)

“Twelve Ulemas from Mecca and thirty-two Ulemas from Medina have verified this verdict and affixed their seals to the document”.

The conclusion

After having related very briefly the deplorable incidents and the historical facts concerning the chosen sages of God, who faced great trials and sacrificed their honour, their possessions and their lives and became the victims of the obdurate Mullas totally impervious to reason in declaring these saints as infidels, renegades, heretics and apostates, we shall now quote a few lines from the writings of the Promised Messiah in this connection. He said,

“What makes one wonder is that none of these saints had escaped the verdict of apostasy. And how holy and how blessed were they all? . . . Even this verdict of apostasy is a matter of great blessings which these noble and pious souls of God had inherited”. (Akhbaar Al-Hakam: 18th May, 1908)

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