

## TAZKIRA

### SHAIKH JAMALUDDIN DAHLAVI

(Pages 31-51)

The most venerable person who reached unprecedented eminence in religious learning and *Sufi tariqat* (mystic observances) among the ancestors of my late father was his grandfather Hazrat Shah Muhammad Afzal. His father was Shaikh Muhammad Mohsin. I will write about him later. But, among the maternal ancestors of Hazrat Shah Muhammad Afzal was Maulana Jamaluddin alias Shaikh Bahlol of Delhi. I will write about him first.

Unfortunately, I could not get enough details about him (Jamaluddin). What my father has written about him is based on *Siar al-Asfia*, *Maktubat Hazrat Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith* of Delhi, and *Tazkeer Al-Talibeen ba Tazkirat al-Sulaha wal-Wasileen*. His writing contains encomiums about his (Jamaluddin's) virtues and excellences rather than facts about his life. *Tazkeer al-Talibeen* is before me. But the collection of the letters of Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith<sup>1</sup> of Delhi, titled *Irsal al-Makateeb war-Rasail* does not contain any details about Jamaluddin. There could possibly be another collection of the Shah's letters.

Be that as it may, these books show that he (Jamaluddin) was a native of Delhi and that he was among the renowned people, eminent ulama and *Sufis* of (Mughal) Emperor Akbar's period. He completed his education about *Sufi tariqat* (mystic observances) as a disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal<sup>2</sup>, who was a disciple of Syed Rafiuddin Salami al-Shirazi in

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Abul Mujid Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi's ancestors came to India from Bukhara during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khilji. The Shaikh was the son of Shaikh Saifuddin bin Saadullah. He was born in Delhi in Muharram 958 AH (January, 1551 AD). He completed his studies at the age of 20 or 22 years. He had memorised the Quran and mastered the common branches of knowledge. He started teaching but soon he became disappointed with the conditions prevailing in the country and finally went to Hejaz in 996 AH (1587-88 AD). He returned to India in 1000 AH after completing his studies as the disciple of many learned scholars in Hejaz. He spent the rest of his life in India, teaching the sciences of religion, particularly, the sciences of Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>S.M.</sup>). The spread of the Science of Hadith in India is greatly due to his untiring efforts. He wrote over sixty books on *Tafseer* (commentary of Quran), *Tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism), *Hadith* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>S.M.</sup>), *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Aqaed* (Islamic beliefs). He was also a poet and his poetic pen name was Haqqi. He is said to have composed 500,000 lines of poetry. He died on 21 Rabi-1, 1052 AH (9 June, 1642 AD). He was buried at the Dargah Qutub Sahib near Hauz Shamsi in Delhi. — Malik Ram.

<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal: Jahni is a small town in Lahore District (now in Pakistan). His ancestors were Arabs. But he was born in Sitpur (Multan District, Punjab, Pakistan) in 809 AH (1406 AD). His father died before his birth and his mother a little later. His elder brother, Shaikh Rahmatullah, therefore, brought him up. For sometime, he studied as a student of Maulana Ismail Uchcha (the disciple of Hazrat Jami<sup>RA</sup>). But the fact is that he was a divine scholar. He died in 986 (1574-75 AD) and was buried in Shergarh, where he spent all his life. — Malik Ram.

The date of his birth as given by Malik Ram appears to be doubtful. It should probably be 908 AH. Otherwise, his age at his death would work out to 177 years in terms of Islamic calendar. Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri died in 910 AH. In the text of the *Tazkira*, he is said to have learnt by *Kashf* (divine revelation) that "Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri, Rahmatullahi Alaih, was among the great saints of a high degree of spiritual attainments" — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi, Translator.

philosophy and other sciences. Syed Rafiuddin Shirazi was among the ninth century (AH) authorities on Hadith and a great man of learning. He is the disciple of Hafiz Shamsuddin Sakhawi<sup>3</sup> who, in turn, was the disciple of Hafiz Ibn-e-Hajar Asqalani<sup>4</sup>. He had studied philosophy as a disciple of Allama Jalaluddin Dawwani<sup>5</sup>. According to *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, Rafiuddin's family was greatly respected in Shiraz, so much so that Allama Dawwani himself would come to his (Rafiuddin's) house to teach him. Before meeting Rafiuddin, Sakhawi had sent him written documents of about fifty books and had stated that a personality like him (Rafiuddin) did not need any formal instruction and tuition. But his (Rafiuddin's) thirst for knowledge knew no bounds. Rafiuddin himself went to Cairo and stayed there for a long time as his disciple. In his book, *Zau-ul-Laame fi A'yan-ul-Qarn-al-Tasey*, Sakhawi has written a detailed treatise about him. Besides, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, *Rozatul Ulama* and others give details about Rafiuddin. He came to India during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi<sup>6</sup> and settled there. All kings from Sikandar Lodhi to Salim Shah<sup>7</sup> were his

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This was a reliable *Kashf* (revelation). There remains no reason to doubt Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>'s claim of being *Mahdi al-Mauood* after reading the passage about the *Kashf*. If Shaikh Jamaluddin has something against the *Kashf* of his *murshid*, it must be due to some political exigency. Otherwise, he has left no stone unturned to prove by convincing arguments about the *vilayath* of Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

- <sup>3</sup> Hafiz Shamsuddin Sakhawi's full name is Shamauddin Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad. Originally his family lived in a small town Sakha in Egypt. Hence, he was called Sakhawi. He was born in Cairo in 831 AH (1467 AD). He extensively traveled all over the Islamic countries. He was an authority on various branches of the science of religion like history, *tafseer* (commentary on Quran), *Hadith* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>) and literature. He is the author of over 200 books. Prominent among them is *Zau Al-Laamey Fi A'ayan al-Qarn al-Tasey* in 12 volumes. Most of his books have not yet been published. He died in Madina in 902 AH (1497 AD). —Malik Ram.
- <sup>4</sup> Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani's name was Shahabuddin Ahmad and patronymic appellation Abul Fazal. It is said that his father Ali bin Muhammad was issueless and was, therefore, very sad. Hence, he went to a great saint Zaqeery for supplications. Shaikh told him that he would have a son who would enlighten the world with his knowledge. Shaikh Asqalani was born in Cairo (Egypt) on 23 Shaban 773 AH (29 February, 1372 AD). He pursued his studies in Egypt, Iran, Hejaz, Syria and Yemen. He was a follower of Imam Shafei<sup>RA</sup>. He was a prominent scholar of the science of Hadith (traditions of Prophet<sup>SLM</sup>). He was also a poet. He is credited with writing about 150 books and each of these books is considered to be an authority on the concerned subject. Famous among his is *Fatah al-Bari fi Sharah al-Bukhari*, *Al-asaba fi Maarifat al-Sahaba*, *Bulughul Maram fi Ahadith al-Ahkam*, *Lisan al-Meezan*, *Al-darer al-Kamina*, etc. He died in Cairo on 28 Zil-Haj, 852 AH (22 February, 1449 AD). — Malik Ram.
- <sup>5</sup> Jalaluddin Muhammad bin Asad Dawwani is associated with Dawwan, a town near Gazaroon in Iran. Also called Shaikh Faruqi, he was born in 830 AH (1427 AD), studied in Afghanistan, Turkistan and Turkey. He mastered *Fiqh-e-Shafa'iyah*, Logic, Mysticism and other branches of knowledge. He is the author of many books. His treatise, *Fi Tahqiq wal Maad*, has already been published in Egypt. Another of his masterpieces is *Akhlaq-e-Jalali*, which was a text for religious scholars for a long time. He wrote this book by excerpting from *Akhlaq-e-Nasiri* by Khwaja Naseeruddin Tusi, and adding his own comments. He died in 907 AH (1501-02 AD). —Malik Ram.
- <sup>6</sup> Sikandar Lodhi (1489-1517 AD): His name was Nizam Khan. He was the son and successor of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi (1451-1489 AD). He was himself a learned person and respected the learned. He was a poet and his poetic name was *Gulrukh*. He was a disciple of Shaikh Jamal Kunbhavi (the author of *Sier al-Arifeen*). Hindus acquired mastery over Persian and started joining Government services under Muslim kings during his reign. He died in Agra on 17 February, 1510 AD (7 Ziqada, 923 AH). — Malik Ram.
- <sup>7</sup> Saleem Shah: He was the younger son of Sher Shah Suri (1539-1545 AD), the founder of the Sur dynasty. His original name was Jalal Khan. He ascended the throne on the sudden death of his father Sher Shah on 23 May, 1545 AD (11 Rabi-I 952 AH). Although he had assumed the name Islam Shah, he was popularly called Salim

*murids* (disciples). Great ulama also were his disciples in the Science of Hadith. All the knowledge of the Science of Hadith that had spread in India before the period of Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith of Delhi was the blessing (*faiz*) and result of his stay in India. Defeated by Sher Shah, Humayun came to Agra and met Rafiuddin at the latter's residence seeking his blessings and supplications. *Tazkirat al-Waqiaat*<sup>8</sup> says that Rafiuddin had suggested to Humayun to go to Iran. In the tussle between Mullah Mubarak<sup>9</sup> and Shaikh Abdunnabi<sup>10</sup>, Rafiuddin always took

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Shah. He was a friend of the learned. He was happy among the scholars and pious people. He died on 22 Ziqada, 960 AH (30 October, 1553 AU) in Gwalior. His body was brought to Sahasram and was buried by the side of his father. — Malik Ram.

<sup>8</sup> *Tazkirat al-Waqiaat* (Urdu translation; "However, it does not appear from here that Syed Rafiuddin had advised Humayun to flee to Iran. When Humayun was defeated near Kannauj in May 1540 AD, he came to Agra where Rafiuddin suggested to him that it was imprudent to stay in Agra because Sher Khan was pursuing and, hence Humayun should flee. Rafiuddin offered him a horse and other requirements. He also blessed the fleeing king.... - - Malik Ram.

<sup>9</sup> Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri was the scion of a family from Yemen, which had come and settled in Reel in Sindh (now in Pakistan). His father Shaikh Khizr migrated and settled in Nagaur near Ajmer. Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> was born in Nagaur in 911 AH (1505-06 AD). His teacher in initial stages was Shaikh Attan (Turky). He then moved to the school of Khwaja Ahrar. When he left Nagaur and came to Ahmadabad, he joined the school of Shaikh Gazarooni, an eminent scholar of the city. Shaikh treated Mubarak as his son. During his stay in Ahmadabad, he met many scholars and learnt whatever he could from each of them. He returned home in 1551 AD but settled down in Agra (Chhar Bagh) instead of Nagaur. At Agra Mir Rafiuddin Safavi Muhaddith was the *sajjada*.

Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>'s two elder sons, Abul Faiz Faizi and Abul Fazal were born here. Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> was free in his thinking and beliefs and naturally all these things were nothing less than infidelity (*kufir*) and heresy (*ilhad*) in the eyes of the conservatives. The result was that till Faizi and Abul Fazal reached the Mughal Emperor Akbar's court, he could not rise to any position. Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> was persecuted by the conservative court ulama. When Faizi and Abul Fazal joined the Emperor's court as courtiers, Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> heaved a sigh of relief. There is no doubt that Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>, along with his two sons, had a great role to play in the development of Emperor Akbar's religious thinking and his launching *Deen-e-Ilahi*.

Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> is the author of many books. The most famous among them is *tafseer* (commentary on Quran), *Manba al-Uyoon al-Maani-o-Matla al-Shamoos al-Masani*, in four volumes. He wrote this book during the last days of his life, when he had lost his eyesight. He dictated the whole book with, the help of his memory. Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> died at the age of 90 years on 17 Ziqada, 1001 AH (4 December, 1593 AD) at Lahore. His body was brought to Agra (Chhar Bagh) and buried there. It appears that his grave was later shifted to Roza Ladli Begum in Sikandra. — Malik Ram.

Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>'s being a Mahdavi is well known among the Mahdavis and non-Mahdavis. Mullah Badayuni admits that Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> was a Mahdavi in his book, *Nijat al-Rashid*. Nagauri<sup>RA</sup> had compiled a chronogram, *Maza Mahdi*, on the death of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri (910 AH). Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> had sent an *istifta* (religious enquiry) to Hazrat Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> *Aalim Billah* who, in reply, wrote a book, *Minhaj al-Taqqweem*, in Arabic. *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani* says that during the debate in the court of Salim Shah, Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> supported Hazrat Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> and suffered for it. Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi says that Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>'s father Shaikh Khizr Nagauri also was a Mahdavi. — Muqaddima Siraj al-Absar, III edition, Hyderabad, 1990 AD, pages 239-242).

<sup>10</sup> Shaikh Abdunnabi was the son of Shaikh Ahmed and the grandson of Shaikh Abdul Quddoos Gangohi, the resident of Edri in Gangoh District. Initially, he was attached to the Chishtia Order of Islamic mysticism. He thus frequented the congregations of sama' (*qawwali* sessions). When he went to Hejaz and acquired the knowledge of Hadith, he gave up the congregations. He joined the order of *Ahl-e-Hadith*. He was famous for his piety in addition to his knowledge and learning. When Emperor Akbar heard about the piety and learning of Shaikh Abdunnabi, he appointed him as *Sadr-us-Sudoor*, a prestigious post of the highest court of law in 971 AH (1563-64 AD). Historians admit of his charity, rank and grandeur and pomp and pageantry. But, finally Emperor Akbar

the side of Mullah Mubarak and it was due to the support of Rafiuddin that Mullah Mubarak could settle in Agra. Rafiuddin died in 954 AH.

Thus, it is obvious that Maulana Jamaluddin was the disciple of the disciple of Hafiz Asqalani. Jamaluddin lived in Delhi. He was accepted as a great teacher of the sciences of religion and philosophy. In religious instruction, none could compete with him. Besides, he was a Sufi and a *murshid* (spiritual guide) and strictly followed mystic observances. People from far and wide came to him for his blessings. The seat of Government in those days was Agra. But the centre of learning and the learned was always Delhi. Particularly those truthful ulama, who wanted to protect themselves from the trials and tribulations of the royal proximity and its concomitant hazards and who wanted to avoid worldly desires and lust, preferred the calm and quiet of Delhi to the hustle and bustle of the capital. Hazrat Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith of Delhi too belongs to this period.

But when the family of Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> became influential in the imperial court and the latter's religious orientation itself changed, Jamaluddin bade farewell to India and went to Makkah in Arabian Peninsula. *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* describes the reason for this voyage as under:

"Some contemporary *ulama* prepared a *mahzar*<sup>11</sup> (document) that Emperor Akbar was the *imam* of the time. All the *ulama* of the capital affixed their seals to it. Later, this *mahzar* was sent to Delhi also. The *ulama* of Delhi were asked to affix their signatures and seals to it. But Jamaluddin refused to do so on the plea that whatever had been done was enough. "Why should we *faqirs* and people living in seclusion be troubled? If necessary, an opinion poll of all the *ulama* of the whole country be conducted," he suggested. After this, the *ulama* of the eastern regions issued a *fatwa* that Emperor Akbar had rebelled against the *Shariat*. Consequently, a suspicion arose that the *ulama* of Delhi were hand in glove with those of the eastern regions. Among them was Jamaluddin. When the situation worsened, Maulana Jamaluddin embarked upon the Haj pilgrimage and went to Makkah with a group of his disciples and devotees.

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became weary of his stubbornness. He had to suffer humiliation at the hands of the family of Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri. Akbar directed him to go to Makkah in 986 AH (1578-79). Had he stayed there, he would have died in peace. To his misfortune, he returned in 990 AH (1582 AD). He presented himself at the imperial court at Fatehpur. The situation at the court had greatly changed during his absence. He was humiliated and disgraced. Finally, Shaikh Abdunnabi was handed over to Todarmal and Abul Fazal to enquire about the amount of Rs. 70,000 the Emperor had given to Shaikh Abdunnabi for distribution among the ulama and the deserving in Hejaz. Abul Fazal jailed him. He died during his incarceration. Some historians say that Abul Fazal got him murdered at the instance of Emperor Akbar in 992 AH (1583 AD). He was buried in Narnool in Punjab. The mosque on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in Delhi, which houses the offices of Jamiat al-Ulama-e-Hind now, was constructed by Abdunnabi. — Malik Ram.

<sup>11</sup> Shaikh Mubarak Nagauri prepared the original draft of the *mahzar* in Rajab, 987 AH (1579 AD). Other ulama also affixed their signatures to the *mahzar* under duress. The text of the *mahzar* has been reproduced in full in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* (Vol. II, pp. 271-272). Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad too has copied it from there (*Darbar-e-Akbari*, pp. 397-398). The purpose of the *mahzar* was (to assert that) the rank of the *sultan-e-aadil* (righteous king) was above that of a *mujtahid* (jurist who formulates independent decision). Hence, if two *mujtahids* differ on any point, the decision of the *sultan-e-aadil* was binding. If, under such circumstances, the *sultan* issued an order in his discretion, it would be enforceable even if it were ostensibly to contradict any texts. Violation of the order would be tantamount to ruining one's world and the Hereafter. Obviously the term *sultan-e-aadil* referred to Emperor Akbar himself. — Malik Ram.

But it has been written in *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* in the chapter dealing with Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> that:

"Some *ulama* of the period, particularly Shaikh al-Islam, Maulana Abdullah Sultanpuri<sup>12</sup>, were bitterly hostile to Shaikh. The reason for this hostility was that it had been divinely revealed to the Shaikh, that Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri<sup>13</sup>, Rahmatullahi Alaih. was among the great

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<sup>12</sup> Abdullah Sultanpuri was a resident of Sultanpur near Lahore. He was the son of Shaikh Shamsuddin Ansari, a master of religious and rational sciences, particularly, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Emperor Humayun had given him the title *Makhdoomul Mulk* and *Shaikh Al-Islam*. He was so steadfast in religious matters that he would not tolerate any difference of opinion. But when Emperor Akbar claimed to be the fountainhead of *ijtihad* (independent judgement on a legal or theological question, based on interpretation of Islamic religious texts), he had to affix his signature. But, since the power of the family of Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri was on the rise, he could not regain his eminence. He, therefore, went on Haj pilgrimage. He died on his return in 990 AH (1582 AD) at Ahmadabad. — Malik Ram.

<sup>13</sup> Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri, son of Mir Syed Khan<sup>RA</sup>, was born in 847 AH (1443-44 AD). He was very intelligent from his childhood. He completed his studies at the age of twelve years. He was so enthusiastic in research and debate that his contemporaries conferred on him the title of *Asad-al-Ulema* (Lion among the Learned). His eloquence was charismatic and very effective. He claimed to be Mahdi and *Imam-e-ahd* (leader of the era) in 905 AH. Contemporary *ulama* opposed him bitterly. He extensively traveled in Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat and Deccan in search of refuge. But the *ulama* opposed him everywhere. Finally, he went to Hejaz on Haj pilgrimage. On return, he stayed for sometime at Ahmadabad in Gujarat. Aggrieved by his sermons, the *ulama* complained to Sultan Mahmood Begadha that he was misguiding the people by his preaching against the *Shariat*. The *sultan* ordered his expulsion (from his dominions). He embarked on a journey again. It was during this journey that he proclaimed for the third time at Barhli in Gujarat that he was Imam Mahdi "*Ana Mahdi Mubeen Muradullah*" His followers claim that this was his confirmed proclamation (*dawa-e-muakkad*). When he found no refuge anywhere, he went to Sindh (now in Pakistan). Here, too, the same situation confronted him. At the instigation of local *ulama* the ruler of Sindh ordered his beheading. However, through the efforts of the courtiers, his life was saved. But he had to migrate from Sindh. From Sindh, he went to Qandahar and, finally, to Farah in Khorasan. Here, he died at the age of 63 on 19 Ziqada. 910 AH (23 April, 1505 AD). He was laid to rest there. Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri has extracted the chronogram "*Maza Mahdi*" which aggregates to 910 AH, the year of the death of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> of Jaunpur. — Malik Ram (Malik Ram, quoting *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh, Tazkira-e-Ulama-e-Hind and Nuzhat al-Khawatir*).

Some points in this note by Malik Ram need clarification: The name of the father of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri is Syed Abdullah. Syed Khan was the title conferred on him by the rulers of Jaunpur. Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> started his migration from Jaunpur in Jamadi-I, 887 AH (1482 AD), when he was forty. At that time there was no opposition from the *ulama* against him. He started his migration on a commandment of Allah. He went to Danapur (Bihar) in the East. His going to Bengal is not reported in Mahdavia literature. Long before the migration started, Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> had participated in a war. King Sultan Hussain Sharqi of Jaunpur waged against Raja Dalpat Rai of Gaur in Bengal. During his life-long migration, he went to Makkah for Haj pilgrimage, after he visited Deccan. Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s migration was not in search of refuge, as claimed by Malik Ram. Besides Danapur, he went to Chanderi. Chapaneer, Mando, Daulatabad, Bidar, Gulbarga and Bijapur, before embarking on a voyage to Arabia. At Makkah, Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> proclaimed to be Imam *Mahdi al-Mauood* in 901 AH. On his way back to India, he disembarked at the port of Diu in Gujarat and came to Ahmadabad where he claimed to be *Imam Mahdi* for the second time. From there, he went to Patan in Gujarat. Here *ulama* obtained an official order for the expulsion of Hazrat Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>. His next stop was Barhli where he made the claim to be Mahdi for the third time in 905 AH. This is called the *dawa-e-muakkida* (final and confirmed claim). Sultan Mahmood Begadha had become a devotee of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> long before the latter proclaimed to be Mahdi. Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> stayed in Badli for a year and a half.

From here, Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> wrote letters to various kings and rulers, including Sultan Mahmood Begadha, inviting them to recognise and accept him as *Mahdi al-Mauood*. The letter reads (in translation):

*Text begins:* I am Syed Muhammad, son of Syed Abdullah. I am in bodily health and in my senses and mental

saints of a high degree of spiritual attainments and that, because of their shortcomings in realising truth, people have blundered in understanding his great spiritual achievements. The *ulama* that were accusing Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> of impiety and misleading the people were in grave error. This attitude was not to the liking of some of the *ulama* at the imperial court. These *ulama* were engaged in torturing and killing of the Mahdavia group and in their zeal, they had inflicted great sufferings on *faqirs* and the people of God. When, during the reign of King Salim Shah, Shaikh Abdullah<sup>RA</sup> Niazi<sup>14</sup> and the group of his *faqirs* were tortured, Hazrat Shaikh

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alertness. I am not intoxicated but in full consciousness. In other words, without any constraints and misunderstandings, I have, as ordained by Allah, made this claim to be Mahdi. And I present the argument and proof of this claim from Quran and obediently following of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. It is the duty of the kings to assemble the *ulama* (scholars), righteous people, ministers and nobles of the royal court discuss and argue to find out the truth. They should spare no effort to investigate the matter. If my claim is correct according to Shariat and if it is necessary to accept me they should accept me and support and help Truth. If I am wrong or false or am slandering Allah, it is their duty to convince me (of the truth). If I fail to be convinced, they should imprison me for a year or two. And if I am found obstinate without a (valid) argument and authority, they should kill me because, wherever I go, I would repeat my claim and invite people accordingly, thus misguiding them. Hence, in either case, if they fail to do justice, it would disgrace them. In other words, they would be blamed for not accepting me if I was truthful in my claim and for not trying to convince and imprison me, if I was false, and, finally, for not killing me and putting an end to my mischief, if I was obstinate. The burden in either case falls on the heads of the kings. *Text ends.*

Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>, author of the book, *Tazkira-e-Mahdavia*, writes that he had taken the text of the letter from the book, *Intikhab al-Mawaleed* by Mian Fazlullah<sup>RA</sup>. He adds: The *ulama* and the courtiers showed Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>'s letter to their kings. None of the kings sent a reply. The *ulama* and courtiers told the kings that Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was a perfect saint (*vali-e-kamil*) and would prove his claim by Quran and *Sunnat*, and, therefore, it was not prudent to confront him on his claim.

From Barhli, Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> went to Nagaur, Jaisalmer, Thatta (in Sindh), Kaha, Qandahar and, finally, Farah in Afghanistan, where he died and was laid to eternal rest in 910 AH (1505 AD). — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>14</sup> Shaikh Abdullah<sup>RA</sup> Niazi was from the Afghan tribe called Niazi. He was a great traveler. Wherever he went, he stayed in the company of great scholars and learnt religious sciences from them. In the beginning, he was a disciple of Shaikh Salim Chisti. But later, he took to the ways of Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri and began to live in seclusion in Bayana. When King Salim Shah Suri ordered his men to beat him and he was almost dead, Salim Shah left him, thinking he was dead. However, he survived and fled from Bayana and spent the rest of his life in travel, visiting various places. When he returned, he settled in Sirhind in Punjab (now in India) and gave up the Mahdavi faith. Emperor Akbar offered to give him and his family financial help and lands, which he rejected on the plea that he trusted in Allah (*tawakkalan ala-Allah*). He died in Sirhind in 1000 AH (1591-92 AD) at the age of ninety. — MR.

Malik Ram has relied for his note on Shaikh Niazi on *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, *Tabaqat-e-Akbari* and *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* for saying that Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> gave up the Mahdavia faith after returning to Sirhind. However, he also states that Emperor Akbar had offered to Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and his family financial assistance and land but the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> rejected it, saying he trusted in Allah (*Tawakkalan ala-Allah*). Among the main commandments of the Mahdavia faith are *tawakkal* and refusal to acquire property and accept regular income at fixed intervals, which is called, *ta'ayun* in Mahdavia parlance. *Ta'ayun* vitiates *tawakkal*. Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>'s refusal to accept *ta'ayun* and landed property indicates that he had not given up Mahdavia faith. — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

According to *Mazameen-e-Mahmood*, Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> was in continued migration for over forty years after he left Bayana subsequent to his persecution at the hands of King Salim Shah. He visited Punjab, Afghanistan, and Sindh. Wherever he went, he established a *daira* (locality) in the Mahdavia style and engaged himself in propagating the Mahdavia faith. Sign of his efforts are evident even now. Balochistan Gazette reports that the *Zikris* of Balochistan, among whom Niazi<sup>RA</sup> worked for a long time, are a branch group of Mahdavis.

Dawood<sup>RA</sup> had said that the blood of the *faqirs* would be avenged, and the rule of the Afghans would not last long. The news of the expression of this opinion by Dawood<sup>RA</sup> spread. His opponents accused Dawood<sup>RA</sup> of being a Mahdavi. They gave him great trouble. Seeing all this, Jamaluddin wrote a book in which he endeavoured to prove with incontrovertible arguments that the *vilayat* (sainthood) of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> of Jaunpur was *haq* (true) but the belief that he was *Mahdi al-Mau'ood* (Promised Mahdi) was not sound (*batil*). "To accuse us of belonging to the group of such unsound beliefs was the result of malice and villainy of our opponents,"<sup>15</sup> he wrote. A study of this book satisfied the righteous people. However, the ire of his opponents increased. But Allah was the Protector (*nasir*). Hence, they could not hurt him. And, finally his opponents were disgraced."

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According to *Tazkirat al-Murshideen*, 1800 seekers of Allah lived in Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA1</sup>'s *Daira*, in the recognisable style of the Mahdavia group. How could the head of such a group retract while living in peace after all the persecution had ended, when he had refused to retract while he was subjected to the most inhuman treatment?

According to *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani*, Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> was the disciple of Hazrat Shah Ne'mat<sup>RZ</sup>, third Caliph of Hazrat Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. But according to another narration, he was the disciple of Mian Khund Shaikh<sup>RZ</sup>. However, what Maulana Azad has said about the daily routine of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>, the way he served the people, distributed his own wages among the needy and indigent, who joined his prayer congregation, shows that his deeds were greatly influenced by Shah Ne'mat<sup>RZ</sup>. — Syed Mahmood Yadullahi, author of *Mazameen-e-Mahmood*, Karachi. 1986. Pages 61-86. (Please also see Note 65 below. — Syed Ziaullah Yedullahi).

<sup>15</sup> This statement of Maulana Azad manifests three points: one, that the sainthood (*vilayat*) of Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri was genuine and authentic; two. Maulana Jamaluddin regarded Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri's claim to be the promised Mahdi (*Mahdi al-Mauood*) as unsound (*batil*), and, three, the evil *ulama* persecuted Maulana Jamaluddin and his companions on the charge of being Mahdavis.

It may be noted in this connection that Maulana Jamaluddin asserted that Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri's sainthood was genuine and authentic. Various eminent Ulama opposed to the Imam<sup>AS</sup>, including Shaikh Ali Muttaqi, Shah Abdul Aziz and Maulana Wajihuddin Gujarati and others have admitted that the Imam<sup>AS</sup> was an *aalim-e-haq* and *wasil billah* (a truthful scholar and in communion with Allah). So much so, that Maulana Azad himself has stated that it was revealed by Allah to Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal that the sainthood of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri was genuine and authentic and that he would not sign the *fatwa* (religious edict) to persecute the Imam<sup>AS</sup> and his companions.

So far as the belief that Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> is the promised Mahdi, is concerned, the Mahdavis do not expect the non-Mahdavis to subscribe to the belief, nor do they need any certificate from them.

However, it becomes clear how the evil *ulama* made this belief a pretext to persecute the Mahdavis. Further, it is confirmed by a comment of Maulana Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal, spiritual guide (*murshid*) of Shaikh Jamaluddin that the persecution of Shaikh Abdullah<sup>RA</sup> Niazi and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> would soon be avenged. — Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin and Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

It is strange that many righteous ulama were convinced of the sainthood and eminence of Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> and admitted that he claimed to be *Imam Mahdi al-Mauood* when he was fully conscious and in his senses and continued to so claim till his last breath, but despite this admission, they refute his claim. It is a fact that Allah warns *aulia* (saints) if they err. The *aulia* are the devotees of Allah. No *wali* (saint) has ever died without retracing and repenting if he had made a mistake or a false claim. The attitude of those who had acknowledged Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s *vilayat* (sainthood), but had refuted his claim to be *Mahdi al-Mauood*, despite being wary of his (Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>'s) opponents, shows that they had accepted Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> as *Mahdi al-Mauood*. But they could not openly acknowledge this fact for fear of life and persecution at the hands of the evil *ulama* of the court at that time. In our opinion, these people (including Shaikh Jamaluddin and his pir Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal) were, in fact Mahdavis. Maulana Azad has himself written in another place that the allegation of being a Mahdavi, if proved, would have led to the death of Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> at the hands of Makhdoomul Mulk. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

Be that as it may, whether it was because of the *mahzar* of Emperor Akbar's *imamat* (leadership), or because of the allegations of his being a Mahdavi, it had become impossible for Jamaluddin to stay in India. He was thus compelled to give up his native place and go to Makkah. The author of *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* writes that a few years later, Khan-e-Azam Mirza Aziz Kokaltash<sup>16</sup> went to Makkah for his Haj pilgrimage. He was a great devotee of Jamaluddin. And, hence, he was able to persuade Jamaluddin to return to India. But he did not live long after the return. He died within a few months, as if the angel of death was waiting only for his return.

If Shaikh Jamaluddin had gone to Makkah after the incident of the *mahzar* of Emperor Akbar's *imamat* (leadership), he must have gone in 987 AH. Khan-e-Azam went to Makkah after he was annoyed by the irregularities and innovations of the imperial court in 1000 AH. He returned in 1002 AH. Shaikh Jamaluddin also returned with him. This shows that Jamaluddin stayed in Makkah for twelve or thirteen years. His long carefree stay at Makkah shows that his attitude was totally different from that of the courtier *ulama* who would go to the House of God in disgust at the goings on in the imperial court, but when worldly lust did not allow them to live in peace there, they would rush back to India. They gave up the House of God for the worldly lust which they had abandoned for God!

Emperor Akbar had himself sent Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri Makdoomul Mulk and Shaikh Abdunnabi to Makkah but they could not stay there even for three years. The result of this return is well known.

*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* is (like) an album, which shows the leading scholars and spiritual guides of the era in their true colours. One is warned by seeing that worldly lust did not allow great claimants of (religious) knowledge and piety to live in peace. Destiny did not allow them to tread the path of (Ultimate) Truth. But never was the world devoid of the people of (Ultimate) Truth in any era.

Emperor Akbar's reign too was not devoid of such righteous people. But they were too few and spent their time praying in seclusion. Shaikh Jamaluddin too was among them. All his life, he kept himself dissociated from the imperial court. He could never bear to ruin the glory of divine knowledge in exchange for the worldly wealth. When he saw that conditions had changed, and the contemporary governance had passed into the hands of the purveyors of religion and worldly ostentation, so much so that there was no peace even for those who lived in seclusion, Jamaluddin decided to give up his home. Aye, he gave up India itself.

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<sup>16</sup> Khan-e-Azam Mirza Azeez Koka (Kokaltash) was the son of Shamsuddin Muhammad Atga Khan (Khan-e-Azam). Emperor Akbar was the suckling of Koka's mother, Jija Atga. Both Akbar and Koka were brought up together. Akbar respected Koka (as his foster brother) all his life. Koka was short-tempered and sometimes, he said objectionable things. But Akbar took no notice of such things and pardoned him. Akbar used to say: "there is an ocean of milk between me and Azeez (Koka) which I cannot swim across." Koka went on Haj pilgrimage in 1001 AH (1593 AD) and returned to India two years later. In the war of succession after the death of Akbar, Jahangir was one of the pretenders while his elder brother Khusro was the other. Koka supported Khusro. Khusro was defeated and Jahangir imprisoned him. Koka was persecuted. However, he was pardoned at the intervention of some of the courtiers. He died at Ahmadabad in 1033 (1623-24 AD). — Malik Ram.

In another note, on page 359 of *Tazkira*, (Sahitya Akademy\ Edition, 1985), Malik Ram quotes *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* (Vol. II. page 398) to say that on his return to India in 1003 AH Koka took the oath of fealty to join Emperor Akbar's *Deen-e-Ilahi* after shaving his beard. — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

People of the (Ultimate) Truth and Serenity have always been free from the fetters of homes and homelands. The whole world is their homeland; the entire earth is their house. The worldly luxuries have no attraction even at home for those who are free from the cares of worldliness and who are in all humility, the servants of Truth. They have a commitment to serve the divine knowledge and Truth even on their mat of mystic mendicancy. What is there for them in one corner of the world that they cannot get in another? Wherever they are they get two yards of space and a worn-out mat to sit on.

The author of *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* writes that Nasirul Mulk Pir Muhammad Khan Khan-e-Khanan<sup>17</sup> and Khan-e-Azam Kokaltash held Jamaluddin in high esteem. On various occasions they offered worldly wealth to Jamaluddin, but he always refused it and used to say: "I am afraid to build a house: it may render my heart desolate...."

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The facts, which the author of *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* has mentioned in respect of the causes of Jamaluddin's voyage to the holy city of Makkah, are the well-known incidents of the reign of Emperor Akbar. But it would be expedient to give a short account of them.

The details about the *mahzar* (record) of the *imamat* (religious leadership) of Emperor Akbar are that during the reign of Sher Shah<sup>18</sup> and Salim Shah, the large number of the worldly *ulama* and their authority had destroyed the peace in the country. The power-drunk and arrogant *ulama* of the imperial court had particularly persecuted and tortured devout and religious people. Whenever they found a person disdainful of worldly wealth and strictly observing the do's and don'ts of *Shariat*, they considered him a threat to their lust for worldly belongings. On one pretext or the other, they would accuse him of some offence to persecute him. The situation continued to be so till the early period of Emperor Akbar's reign. Among these *ulama*, two persons, Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri and Shaikh Abdunnabi Sadrus

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<sup>17</sup> Nasir al-Mulk Peer Muhammad Khan, a very eloquent and intelligent mullah, reached the Mughal court with the help of Bairam Khan Khan-e-Khanan. He was appointed a teacher in Akbar's childhood. On Humayun's return to India, Peer Muhammad Khan showed great military skill in the war with Hemu Baqal. In recognition of his services, Humayun gave Peer Muhammad Khan the title of *Nasir al-Mulk*. Hence, he became Nasir Al-Mulk Peer Muhammad Khan Sherwani. But he was very conceited and quarreled with Bairam Khan. With the decline of Bairam Khan, Peer Muhammad became more influential in the court. He was sent with Adham Khan on the Malwa campaign against Baz Bahadur. Emperor Akbar's forces won a grand victory in the battle of Sarangpur. But for obvious reasons, Adham Khan came under a cloud and was recalled. Now, Peer Muhammad Khan was in command of the royal forces. He plundered Burhanpur and Bijagarh and massacred the masses. Meanwhile, Baz Bahadur returned with a formidable force. Peer Muhammad's companions advised him not to fight. He ruled out the advice and was defeated on the field. In an effort to save his life, Peer Muhammed plunged with his horse into the Brinda River and drowned in 1562 AD. — Malik Ram.

<sup>18</sup> Sher Shah's original name was Farid Khan, son of Hasan Khan, the Jagirdar of Sahasram. He was also the founder of the kingdom of the Sur dynasty. Due to differences with his father, he became a servant of Sultan Bahar Khan Lohani, the ruler of Bihar. One day, he single-handedly killed a tiger. At this, the Sultan granted him the title of Sher Khan. On the death of Bahar Khan Lohani, he became the teacher of the young prince who ascended the throne. He was now the *de facto* ruler of the Bihar Kingdom. He was determined to unite the Afghans from all over the country and drive away the Mughals from India. He defeated Humayun first in the battle of Chaunsa in 1539 AD and then near Kannauj in 1540. Humayun was compelled to flee to Iran. He assumed the title of Sher Shah Sur and found the kingdom of Sur dynasty. He was a good administrator, kind to his subjects, intelligent and of good comprehension. He died during the siege of Kalanjar in 952 AH (1555 AD) after being hit by a canon. He was buried in his ancestral burial ground at Sahasram. — Malik Ram.

sudoor<sup>19</sup>, acquired immeasurable worldly wealth. One of the victims of their persecution was Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> and his family. They had become frustrated by the forthright activities of Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> in accordance with the commandments of *Shariat* and his great learning, indigence and contentment. At long last, the situation changed Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> and his family gained power and endeavoured to break the backbone of the lustful *ulama* of the imperial court (Mullah Sultanpuri and Abdunnabi). One effective way of doing was, they thought, to somehow reduce the intensity of religious intolerance. The result was that, in the name of policy and

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<sup>19</sup> Excerpts from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's footnote on Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri and Shaikh Abdunnabi *Sadr us-Sudoor* from *Tazkira*, Sahitya Akademy Edition, 1985, pages 37-39:

Some optimists believe that Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni has maligned Mullah Abdunnabi and *Sadr us-Sudoor* Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri in his zeal of contemporaneous intolerance in his *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. These optimists probably do not know that other contemporary historians also agree with him. Although they are not as frank and outspoken as Mullah Badayuni, they admit the truth. Who can be more cautious than Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi? In *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, he writes with reference to Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi: "Shaikh Abdunnabi was among the descendants of Abdul Quddus Gangohi. He had mastered some branches of religious knowledge. He had visited Makkah and Madina in his younger days. He studied Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammed<sup>SLM</sup>) at the feet of scholars of *Fiqh* (Islamic Laws). He, later, returned to India. He became famous as a pious religious man. He antagonised his father and uncles on the question of the Unity of God and *sama'* (listening to *qawwali* music) and created hardships for them. All these things brought fame to him. At the time, the king needed a person who was a scholar in religious knowledge and honest, to fill the post of *Sadr* (chief justice). He was installed on this post in 971 AH. He won more popularity and respect than he deserved. When he became the *Sadr*, he openly started persecution (of his opponents) by taking an authoritarian attitude. It is said that he earned and hoarded immense wealth. The ruling Monarch (Emperor Akbar) had great religious faith in him. Others had fallen from the Emperor's grace. The nobles and scholars (of the court) were disgraced. Whoever was not in his good books or who did not come up to his standards was fleeced. Later, Abdunnabi fell from the imperial grace and was deposed from the high office. Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri, who was given the title of *Makhdoomul Mulk*, was a scholar (*maulvi*) and a rich man. He, too, had occupied high offices during the reigns both of the Afghans and the Mughals. Both Sultanpuri and Abdunnabi were careful in accumulating wealth. They were sent to Makkah. They were opponents and hostile, when at the imperial court, for a long time. But now (after banishment from the court), they became companions on their way to the holy lands. Despite all this, they could not be united, nor did their hostility abate. They were impatient in the holy lands. They returned to India but in vain."

What more had Badayuni said than what Shah Sahib (Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi) has written? While Shah Sahib is careful in selecting his idiom, Badayuni is outspoken in his enthusiasm for telling the truth. Shah Sahib has simply said that Sultanpuri had "accumulated wealth", while Badayuni has elaborated this by saying that in his ancestral mansion, there were well built graves, which were publicised as the graves of the ancestors. After Sultanpuri's death, the graves were dug under imperial orders. But in place of the mortal remains of his ancestors, what were found in them were the bricks of gold and silver. And in fact, gold and silver (i.e. worldly wealth) alone was, in their case, considered to be the touchstone of religious eminence and leadership.

In the events of 990 AH, Badayuni writes: Makhdoomul Mulk died in Ahmadabad. Qazi Ali, who was assigned to enquire into the (ill-gotten) wealth (of Sultanpuri), came to Lahore from Fatehpur. He found it difficult to open the locks of the vaults and underground treasures of Sultanpuri, as they were innumerable. They contained bricks of gold and silver and not the remains of the ancestors in the graves. Nobody except God knows the number of coffins filled with gold and silver. All the bricks and books of Sultanpuri were confiscated to the imperial treasury. — Abul Kalam Azad.

In this footnote, Abul Kalam Azad has mentioned Abdul Quddus Gangohi. Malik Ram writes about him: Abdul Quddus Gangohi was the son of Shaikh Ismail among the descendants of Imam Abu Hanifa. His native place was Radauli. But due to the contemporary political misadministration there, he migrated to Gangoh, Saharanpur district. He died there on 23 Jamadi-II, 944 AH (1537 AD). He was a prolific writer. Shaikh Abdunnabi *Sadr us-Sudoor* was his grandson. — Malik Ram.

modern research, a wave of freethinking and authoritarianism arose. But alas, the remedy that was prescribed to cure the disease created a new malady. The earlier excesses gave way to later deficiencies. Earlier, it was intolerance and superstition; later, apostasy and heresy abounded. Like every earlier era of the history of religion, two groups practising excesses developed. The first consisted of the worldly-wise, intolerant and stupid *ulama* who were disgracing and vilifying the religion by their lust, bigotry, and ignorance. The other group, opposed to the first, was that of the self-proclaimed scholars in modern research and interpretation, thriving in apostasy, profanity and irreligiousness, violating the limits of Shariat and changing sacred tenets to suit their sinful lives in the name of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy and rationalising religion. But the ways of the righteous people believing in divine providence were entirely different from the two groups of worldly *ulama*. They were sick of both these groups....

It is the case even today. The religion-mongers call ignorance, custom, usages, intolerance and lust as religion. The intellect-mongers of so-called liberalism and modern research have camouflaged apostasy and liberalism as philosophy and independent judgment (on a legal or theological) question, based on interpretation and application of the four *usul* (principles), as opposed to *taqlid*. (i.e., custom and usage). There is no knowledge in the *madrassa* (school), nor sincerity in *mehrab* (prayer niche in a mosque); nor honest drinkers in *maikhana* (tavern). People of divine truth are away from all these people and seek protection from them. Their path is different!

During the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar too, the group of the divine truth remained aloof from the two groups of the *ulama*. Since these groups were dominant, one after the other, in the imperial court, they (the righteous people) had to face adversity and suffering. Shaikh Jamaluddin too was among the righteous people.

The family of Mullah Mubarak (i.e., his sons, Abul Fazal<sup>20</sup> and Faizi<sup>21</sup>) adopted a stratagem to undermine the influence of the *ulama* of the imperial court. Abul Fazal and Faizi prevailed upon

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<sup>20</sup> Abul Fazal, the illustrious son of Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri, was born in Agra on 2 Muharram, 958 AH (14 January, 1551 AD). He studied under his father's care, completed the education by the age of 15 and started teaching. He intended to renounce the world and live in seclusion. However, destiny had something else in store for him. When his elder brother, Faizi, reached the imperial court, circumstances compelled him to follow suit. He presented to Emperor Akbar a *tafseer* (commentary) of *Ayat al-Kursi* (a passage from Quran), specially prepared for the occasion. Some time later, meeting the Emperor again, he presented the *tafseer* of *Fatiha* (opening chapter of Quran). Gradually, he became a confidant of the Emperor. He played a great role in sapping the strength of conservative *ulama* (scholars) in the imperial court. His family also played a great role in formulating and establishing *Deen-e-Ilahi*. Prince Salim (later to become Jahangir) was angry with him. At his instigation, Raja Bir Singh Devbandalia killed him on 4 Rabi-I, 1011 AH (12 August, 1602 AD), while he was returning from a military campaign in the Deccan. Abul Fazal is an eminent historian, too. His *Akbarnama* and *Ain-e-Akbari* is a great historical source of Akbar's period. His other works are *Ayar Danish*, *Insha-e-Abul Fazal* (a collection of his letters), *et cetera*. — Malik Ram.

<sup>21</sup> Shaikh Abul Faiz Faizi, the eldest son of Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> Nagauri, was born in 954 AH (1547-48 AD) in Agra. His father educated him. His reputation reached Emperor Akbar's court when he was a young boy. He acquired mastery in many branches of knowledge. His book on moral philosophy (*Ilm al-Akhlaq*), *Mawarid al-Kalam* is written in undotted Arabic. Later, he wrote a commentary of Quran, *Sawate al-Ilham*, again in undotted Arabic. He translated *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Leelavati* in Persian. Besides all these, he had started writing a *khamisa* (a long poem of Stanzas containing five lines each on the lines of *Khamisa-e-Nizami*), but could not complete it due to his untimely death. He could only complete the story of *Nal-Daman* and *Markaz-e-Adwar*. In the beginning, he had adopted Faizi as his poetic name but later changed it to *Fayyazi*. Emperor Akbar had given him the title *Malik-ush-Shuara* (king of poets). He is the second person to win the title by the *Chughtai sultans*.

their father Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>. to prepare a *mahzar* (a document of public attestation) in 987 AH. It said (in translation):

"The King, being the vice-regent of the (present) era and the leader of his time, has to be obeyed. He has the right to *ijtihad* (interpret and reinterpret to arrive at an independent judgment) as might be necessary in various controversial matters, and his *ijtihad* has to be (obeyed and) brought into force."

Fundamentally, this was correct. In fact, the vice-regent of the time and the authorities and members of the advisory council (the *Shura*) have, at any time, the right to *ijtihad* (interpret). The closing down of this (path of) *ijtihad* has given rise to all the troubles, the history of Islam has faced. But the trouble was that Akbar was totally ignorant of religion and his courtiers were of a different hue. The result would have been, and actually was, that the leadership (*imamat*) of the king would have, and finally had, become a source of profligacy and apostasy. Therefore, the righteous people hesitated, out of sheer necessity, in accepting the *mahzar*. But who could stand against the government? The evil ulama had already lost their influence due to their misdeeds. By force of circumstances, all of them had to affix their signatures to the *mahzar*. The very first to bow their heads were the most arrogant. The very persons whose power and influence was sought to be curbed by the *mahzar* were the ones who signed it without a whimper.

Mullah Abdunnabi and Makhdoomul Mulk first signed the *mahzar*. Qazi al-Quzzat (chief justice) Jalaluddin Multani<sup>22</sup> Shaikh Abdul Hai Mufti and others unhesitatingly followed suit. None in the imperial court had the courage to refute the *mahzar*. In the events of 987 AH, Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni writes:

"In those days a *mahzar* (record) was drafted in the hand writing of and passed under the seal of Makhdoomul Mulk (Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri), Shaikh Abdunnabi Sudoor, Qazi Jalaluddin Multani, who was the Qazi (chief justice), Sadre Jahan<sup>23</sup> Mufti-e-Kul and Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>,

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Earlier, this title was conferred on Ghazali Mashhadi. His anthology *Tabasheer-us-Subh* has been published. He died on 10 Safar, 1004 AH (5 October, 1595 AD) in Agra. — Malik Ram.

Among Shaikh Mubarak's sons, only Faizi evinced interest in Mahdavia group. He met Hazrat Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> (Grandson of Hazrat Syed Mahmood<sup>RZ</sup> son of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri), author of *Matla' al-Vilayat* during his visit to Bijapur. (*Muqaddima Siraj Al-Absar*, III Edition. Hyderabad. 1990 AD, page 242). — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>22</sup> Qazi Jalaluddin Multani was a great scholar of Emperor Akbar's time. He was born in Bhakkar (Sindh. now in Pakistan). But he was brought up at Multan (Punjab, also now in Pakistan). He was also a disciple of Shaikh Jalal of Agra. He completed his studies as a disciple of Shaikh Wajihuddin Gujarati, son of Ahmadullah Alvi. He returned to Agra and spent a long period of his life as a recluse. For a livelihood, he took to trading as a profession. He started teaching. His reputation as a great scholar reached Emperor Akbar, who appointed him as *Qazi al-Quzzat* (Chief justice) in place of Qazi Kamaluddin Yaqoob. He was relieved of his office because of the foolishness of his son and dishonest officials. Akbar sent him to Deccan. When he reached Bijapur, he was greatly honoured by the local government. He went on Haj pilgrimage and died there in 999 AH (1590 AD). — Malik Ram.

<sup>23</sup> Meeran Sadr-e-Jahan: *Sadr-e-Jahan* was in fact a government post and the official occupying it was the *mufti* of the whole kingdom. By coincidence his name, too, was *Sadr-e-Jahan*, son of Abdul Muqtadar. He was born in Pahani (near Kannauj). He was appointed *mufti* (judge) on the recommendation of Mullah Abdunnabi and, step by step, rose to the position of *Sadr-e-Jahan* (Chief Justice) in 997 AH (1588-89 AD) after the retirement of

who was a great scholar in logic and philosophy, among the scholars of the period, and Ghazi Khan Badakhshi, who was unique as master of rational sciences. The *mahzar* was in respect of the pre-eminence of *Imam Adil* (the king) over the *mujtahid* (a legist formulating independent decisions in legal or theological matters, based on the interpretation and application of the four *usuls*— principles— of fiqh). This was a controversial issue, which the *mahzar* rectified. The discussion persisted.... (But) finally some *ulama* affixed, of their own free will and volition, their signatures and seals, while others did so under duress." (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, Vol. II, page 270).

My Goodness! What a change. These were the very seals and signatures that used to be affixed to the *fatwas* of kufr (infidelity) and *tazlil* (waywardness) ordering the execution of the righteous *ulama*. They were today confirming the *imamat* (leadership) and *ijtihad* (interpretation) of an illiterate youngster (Emperor Akbar), so that his confirmed leadership (*imamat*) could extinguish in the first gust the candle of their position as Shaikh al-Islam and their (hitherto unchallenged) religious sway... Alas! Whatever the losses that befell (on the Islamic *Ummah*) were caused by these evil *ulama*. No use blaming the times and the circumstances....

When all the *ulama* of the royal court at the capital (Agra) had affixed their signatures and seals to the *mahzar*, it was thought expedient that eminent *ulama* of (various other parts) of the country should be brought under control. After the capital (Agra), Delhi had the largest concentration of the *ulama* and was therefore, superior to the capital. Exalted among the great religious teachers of Delhi was Maulana Shaikh Jamaluddin. It appears that great pressure was exerted on him to affix his signature to the *mahzar*. But, as has already been stated, the power of the court and the majority of the contemporary (evil) *ulama* did not overawe him. He flatly refused to affix his signature to the *mahzar*. This is a very important event in the life of the Shaikh. It also shows his righteousness and unpolluted life. Not to sign the *mahzar* was to face certain death; it was also an act to (indirectly) confirm his opposition to the Emperor's government. "This was the time when great stalwarts succumbed to royal pressure. But it is also true that when Allah opens the hearts of his servants to establish truth, nobody can shake this faith. Allah says: "*Behold! Verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve;* ... (S. X: 62).

(2)

The other incident, which the author of *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* has mentioned, is about Hazrat Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal's conflict with Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri. It would be pertinent to deal with it in some detail.

During the reign of Sher Shah and Salim Shah, Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal was among the celebrated saints of Allah. His worthy ancestors had migrated to India from Arabia and settled in Multan (now in Pakistani Punjab). Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> was born there. For a long time, he practised religious and spiritual exercises. After this, he took to guiding the common people to the path of Allah. At that stage, he went to and settled in seclusion at a small village, Jahni, near

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*Sadr-e-Jahan* Fatahullah Shirazi. Later, he became the *do-hazari mansabdar*. In his childhood, Emperor Jahangir had learnt *Chahal Hadith* (a book of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>'s traditions) from *Sadr-e-Jahan*. Hence, Jahangir had great respect for him and elevated him to the *Char-hazari mansab*. He is said to have lived to the age of 120 years. He died in 1020 or 1027 AH. He was buried in Pahani. He was a poet too. — Malik Ram.

Lahore. The power of attraction of his chaste personal character and divine strength lured thousands of devout people to him. He was among the choicest great saintly souls of those trying times. They spent their lives in poverty and asceticism and their peace of mind was never disturbed by the allure of worldly desires. Details of his biography are given in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, *Tazkirat al-Wasileen*, *Tabaqat-e-Akbari*, *Rozatal-Ulema* and other books. They all agree that he never faltered in telling the truth and ordering the observances of known holy commandments and never failed in giving his sermons. He hated all those undisciplined *ulama* and deceitful *Sufis*, who never put into practice their religious knowledge, who destroyed their selves in the insanelly love of worldly wealth and ostentation and who used their knowledge as a means to earn earthly luxuries and religion-mongering. He used to say that the fly, which sat on filth, was a thousand times better than the *ulama* that made the kings and the rich their Mecca....

What could provoke greater opposition and wrath of the worldly *ulama* and slaves of earthly desires from a humble dervish sitting on a worn-out mat, casts a contemptuous look at the pomp and pageantry, which, they (the *ulama*) had earned by their religion-mongering....

It is this (attitude) that has always made the rich jurists and *ulama* of the imperial court the enemies of the dervishes of the Truth. And then they find religious excuses to wreak vengeance against the dervishes. Since both the kings and the commoners are always under the influence of the *ulama*, they provoke the kings by raising a hue and cry of a political threat and the people by making religious incriminations against the devout dervishes.

When Makhdoomul Mulk (Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri) was elevated to the post of *Shaikh al-Islam* during the reign of Sultan Salim Shah, and he started the persecution of righteous dervishes who invited the people to the path of Allah, he cast his evil eye on Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal, who, in his zeal for telling the truth, had often criticised the court *ulama*, including Makhdoomul Mulk and others, for their earthly lust and hostility to devout dervishes. He wanted to take revenge now because Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> had rejected his primacy unlike the other evil *ulama*. Makhdoomul Mulk became more hostile.

Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni writes in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* that when Makhdoomul Mulk got many dervishes killed on various pretexts, he also turned his hostile attention towards Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup>. He sent royal summons from Gwalior to force Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> to come to the court of Salim Shah. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> started from Jahni with a couple of his disciples and met the king outside Gwalior. The king was greatly impressed by the appearance and conversation of the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>. The king said in Persian: "Such a man would never tell a lie." The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> gave a short speech inviting the king to Allah and His religion. Then the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> was sent back with honour and dignity.

Badayuni has not clearly stated what charge Makhdoomul Mulk had made against the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> and what the cause of hostility and summons was. Regarding the conversation between the two Badayuni writes only this:

"After the initial salutations, (the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>) asked why he had been summoned. Makhdoomul Mulk said that it had been learnt from his (the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>'s) disciples that during the *zikr* (remembrance of Allah), they were made to recite, 'Ya Dawood, Ya Dawood'. In reply, the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> said that people had misunderstood. The disciples recited, 'Ya Wadood, Ya Wadood'<sup>24</sup>. (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, Vol. III, P. 32).

Obviously, this does not appear to be a very weighty reason. But who knows? The business of this group of tricksters is wide and complicated. It is possible that an effort was made to implicate (Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup>) in this manner. An effort could have been made to raise a controversy by changing "*Ya Wadood*" into "*Ya Dawood*". However, it appears from an explanation in *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* that Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> was suspected to be a Mahdavi (the follower of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri). And Makhdoomul Mulk had made this the basis of his hostility and mischief. However, there was this much truth in it that Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> had acknowledged the sainthood and greatness of Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. And Maulana Jamaluddin had written a book in favour of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. Although this book had refuted the beliefs of the Mahdavis, it openly supported Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. Besides, in respect of the incidents involving Hazrat Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>, his opinion was not in conformity with that of Makhdoomul Mulk and other *ulama* of the court. The way these two respected persons were treated, he had condemned as oppression and wickedness. *Akhbar al-Akhyar* also confirms this. An allegation of this type in those days was enough to bring Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> to the gallows like many other dervishes who had been martyred by Makhdoomul Mulk.

(3)

To elaborate the above brief remark: In those days, the newly-formed Mahdavia sect was the talk of the town; and a pleasant and successful pastime of the royal Court *ulama* was to persecute and kill the Mahdavis and incriminate them as *kafirs* (infidels) and the misled. They (the court *ulama*) should always have confrontation, war and killing of Muslims as a concomitant of their power and pelf in the court. And in the circumstances, there could be no better preoccupation for them except this.

The Mahdavia sect is associated with Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> of Jaunpur. It is said about him that he had claimed to be Mahdi. Although many new things and beliefs, transgressing the bounds of propriety, accreted later to the tenets of this sect.<sup>24</sup> I think the sect was founded on the basis of

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<sup>24</sup> Maulana Azad writes "many new things and beliefs, transgressing the bounds of propriety, accreted later to the tenets of this (Mahdavi) sect...." However, he has failed to point out any belief or any other material, which, in his opinion, was new or transgressing the bounds of propriety. Even today the Mahdavis follow the Imam<sup>AS</sup>'s dictum that 'My religion is the Book of God and adherence to the *Sunnat* (practice) of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>'. Whatever Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> claimed was in accordance with the Quran and Hadith and nothing else. It may also be recalled here that Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> finally declared on one occasion that his word and deed alone were authentic; although the Syedain (Hazrat Syed Mahmood<sup>RZ</sup> and Hazrat Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup>) would not err, their word and deed were not to be taken as authority. Then how could any "new things and beliefs, transgressing the bounds of propriety," accrete later to the tenets of the Mahdavi sect? ... --Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin and Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

Maulana Azad has not compared the beliefs and deeds of the Mahdavia sect with the commandments of Quran and Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>) and the words and deeds of *aulia* Allah (saints). He has only relied on the writings of their [the Mahdavis'] opponents. No deed or belief of the Mahdavis, as reported by the companions of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> is contrary to the commandments of Quran and *Sunnat* (practice) of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. All the atrocities were perpetrated on them because they were Mahdavis. Nobody has so far found fault with the beliefs and deeds of the Mahdavis. Maulana Azad himself admits that no other group can produce an act similar to that of Mahdavis in following *Shariat* and eradicating *shirk* (assigning partners to God), customs, innovations and habits... Maulana Azad found no opportunity to be in the company of Mahdavia group and see their behavior. Otherwise, the erstwhile discipline and truth prevails among the Mahdavis even

truth and righteousness. In other words, the real purpose of this (movement) was inviting the people to the path of Allah, disseminate information about Truth, revival of *Shariat* and re-establishment of the obligation of do's and don'ts of *Shariat*. And Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> himself and many of the respected members of the first group of his disciples were God-worshipping and chaste of soul (*nafs*). Such matters are something in the beginning and, later, they change into something else. The evil of exaggeration and interpretation by the later generations was a great mischief for various sects of this (Muslim) *ummah* as was the case in the earlier *ummahs* (religious communities). The same happened to this (Mahdavi) sect also. And the basic truth of this sect gradually fell a prey to the mischief of exaggeration and innovations (*muhaddisat*).

Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was a resident of Jaunpur (now in Uttar Pradesh, India). He was born in 847 AH. Even the bitterest opponents of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> are all praise for him and admit that he was unique in formal learning, piety, living like a dervish, fear of and devotion to God. Shaikh Ali Muttaqi<sup>25</sup> (who was a contemporary and bitter opponent of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> and has

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today. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Shaikh Ali Muttaqi was the son of Hussamuddin whose family belonged to Jaunpur. But he was born in Burhanpur in 885 AH (1480-81). In his youth, he was a servant of the wealthy and royalty, but later, he gave up worldly pleasures and became a disciple of Shaikh Abdul Hakeem bin Shaikh Bajan of Burhanpur. Shaikh Hakeem made him a *Khalifa* of the *Chistia* Order. He then completed his studies of religious sciences and went to, Makkah (now in Saudi Arabia). He is said to have written over hundred books, including *Kanz-ul-Amal*. He died in Makkah on 2 Jamadi-I, 975 AH (4 November, 1567 AD) at the age of 90. — MR

Mian Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> writes in *Siraj al-Absar*: "Muttaqi did everything he could to spite and harm the Mahdavis. He came all the way from Makkah to Gujarat to wipe out the Mahdavia group during the reign of Mahmood Shah II. But he failed and returned to Makkah. Sometime later he again wrote to the *Sultan* seeking the murder of Mahdavis. The *Sultan* killed eleven Mahdavis. But within four months, their assassination was avenged.

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi writes in *Zad-ul-Muttaqeen* (Maqsad Awwal, Chapter III) quoting Shaikh Abdul Wahab Muttaqi: "(Shaikh Abdul Wahab Muttaqi) used to say that a relative of Shaikh Ali Muttaqi who had joined the Mahdavia group had come to Makkah. Shaikh Ali gave an *Ibrahimi* (a local coin) to Shaikh Abdul Wahab and asked him to go to the relative and give it to him. Saying that this gift was a token of blood relationship and not of religious affinity. Abdul Wahab was also instructed to tell the relative that his coming to Makkah was good, he could meet him (Shaikh Ali) and clarify any doubts he had and repent (on becoming a Mahdavi). Abdul Wahab went to Shaikh Ali's Mahdavi relative and saw that the latter emerged from his abode in tears. Abdul Wahab gave him the Shaikh Ali's coin and message. The relative did not reply. Abdul Wahab told Shaikh Ali all the details. — (Muqaddima Siraj al-Absar, page 713).

Shaikh Ali Muttaqi was not a contemporary of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. He became hostile to the Mahdavis. He wrote a tract, *Risala Ar-Rad*, based on the *fatwas* (edicts) of the *ulama* of Makkah, against the Mahdavis. (*Siraj-al-Absar* by Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> is in reply to this tract).

The court *ulama* asked Emperor Akbar to behead Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati<sup>RA</sup>, a Mahdavi saint, on the authority of the *fatwas* of the *ulama* of Makkah.

The Emperor asked Shaikh Mustafa<sup>RA</sup>: "Had you been to Makkah."

Shaikh Mustafa said: "No."

The Emperor: "Had the *ulama* of Makkah come to Gujarat?"

The Shaikh: "No."

The Emperor "What kind of people are these *ulama*? Without coming to Gujarat and without enquiring or issuing a warning, they have issued a *fatwa* to behead the Mahdavis on the issue of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>'s appearance

written a booklet against him) admits that the early period of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was spent in perfect devotion, asceticism, total concentration and wiping out of his inner self. For seven years, he used to fast continuously and used to lie down alone in a corner. During this period an incident occurred to him: the voice "*antal mahdi*" (you are Mahdi) was heard. For years he hesitated. But the voices were repeatedly heard; he declared that he was Mahdi. The ninth century (AH), just before the advent of the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar was an agonising period of anarchy and chaos. Day in and day out kings were enthroned and dethroned. There was no central government worth the name, which could enforce the rule of Islamic *Shariat*; the righteous *ulama* were rare. The evil *ulama* were large in number. Worldly lust, deceit and hunger for power were rampant. More than anything else, the innovations and forbidden activities of the ignorant *Sufis* had been misguiding the people at large. Seeing this state of affairs, Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> raised the banner of the revival of *Shariat* and the re-establishment of its imperatives. He told the people that there was no need for any *mujahida* (spiritual struggle) and *zikr* (remembrance) or other rituals. The greatest struggle, he said, was to put the people on the right and righteous path (of Allah) and stake one's life in the struggle for re-enforcing the commandments of Islamic *Shariat*.

The truth of divine love and the purity of the heart had endowed his call to the path of Allah an effectiveness that brought hundreds of thousands of people to become his disciples. Various kings and *sultans* took the oath of fealty to him. Their manners and practices were so amorous and spontaneous that they reminded one of the special characteristics of the companions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. It was a resigned group of people immersed in divine love, which had sacrificed its blood relationships and mortal love of native land in exchange for the relationships of faith (*iman*).

Having given up everything, by way of worldly possessions, they had become companions and comforters of each other in the divine path. The wealthy and the poor, the high and the low, they all lived in the same set of conditions and circumstances. And they had nothing to do with anything other than the guidance and service of the creatures of Allah (people) and the enforcement of the laws of *Shariat*.

One of the commandments was that the first stage was migration. Whoever stepped on to this path, he should free himself from the shackles of the homeland (*watan*) and leaving his hearth and home, should become a companion of his brothers of the religious order.

The second stage was to give up one's wealth. Allah says in Quran: "*By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which you love...*" (S. III: 92 AYA). Hence, wealth did not belong to any one person. Whatever one has, one should distribute it among his companions.

The third stage is giving up life. Allah says in Quran: "... *Express your desire for death, if ye are truthful.*" (S. LXII: 6 AYA). Hence, always be prepared to lay down your life and if the enemies of *Shariat* do not bow before the (Ultimate) Truth, Quran and Justice, resort to the iron of arms

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and death on the basis of what their (the Mahdavis') enemies had to say. This is not the work of Allah fearing *ulama*." (*Majalis-e-Khamsa* by Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati<sup>RA</sup>) — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

(*hadid* - iron). Allah says in Quran: "... and We sent down Iron in which is (material for) mighty war..." (S. LVII 25 AYA).

There is no doubt that all this was true. Later on, his (Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s) innocent followers made it something entirely different<sup>26</sup>. Allah says in Quran: "Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise...)" (S. IX: 111 AYA)...

All these details have been written by all his supporters as well as his detractors. His opponents include Shaikh Ali Muttaqi, Shaikh Ibn Hajar Makki<sup>27</sup>, Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith<sup>28</sup>, Shaikh Asad Makki<sup>29</sup> and others. His supporters and devotees include his disciples like Khundmir<sup>30</sup>,

<sup>26</sup> Maulana Azad's assertion that "later on, his (Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s) innocent followers made it something entirely different" is not true. Even today the strict observance of the same true *Shariat* and *sunnat* can be seen among the Mahdavis. Giving a new interpretation (*taveel*) or changing (*tahveel*) the religious texts are considered to be sins. The Mahdavis adopt excellence (*aaliat* and *azimat*), piety (*zuhd*) and fear of God (*vara*) on every issue. They do not accept anything less than excellence (*rukhsat*) in any matter. The author of *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* has slandered this group by his false charges, wrong interpretations and twisting (of our principles). It is strange that a great sincere scholar of the caliber of Maulana Azad has become influenced by the writings of our opponents, despite his vast knowledge of the facts, and makes baseless allegations against us (the Mahdavis). May be, Maulana Azad could not spare more time to do research and, consequently, relied on books hostile to the Mahdavis. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Shaikh Ibn Hajar Makki's full name is Shihabuddin Abu Abbas Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ali Ibn Hajar al-Haitami as-Saadi, a renowned jurist of the Shafei school of *Fiqh*. He was born in 909 AH (1504 AD). He was educated at the Al-Azhar University of Cairo (Egypt). He performed his third Haj pilgrimage in 940 AH and settled down in Makkah. He spent his time in writing books and teaching. He died in 974 (1567 AD).

According to *Muqaddimah Siraj al-Absar* (MSA), his date of death is 971 AH. MSA adds: "Ibn Hajar was the first among the traditionalists (*muhadditheen*) who spread the wrong principle that all signs described in Hadith books should be found in Imam Mahdi. He did not ponder over the question of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> in the six correct books of Hadith (*Sifah-e-Sitta*) and the other books of Hadith. Till his time, no traditionalists had mixed up the traditions indiscriminately. There is no precedent, which says that all the traditions of the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup> relating to Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> should be looked into for the Imam's signs.

The source of Shaikh Ali Muttaqi's tract, *Ar-Rad* against the Mahdavia group is *the fatwa* of Ibn Hajar Makki. Mian Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> wrote the book *Siraj al-Absar* in reply to *Risala Ar-Rad*. — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>28</sup> Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi is not an opponent of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> and Mahdavi group. He is silent on the question of Mahdi-ship. He has not supported the opponents of Mahdavis. Similarly, many other *Ulama-e-Haq* (the righteous scholars) have kept quiet in deference to the anti-Mahdavi sentiments of hostile government. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Shaikh Asad Makki was an Arab and had learnt Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>'s traditions from scholars like Tajuddin and others in Makkah. He had written a book against *Siraj al-Absar* by Hazrat Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> *Aalim Billah* and in favour of Shaikh Ali Muttaqi's tract, *Risala Ar-Rad — Muqaddima Siraj Al Absar*.

It may be mentioned here again that *Siraj al-Absar* was written in reply to *Risala Ar-rad* — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>30</sup> Bandagi Mian Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup>, a descendant of Imam Musa Kazim, was born in 886 AH (1481-82 AD). His ancestors came from Samarqand and Bukhara and settled down in Bari and Bayana. His father, Syed Musa, was a commander of 500 mounted soldiers. His maternal grand father's brother, Mubariz al-Mulk was the Governor of Patan (in Gujarat).

Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> took the oath of fealty at the hands of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. Mubariz al-Mulk incarcerated him in

Shaikh Dilawar<sup>31</sup>, Shahabuddin<sup>32</sup>, Mian Qasim<sup>33</sup> and the authors of *Shawahid al-Vilqyat*<sup>34</sup> and *Mat la' al-Vilayat*<sup>35</sup> and others. But his disciples gave these matters the colour of *Shariat* Laws.

one of the rooms of his gubernatorial mansion. Six months later, Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> escaped and came to the Imam<sup>AS</sup> at Barhli. From then on, he was in constant company of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> till they reached Nasarpur in Sindh (now in Pakistan). From Nasarpur, Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> returned to Gujarat and went back to Khorasan to live in company of Imam<sup>AS</sup>. After the death of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> at Farah, Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> came back to Gujarat and started preaching the Mahdavi faith. Thousands joined his group. Meanwhile, Muzaffar Shah succeeded to the throne of Gujarat on the death of his father, Sultan Mahmood Begadha. During the reign of Muzaffar Shah, *ulama* issued a *fatwa* which said: "Whoever killed a Mahdavi, would be deemed to have killed a hundred highway robbers of Dantiwada and would be rewarded by Allah as if he had performed Haj pilgrimage seven times." On the basis of this *fatwa*, Mahdavis were being killed in large numbers. Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> got killed the mischief mongers like Mullah Hamid and others. King Muzaffar Shah was prevailed upon by the court *ulama* to send a military force to kill the Mahdavis. On the first day of the battle, Muzaffar's forces were defeated. Two days later, on 14 Shawwal, 930 AH (1525 AD), Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> was martyred at Sudrasan. He lived for 20 years after the death of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> and was exiled 20 times. He wrote many books including *Aqida Sharifa*, also known as *Umm al-Aqaed*. — *Muqaddima Siraj Al Absar*.

<sup>31</sup> (Shaikh) Shah Dilawar<sup>RZ</sup> is the fifth Caliph of Hazrat Imam Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri Mahdi al-Mauood<sup>AS</sup>. His date of birth is not known. He was taken captive in the war between Sultan Hussain Sharqi of Jaunpur and Raja Rai Dalpat of Gaur in Bengal in 875 AH (1471 AD). A nephew of Raja Dalpat, Shah Dilawar<sup>RZ</sup> was a handsome boy of eleven or twelve years when he was captured. Sultan Hussain gifted him to his issueless sister, Salima Khatoon. She brought him up with great affection and care. However, she found him to be abnormal. He took no interest in normal teenage pursuits and pastimes. He was always immersed in deep thought. Salima, therefore, gifted him to Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> with the permission of her brother, the king. Till then, he was known as Dilawar. The Imam<sup>AS</sup> called him Shah Dilawar and said: "He is my lovable son and well-liked by Allah." He was among the seventeen-member group, which migrated from Jaunpur along with Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>. At Danapur, the first halt of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, after leaving Jaunpur, Shah Dilawar<sup>RZ</sup> went into a spiritual trance, which lasted, according to some reports, for seven years. Meanwhile, the Imam traveled as far south as Bijapur (in Karnataka) and boarded a ship at Dabhol for Jeddah for the Haj pilgrimage. At Makkah, the Imam<sup>AS</sup> proclaimed to be Mahdi, and returned to India and landed at Diu port (in Gujarat). When the Imam<sup>AS</sup> reached Ahmadabad, Shah Dilawar<sup>RZ</sup> who was still at Danapur, pursued the scent of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> and embarked on a journey to Ahmadabad. When he met the Imam<sup>AS</sup> at Ahmadabad he was forty while the Imam was 56. After that, he was in the company of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> till the latter's demise in 910 AH (1505 AD) at Farah in Afghanistan. He returned to India from Farah with Hazrat Syed Mahmood<sup>RZ</sup> *Sani-e-Mahdi*. His last *Daira* was at Borkheda (near Chalisgaon in Maharashtra) where he died in 945 AH (1537-38 AD). Shah Dilawar<sup>RZ</sup> was not a religious scholar, but great scholars like Hazrat Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> were among his devotees.... (Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin in *Noor-e-Hayat*. Vol. XXXIV. No. 12. Pages 20-22).

<sup>32</sup> Hazrat Syed Shahabuddin *Shahabul Haq*<sup>RZ</sup> the second son of Hazrat Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> *Siddiq-e-Vilayat* was born in 920 AH (1515 AD). When he was eleven, his father was martyred at Sudrasan (in Gujarat) by the army of Muzaffar Shah, the ruler of Gujarat. He received his education at the hands of Bandagi Mian Bhai Muhajir<sup>RZ</sup> a companion of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. He received his religious instruction (*talqeen*) from Bandagi Malik Illahdad<sup>RZ</sup>, *Khalifa-e-Groh*. Hazrat Shahabuddin<sup>RZ</sup> had spiritual allegiance (*ilaqa*) with Malik Peer Muhammad<sup>RA</sup>, son of Bandagi Illahdad<sup>RZ</sup>. He used to go often to Jalore (in Rajasthan) to meet Peer Muhammad<sup>RA</sup>, who later joined the latter's *Daira* at Khanbel. At the time, there were 18 spiritual guides who had achieved the Vision of Allah through their physical eyes in the Khanbel *Daira*.

If the oppressed came to take refuge in the *Daira*, Shahabuddin<sup>RZ</sup> protected them from their enemies. According to *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani*, the sons of Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> got 18 hostile *ulama* killed. Though bitterly hostile to the Mahdavis, Mullah Tahir Patani was mortally afraid of Hazrat Shahabuddin<sup>RZ</sup>; so much so that he would not come out of his fortress-like mansion. Shaikh Ali Muttaqi, author of *Kanz al-Amal*, fled from the *Daira* of the Mahdavis and took refuge in Makkah (in Arabia) where he wrote a tract, *Risala Ar-Rad*, against the Mahdavis. In reply to this, Shahabuddin<sup>RZ</sup> made Miyan Abdul Malik Sujawandi<sup>RA</sup> *Aalim Billah* write *Siraj al-Absar* in Arabic. His contemporary Mahdavi spiritual guides (*murshideen*) and scholars held Hazrat Shahabuddin<sup>RZ</sup> in great esteem. He died on 18 Jamadi-I, 972 AH (1565 AD) and is laid to rest at Khanbel in Gujarat. — Syed

For instance, Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> ordered the distribution of wealth among the companions for the perfection of breaking (family connection) and sacrifice and love. The disciples stretched it to conclude that when the wealth belonged to all, where was the need for inheritance or

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Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>33</sup> Miyan Qasim, who is known as Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Shah Qasim<sup>RA</sup>, *Mujtahid-e-Groh*, was born in Jalore (in Rajasthan) in 989 AH (1582 AD). His genealogical tree runs: Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> son of Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> son of Syed Yaqoob<sup>RA</sup> (*Hasan-e-Vilayat*) son of Syed Mahmood<sup>RZ</sup> (*Sani-e-Mahdi*) son of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri (*Mahdi al-Mauood*). Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> married Chand Khan Sahiba Bibi, daughter of Azam Khan Arab. He renounced the world at the age of 24. He is said to have never touched money all his life. It is also reported that his father Hazrat Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> had a very large library. There were eighteen *tafseers* (commentaries on Quran) in it. Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> had mastered them all. Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> was 37 when his father died. He then went to Hazrat Noor Muhammad<sup>RA</sup>, *Hakim az-Zaman* who was his maternal uncle. After the death of Hazrat Noor Muhammad<sup>RA</sup>, Syed Qasim settled at Daulatabad. He has written a number of books, which are looked upon with great respect. He also visited Gokak (in Karnataka). When Daulatabad was afflicted with a famine and chaos following the downfall of Nizam Shahi Kingdom, Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> and Syed Nusrat<sup>RA</sup> (*Makhsoos az-Zaman*) migrated to Hyderabad. Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> settled at Manchappa near Hyderabad. Later, he migrated and settled at Musheerabad, about a mile and half of Husain Sagar. It was then known as Hameedabad. Syed Qasim<sup>RA</sup> died on 17 Muharram, 1042 AH (1646 AD)—. Excerpts from *Mukhtasar Seerat*, by Syed Khuda Bakhsh Rushdi, Musheerabad, 1409 AH (1988 AD). — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>34</sup> The author of *Shawahid al-Vilayat* is Hazrat Shah Burhanuddin<sup>RA</sup>. He was the son of Syed Allah Bakhsh<sup>RA</sup> bin Amir Syed Yahya al-Deen<sup>RA</sup> bin Syed Shahabuddin<sup>RA</sup> bin Hazrat Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup>, second Caliph of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. The date and years of his birth and death have not come to the notice of this translator. However, *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani* says that Shah Burhanuddin<sup>RA</sup> had received his early instruction (*tarbiat*) in religious discipleship from Hazrat Syed Zainulabedeem<sup>RA</sup> bin Miyan Syed Husain<sup>RA</sup> bin Hazrat Roshan Munawwar<sup>RZ</sup> and the blessings of sacred companionship with Hazrat Syed Raje Muhammad<sup>RA</sup> bin Miyan Syed Saadullah<sup>RA</sup>. He started his migration from Deccan (South India) and went to Farah in Afghanistan on foot via Gujarat, North India, Punjab and Lahore, Kabul, Balkh, Andkhond, Mazhandran and Herat. He reached Farah on 7 Ramadhan, 1052 AH (1283 AD) and paid his respectful homage at Hazrat Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri Mahdi al-Mauood<sup>AS</sup>'s *mazar* (grave). He resumed his journey and went to Makkah and Madina on foot via Persia, Shiraz, Iraq and Basra. After performing Haj at Makkah and paying respects at Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>'s tomb at Madina, he came back to Farah by the same route. He settled down at Farah and died there. He is laid to rest near Hazrat Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>'s *mazar*. He is said to have written over three hundred books, including *Shawahid al-Vilayat* and *Hadiqat al-Haqaiq Haqiqat al-Daqaiq* and others. The latter book is voluminous and commonly called *Daftar-e-Awal-o-Duam*. *Shawahid al-Vilayat* was written in 1052 AH. Some fifteen of the three hundred books, he wrote, have so far been published. — Syed Ziaullah Yaddullahi.

<sup>35</sup> The author of *Matla' al-Vilayat* is Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> son of Bandagi Miran Syed Yaqoob<sup>RZ</sup> *Hasan-e-Vilayat*. He was born in 955 AH. At the age of about 18 years, Hazrat Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> and his brother Hazrat Syed Khundmir<sup>RA</sup> went to see their father. Hazrat Syed Yaqoob asked them to go to Hazrat Syed Mahmood Syedanji<sup>RA</sup> *Khatim al-Murshideen*, make fealty to him and remain in his august company. "Are you not here?" they asked their father. In reply, he said: "Whatever is here is your spiritual heritage. Syedanji<sup>RA</sup>'s father (Hazrat Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup>, Siddiq-e-Vilayat) had laid down his life and got buried in three places in the service of my grand father (Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri). Hence, I ask you to go to him and serve him in the best way you can. This will please me." The two young men reached Hazrat Syedanji<sup>RA</sup>'s *Daira* in Khanbel. On arrival at Khanbel, Hazrat Syedanji<sup>RA</sup> asked Hazrat Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> to bring wood for thatching the huts of the inmates of the *Daira* and Hazrat Khundmir<sup>RA</sup> to repair the walls of the huts. They served their *murshid* in abject poverty for eighteen years. After this, Hazrat Syedanji<sup>RA</sup> allowed them to set up their own *dairas*. He married his daughter to Hazrat Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup>. He dictated the book, *Matla' al-Vilayat*, and Hazrat Shah Qasim *Mujtahid-e-Groh* took it down in 1016 AH at the request of Mustafa Khan. Hazrat Syed Yusuf<sup>RA</sup> died in 1026 AH at Daulatabad. He is buried in the graveyard of *Hasan-e-Vilayat* Hazrat Syed Yaqoob<sup>RZ</sup> there, says *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani*. — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

bequest?<sup>36</sup> The near and dear ones too should get nothing from the estate of the deceased, they contended. Then they thought that this was a *Shariat* Law overruling the Quranic Law of Inheritance. The detractors repudiated it, and said this was a violation of *Shariat*. Repudiating the law of inheritance which was proved beyond doubt by Quranic verses had been invalidated, they said, and, on the basis of this argument, they thought it fit to issue *fatwas* of *kufr* (infidelity) and *fisq* (sinfulness) against the Mahdavis. Thus both the supporters and the

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<sup>36</sup> Here Maulana Azad appears to have relied on one of the most deliberate distortions of Mahdavi faith and beliefs in a book *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* to arrive at the erroneous conclusion that Mahdavis had formulated some law on inheritance, contrary to the *Shariat* Law, which is based on Quranic Verses. However, it must be said to the credit of the Maulana that, when he wrote the *Tazkira*, he was in exile at a village Morabadi, near Ranchi in Bihar. (*Tazkira*. Sahitya Akademy III Edition, 1985 AD, page 6 of foreword by Malik Ram). In his *muqaddima* (preface) to the book, Maulvi Fazluddin Ahmed writes: "Look at this book alone, written off-hand, rather inattentively and without the wherewithal (needed for writing a book like *Tazkira*).... The manuscript too was not with him (for ready reference)... He would write some ten or twelve pages at a stretch and send them to me, retaining the last word, phrase or sentence for future reference and continuity." (Ibid, pages 21-22). Obviously, he had no access to the religious literature of the Mahdavia group. Secondly, at the time. Mahdavia literature was in manuscripts and had not been printed and published.

Quoting an incident wherein a *muhajir* (migrant, companion of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>) and *tarik-e-dunya* (one who had rejected the world) had died leaving 50 *fairozis* (local coins) behind and the money was distributed among the inmates of the *Daira*. *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* had said that the *Shariat* Law of Inheritance had been (overruled (*Hadiya-e- Mahdavia*., Abu Raja Muhammad Zaman Khan, Kanpur, 1287 AH 1870 AD).

Replying to the charge, Hazrat Syed Nusrat<sup>RA</sup>, the Author of *Kuhl ul Jawahir* quotes Quranic verses to prove that the relationship between the migrants and non-migrants ceases after the migration of the former. Hence, the amount of money left by the deceased *faqir* was distributed among the migrants and people who have renounced the world. He also quotes the incident where, after the death of Prophet Muhammed<sup>SLM</sup>, his inheritors, Hazrat Fatima<sup>RZ</sup> (daughter) and Hazrat Abbas<sup>RZ</sup> (uncle), were denied their share in *Bagh-e-Fidak*, the property, the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup> had left behind in testate, by Hazrat Abu Bakr<sup>RZ</sup>, the first Caliph of Islam, on the authority of the tradition, in which Prophet Muhammed<sup>SLM</sup> had said that the Prophets<sup>SLM</sup> had no inheritors and whatever they left on their death was *sadaqa* (charity). He further says that some writers had come to the erroneous conclusion that the Mahdavis did not obey the Quranic commandments on inheritance. However, the fact remains that this is an exceptional case and where such circumstances do not exist, the *Shariat* Law of Inheritance is strictly followed, because the Mahdavis follow this law as all other laws of *Fiqh*. — *Kuhl ul Jawahir*. (KJ) by Syed Nusrat<sup>RA</sup>. Vol. II. Hyderabad. 1957 AD (1376 AJ4) pages 610-12.

The Mahdavis are divided into two groups: the *Kasibs* (earners) and the *faqirs* (people who have rejected the world). The standards applicable to each of them are different. It is not proper to mix up these standards. Hence, the terms used by each group should be ascertained from the concerned group and used. The writings of their opponents should not be relied upon to criticise them. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

In the Mahdavia parlance, a *kasib* is one who indulges in worldly or gainful activity like earning a livelihood by his efforts like trade, business, industry, agriculture, *et cetra*. He is expected to strictly observe the commandments of *Shariat* in earning his livelihood, which should be *halal*. He can earn and acquire property. But when he decides to renounce the world (*tark-e-duniya*), he gives up all his movable and immovable property, and devotes his time to prayers and remembrance of Allah. At this point of time, the property is distributed among his heirs and legal representatives in accordance with *Shariat* as if he dies on that day. From then on, he is virtually a dead man, living in the company of other *faqirs* in the *Daira* under the guidance of the *murshid* (spiritual guide). He entirely depends on and has full trust in Allah (*tawakkal*). He takes his share of *sawiath*, which the *murshid* distributes among his *faqirs* equally. He is not supposed to save anything. Such saving vitiates his trust in Allah (*tawakkal*). Despite this, if he saves anything from the *sawiath* he received from his *murshid*, it goes to his fellow *faqirs* and not to his legal representatives, because it is not his earnings and he had severed his earthly and blood relations with them. — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

opponents went far away from the truth and reality. And neither of them did justice to this unjustly treated reformer (Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>).

Alas! This happened to many. In other words, half the problems in the history of guidance and reform of the nations the world over are created by these misunderstandings and wrong interpretations and arguments. The earlier people said something; and the later ones understood something else. The disciples exaggerated and the opponents indulged in violence and intolerance. Allah says in Quran: "... depths of darkness, one above another:...." (S. XXIV: 40). And in this deep darkness, reality was lost. To understand the word of the people of *Tariqat* and *Maarifat* (the *sufis*), a pure heart and an alert comprehension is needed. Mere taxing the brains in schools and setting up of the shops of rosaries and dervish orders will not help.

Be that as it may, the unconcealed righteousness of these people (the Mahdavis) was difficult for the evil *ulama* and worldly-wise *mashayakheen* (masters of Sufi orders) to tolerate. Some of the people, who were truthful, also fell a prey to misunderstandings. The result was that there was opposition from every quarter. First, they (the Mahdavis) were accused of infidelity and waywardness and, finally, they were killed and eliminated. The main cause of opposition was that the Mahdavis were bold and outspoken in their declarations of Truth. More than everything else, they relentlessly denounced the evil *ulama* for their earthly lusts and heedlessness. This is what had angered the contemporary evil *ulama* against every reformer. The trouble is that there is no other go. When opposition became intense, Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> migrated to Gujarat<sup>37</sup>. Sultan Mahmood Kalan<sup>38</sup> became his disciple at first sight. But the *ulama* of Gujarat too became

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<sup>37</sup> Maulana Azad asserts, "When the opposition became intense, he (Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>) migrated to Gujarat." But he fails to point out where the opposition had become intense that compelled him to migrate to Gujarat. It may be pointed out here, that when people embark upon opposing somebody, they always distort facts to suit their purpose. The facts, however, are that when Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> started his migration from Jaunpur in 887 AH (1482 AD), he had no particular place in mind as his destination. He moved to any place Allah led him to. His purpose was, as Maulana Azad himself admits elsewhere, to enforce the do's and don'ts of *Shariat* (*Amar bil ma'roof wa nahi anil munkir*). Leaving Jaunpur, he visited Danapur (in Bihar), Kalpi, Chanderi, Mandu, Chapaneer, Daulatabad, Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Gulbarga and Bijapur, and went to Makkah for Haj pilgrimage via Dabhol port. There was no opposition to him at any of those places he visited. Even at Makkah, where he proclaimed for the first time to be *Mahdi* in 901 AH, there was no opposition. From Makkah, he came to Gujarat via Diu port. From here he went to Ahmadabad, where he proclaimed for the second time that he was *Mahdi*. Thence, he went to Sola Santej, Patan and Barhli where he proclaimed for the final and third time that he was *Imam Mahdi*. From Barhli, he went to Farah via Nagaur and Jaisalmer (in Rajasthan, India), Thatta and Kaha in Sindh, Pakistan and Qandahar in Afghanistan. At Farah, he breathed his last and was laid to eternal rest. Wherever he went, he stayed for a few days or for a year or more as the circumstances demanded. Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s going to Iran from Makkah is not mentioned any-where in the books of Mahdavis. The theory of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> going from place to place in the face of the opposition of the hostile elements is not based on facts. — Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin and Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>38</sup> Sultan Mahmood Kalan, also known as Sultan Mahmood Begadha (1459-1511 AD), was a learned commentator of Quran, an expert in the Science of Hadith, a scholar and fair-minded King of Gujarat. When Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> reached Chapaneer, the then capital of Gujarat, before proclaiming himself as *Mahdi*, the Sultan sent two *ulama* and two of his ministers, Salim Khan and Farhadul Mulk to enquire about the Imam<sup>AS</sup> who was staying at *Jama Masjid* (also known as *Ek-Minari Masjid*). Impressed by the explanation of Quran by Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, the two ministers became devoted disciples of the Imam<sup>AS</sup>. So did the two sisters, Raje Soon and Raje Muradi, of the Sultan. The king himself wanted to meet the Imam<sup>AS</sup>. *Mirat-e-Sikundari* and *Nuzhatul Khwatir* say that the *ulama* prevented the king from meeting the Imam<sup>AS</sup>. But, according to Abul Fazal and Abdul Qadir Badayuni, Sultan Mahmood Begadha met Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> and remained in his company for sometime. Badayuni also writes that, instigated by the court *ulama*, the Sultan did not agree to Imam<sup>AS</sup>'s stay

hostile to him. He was constrained to go to Hejaz and Arabia. From there, he went to Iran<sup>39</sup>. That was the period of Sultan Ismail Safavi. He ordered the Syed<sup>AS</sup>'s banishment when he saw huge gatherings at the latter's preaching sessions. He was returning to India. On his way, he died at Farah (now in western Afghanistan, close to Iranian border). Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni writes in the events of the year 911 AH:

"The same year, Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, who was distinguished among the great saints and who had laid claim to Mahdiat, died at Farah on his way back to India. Qazi Husain Zargar of Qandahar, who was the Syed<sup>AS</sup>'s disciple, has extracted the chronogram of the year of the death from the sentence (in Persian): *Gufta keh b'row za-Shaikh kun istifsar* (said, go and ask the Shaikh).

The affair of the Syed (Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>) is strange. Various claims and *shatahiyaat* (sayings which are contrary to *Shariat* but are uttered by pious people in divine ecstasies) are attributed to him. One need not go by what his followers and disciples say because when they accept anybody as their leader, they do not leave him without making a god out of him; and if they were extremely careful, they would be content to make him a *nabi* (prophet)<sup>40</sup>.

But some of his contemporary or later historians too have written certain things that, at first glance, agitate the mind. Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlavi writes:

"Among the beliefs of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri is the fact that every excellence and perfection that Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> had and whatever had been divined in him (Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>), was also divined in Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>. The only difference between the two is that in case of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>, it was personal and natural, while in case of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, it was by way of emulation or following (*taba'iyat*). Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>'s emulation of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> was so perfect that he had become like the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup>."

After reading this passage, I was reminded of Mirza (Ghulam Ahmed) Sahib Qadiani<sup>41</sup> of our times, a big group of whose followers hold similar belief about the Mirza. They also rely on the

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in Chapaneer and permitted him to go to Makkah. — *Muqaddima Siraj Al Absar*, pages 192-93.

<sup>39</sup> The correct report is that Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> went direct to Farah from Qandahar. He did not go to Iran. He died at Farah in 910 AH. It was long after this that Iranian ruler Ismail Safavi came to Afghanistan. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Mahdavis do not consider Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> to be god or prophet. They consider him to be Imam *Mahdi Al Mauood* in accordance with Quran and Hadith. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> By Mirza Sahib, Maulana Azad is referring to Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani. He was born on 13 February 1835 AD at Qadian in Punjab (India). He claimed to be *Masih-e-Mauood* (the promised Messiah). He died on 26 May 1908. He was buried in Qadian. His followers are called *Ahmedis*. Their head quarters are Qadian in India and Rabwah in Pakistan. — Malik Ram.

In 1902 AD, it was reported that a Christian preacher in England had claimed to be the promised Messiah, and Ghulam Ahmed wrote a pamphlet to denounce him. It was signed: *An Nabi*, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed. (*Naql-e-Kufr, Kufr na bashad*).— From the magazine. *Review of Religions*. Vol. LXXXV<sup>III</sup>. No.3. March. 1993, page 46.

One of our contemporaries, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani Gurdaspuri Punjabi, claimed to be Messiah and *Mahdi*, and argued on the basis of the Hadith which said: *La Mahdi illa Esa ibn Maryam* (no Mahdi without Jesus, son of Mary) He ignored all those Hadiths, which had reported that Jesus was the Son of Mary and that he would come down from the Heavens and slay *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ). The Ahmedis tried to explain the Hadith with far fetched arguments and interpretations, none of which were applicable to Ghulam Ahmed. Had he

difference between *asalat* (genuineness) and *taba'iyat* (emulation) and base their exaggeration on that difference....

But Shah (Abdul Haq) does not clarify whether Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> had himself said this or it was the result of devotional praise by his followers and disciples. Syed (Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>) did not write any book. His disciples wrote the book *Ummul Aqaid*<sup>42</sup>, which is attributed to him. The author of *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*<sup>43</sup> has copied some of the passages from it (*Ummul Aqaid*). Some

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thought over the matter, he would have come to the conclusion that he did not deserve the claim to be Mahdi or Jesus. He was neither the descendant of Mary nor prophet Muhammed<sup>SLM</sup>. He was the descendant of some Mirza. It would have been appropriate for him to become a *Shaikh al-Mashayakh*... He also claimed to be Sri Kishan. — Allama Syed Ashraf Shamsi<sup>RA</sup> Yadullahi (SASY), *Tanveer al-Hidaya*, Hyderabad, 1390 AH, page 73.

To compare us Mahdavis with Qadianis is not justifiable. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ummul Aqaid*, also known as *Aqida Sharifa*, was written by Hazrat Syed Khundmir, second Caliph of Imam Mahdi, between 910 and 930 AH (1504 and 1523 AD). Farah Committee, Dubai, has recently published its English translation.

"Human memories fade with the passage of time. Deviations in the beliefs and practices are bound to creep into the life of the community. Hazrat Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> realised that the deviations, however insignificant at the time, could blow up into major controversies in course of time. He wanted to nip the trouble in the bud and, therefore, compiled the basic belief as enunciated by the Imam<sup>AS</sup>. The compilation over, he invited to a conclave those of Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri's companions, who had lived with the Imam<sup>AS</sup>, heard him and seen him in action, and who were still alive. The compiled tract was read to them. They all agreed that it had correctly depicted the word and deed of the Imam<sup>AS</sup>. In token of their agreement, they affixed their signatures to the document. There was no dissent. Hence, the *Aqida Sharifa* is regarded as the basic document of the tenets of Mahdavi Faith." — Syed Qutbuddin (SQ) alias Khub Miyan of Palanpur. *Sharah Aqida Sharifa*, Jabalpur, 1341 AH, 1923 AD, page 8).

"As no Prophet has written any book, Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> too has written no book. He did not make any statement, except on the authority of Quran. In *Aqida Sharifa*, every Mahdavi belief has been explained on the basis of Quranic Verses and Hadith. As such, the beliefs are attributed to Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, and there is nothing doubtful about them... However, a prejudiced bigot and a bitter opponent of the Mahdavis wrote *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*. It is based on lies, false allegations and has very many literal and intrinsic distortions. His statements about Mahdavis and their beliefs can never be relied upon as the basis of Mahdavi beliefs. All the allegations of *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* have been refuted in famous books like *Kohl-al-Jawahir*, *Subl as Sawa* and *Khatmul Huda, et cetra*... One is not justified in alleging that the followers of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> had exaggerated or erred in comprehending (the teachings of the Imam<sup>AS</sup>), where every belief is based on Quran.... There is no room for any doubt.... No vali (saint) nor, in particular, Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, can slander Allah. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> The author of *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*, Abu Raja Muhammad Zaman Khan, was born in Shahjahanpur (in Uttar Pradesh, formerly United Provinces, in India) in 1242 AH. He left his native place at the age of 20 and wandering over various places, like Farrukhabad, Bareilly, Rampur, Dholpur, Gwalior, Jhansi, Sagar, Bhopal, Hoshangabad, Amraoti, Nanded and other places, came to Hyderabad where he was able to get a stipend of Rs. 60/- per month from Nawab Nasiruddowla (died 1273 AH) with the help of some influential people. Nawab Mukhtarul Mulk appointed Zaman Khan as the, Principal of *Darul-Uloom* in 1273 AH. In 1277 AH, Zaman Khan resigned as a result of a tussle between him and Nawab Mukhtarul Mulk. The latter wanted to formulate a new syllabus for the Shia students of the *Darul-Uloom* and Zaman Khan opposed it tooth and nail. Nawab Sahib had to eat a humble pie because Nawab Afzaluddowla and Nawab Shamsul Umara backed Zaman Khan.

When the question of appointing a royal tutor for Nawab Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, later to be the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad, came up, Zaman Khan was selected against the advice of Nawab Mukhtarul Mulk on a monthly salary of Rs. 1,000/-. After resigning as the principal of *Darul-Uloom* in 1277 AH, Zaman Khan founded the *Madrassa-e-Mahboobia*. Five years later, he went on a tour of Muslim countries, which lasted for five years. It was after his return that Hazrat Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup> met Zaman Khan and discussed the Mahdavi faith with him.

of these things are found in the copied passages. But, besides the amplitude of interpretation, this attribution to Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> is doubtful and deserves more study.

Be that as it may, such things could be of two kinds. It could either be the exaggeration, misunderstanding, deviation, error of argument, or, in case of proof they should be taken as a result of profuse ecstasy or the delusion of observations or occurrences, which have occurred to the perfect and great saints treading this path. Many of them reached the mark of (extraordinary) claims and *shatahiyat* (utterance or words not allowed by *Shariat* and which saints utter in a state of divine ecstasy). It is usually said: "This is an utterance during a state of unconsciousness or ecstasy. It should not be taken seriously; ignore it; do not give it any importance."

Under similar circumstances and (mental) conditions, someone said: "My banner would fly higher than that of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>." "Immaculate is my nature; Immaculate is my nature; greater is my glory." Somebody cried: "God alone is inside my garments." Yet someone else said: "My thirst is greater than that of Allah." It was also said: "The great river is flowing while the prophets are lined on its banks." Further, it was said: "My foot is on the neck of saints."<sup>44</sup>

*Na man tanha dareen maikhana mastam/ Junaid-o-Shibli-o-Attar ham mast.*

(I am not alone in this tavern; Junaid and Shibli and Attar are in equal divine intoxication with me).

When people listen to these utterances, they ignore and explain them away by some argument (*dalil*), or look the other way by saying that such thoughts are of *tariqat* or (dervish orders) or divine knowledge. Or they become silent on the pretext that the person saying such things was under an ecstasy because their other utterances and righteous deeds and their achievements in the way of ultimate reality are known to everybody. Then, what was the shortcoming Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> suffered despite all his perfect devotion, piety, fear of Allah, flawless following of the *Shariat*, enjoining its do's and don'ts, surrender and sacrifice for Allah and in

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Nawab Mukhtarul Mulk supported Zaman Khan in the compilation of the book, *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia*, denouncing the Mahdavia group. After obtaining the books of Mahdavia faith from Hazrat Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup>, Zaman Khan prevailed upon Mukhtarul Mulk to exile Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup>. In obedience to the exile orders, Hazrat Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup> went to Pindyal near Vijayawada. Mukhtarul Mulk wanted Zaman Khan to write a book denouncing the Mahdavis and land himself in trouble. Later, Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup> challenged Mukhtarul Mulk's order of exile at the *Darul Adalat* (High Court). The court sent Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup>'s petition to Mukhtarul Mulk, who obtained a written promise from Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup> that he would not meet Zaman Khan on his return to Hyderabad. *Hadiya-e-Mahdavia* was compiled in 1285 AH and printed at Kanpur in 1287 AH. Zaman Khan was killed in 1292 AH. Alam Miyan<sup>RA</sup> was indicted on the grounds that he had published a pamphlet saying that Zaman Khan would be killed for his book.... MSA., pages 720-25.

Zaman Khan was killed by Syed Muhammad<sup>RA</sup> alias Abji Miyan Shaheed on 6 Zil-Haj, 1292 AH (3 January, 1876 AD) after *Maghrib* prayers in a mosque near his (Zaman Khan's) house and *Madarasa-e-Mahoobia* in Rooplal Bazaar. Abji Miyan<sup>RA</sup> surrendered to the police soon after the killing at the mosque itself. A court of seven Sunni *muftis* (jurists) to try Abji Miyan was both the prosecutor and the judge. It sentenced Abji Miyan to death without a proper trial. He was beheaded on 14 Safar, 1293 AH (March, 1876 AD) on the banks of Musi River in downtown Hyderabad and was buried at Musheerabad *Hazira*. — Muhammad Umar Khan Mahmanzai (MUKM), *Abji Miyan Shaheed*, Hyderabad, 1985.

<sup>44</sup> These are the sayings of some of the saints like Bayazid Bistami, Junaid Baghdadi, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani and others in divine ecstasies. — Malik Ram.

the way of Allah, which were not denied by any of his friends and foes, that he should not be considered worthy of having a right to the benefit of doubt allowed in Islam? And on the basis of some utterances<sup>45</sup> the reality of which is not known, he is declared not to be a *momin*. Allah says in Quran: "Say (unto them): 'If ye possessed the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, ye would surely hold them back for fear of spending, for man was ever grudging:'" (S. XVII: 100 MMP).....

## (6) (Pages 60-70)

It is narrated that many of the righteous people and truthful *ulama* (Muslim scholars) had a good opinion about Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri and the group of his followers, or at least they hesitated (in jumping to conclusions) and kept quiet.

We have already dealt with the opinion of Hazrat Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal and Maulana Jamaluddin. Shaikh Wajihuddin<sup>RA</sup> Gujarati<sup>46</sup>, who was a great scholar of those days and whose biography appears in *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, *Maasir al-Kiram* and other books, was confronted with a *fatwa* (religious edict) to declare the *kufir* (infidelity) of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> and his followers. He refused to affix his signature to it. He said: "I cannot write against a group of people who have given up their worldly belongings and who have devoted themselves to the worship of (Ultimate) Truth."

Shaikh Ali Muttaqi has written a tract about the alleged exaggerations and innovations (of the Mahdavis), but with regard to Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, he says that silence is golden. Shaikh Budh Danapuri<sup>47</sup> was the teacher of teachers of his time. Syed Rafiuddin Muhaddis was a pupil of the pupil of Hafiz Asqalani; details about him have already been given earlier. About both of them Shaikh Abdul Qadir Badayuni writes: "*Ba Mahdavia husn-e-zan dashtand*"<sup>48</sup> (they had a good

<sup>45</sup> As stated earlier, Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri proclaimed to be Mahdi, as commanded by Allah, when in soundness of mind and his full senses, and continued to do so with convincing arguments, before the *ulama*, wherever he went and called upon the people to follow the Quran and *Sunnat* of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. He insisted on his being the Mahdi to his last breath, in accordance with the commandment of Allah. Had he been wrong, Allah would have informed him of the lapse and he would have retracted as many other saints did before him. Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> said nothing while in ecstasy. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Shaikh Wajihuddin Gujarati was, by descent, an *Alavi* (descendants of fourth Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Ali<sup>RZ</sup>, but not by his first wife Hazrat Fatima<sup>RZ</sup>, daughter of Prophet Muhammed<sup>SLM</sup>). He was the son of Maulana Nasrullah Gujarathi. A great scholar of his day, he was an authority on religious sciences and an eminent *Sufi*. He was born in Chapaneer (now called Champaneer near Vadodara in Gujarat) in Muharram 911 AH (June 1505 AD). He was the disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Ghous of Gwalior in *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism). Teaching and medicine were his occupations. He wrote commentaries on various books. He is considered to be one of the first architects of Urdu language. He died on 29 Safar 998 AH (28 December, 1589 AD) and was laid to rest in the courtyard of his *khanqah* in Ahmadabad. — Malik Ram.

<sup>47</sup> Shaikh Budh Danapuri was a famous scholar and doctor of indigenous medicine His eminence can be gauged from the fact that Sher Khan Sur (who later became King Sher Shah Suri) took pride in properly arranging the Shaikh's shoes. The Shaikh wrote a commentary on the book, *Irshad-e-Qazi* by Qazi Shihabuddin Daulatabad. — Malik Ram.

<sup>48</sup> These words do not occur in Badayuni's book. But it appears from *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* that Shaikh Budh Tabeeb (doctor of indigenous medicine) did not think the Mahdavia issue was part of faith (*Juzvey iman*) and did not consider Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> an accused (*mulzim*) for his claim to be a Mahdavi. Badayuni says that, keeping justice and fair play in view. Shaikh Budh sought the forgiveness of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>, praised him and paid highest respects to him. — Malik Ram.

opinion about the Mahdavi group). Shaikh Abdul Aziz has reported a saying of Hazrat Shah Waliullah that Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was an *aalim-e-Haq* and *wasil billah* (scholar of Truth in communion with Allah). Some ideas and incidents occurred to him in his life that he was powerless and helpless to understand and misjudged his own position. It is not that he had made a false claim. Hazrat Mujaddid Sahib and Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan are said to have expressed similar opinions.<sup>49</sup>

This was the attitude of the righteous *ulama*. But the evil *ulama* began to persecute the group of Mahdavis and started issuing *fatwas* of *kufr* (infidelity) on the basis of the Mahdi-ship of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>. After the death of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, his group flourished and great saints

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<sup>49</sup> Here, in a footnote, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes: "My opinion is that Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was true in his claim that he was *Mahdi*. And the conditions prevailing in the country at the time were certainly conducive to the appearance of *Mahdi*, and not that of a misguiding person or *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ). But the mistake was that he misunderstood *Mahdi* to be *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zuman*, because the *Mahdi* that was famous and awaited was *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. When the word *Mahdi* is spoken, one's mind rushes to the *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. Even this opinion would hold ground if it were absolutely proved that Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> himself had claimed to be *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. Otherwise, it is quite possible that the incident that occurred to him was (the voice) "*Antal Mahdi*". He might have announced only that much and his followers understood him to be *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*, because of the common belief and started attributing all the signs of the *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman* to him. When such things have happened to the Prophets; "...*Didst thou say unto the mankind: Take me and my mother for two Gods.* — (S.V: 116 MMP); what, then would not happen to ordinary reformers of the *ummah*..." — Abul Kalam Azad.

Here, Maulana Azad has resorted to a clever ruse to dodge the charge of rejecting Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri as *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. We do not believe that Maulana Azad was ignorant of the famous Hadith in which Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> is quoted as saying that "...The Caliph of Allah will emerge; you must pledge fealty to him even if you have to crawl on ice, because he is the Caliph of Allah." Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri was born and claimed to be *Imam Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman* in this very India. The question of his being *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman* was debated by him and his followers on the one hand, and, on the other, the opposing worldly *ulama*, whom Maulana Azad condemns throughout his book *Tazkira* for their irreligious lust for wealth. And the people, who were destined to be blessed with *iman* (faith) by Allah, joined the *Imam Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman* without any debate. Due to his vast knowledge and comprehension of religious affairs, Maulana Azad has accepted Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri as *Mahdi* in its literal sense and did his best to escape the consequences of refusing to admit that he was *Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. — Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin and Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

It appears from this footnote, that Maulana Azad had let loose his imagination to work. Since the book, *Tazkira*, was written when he was confined to a small village near Ranchi (Bihar) in exile, it is possible that he had no occasion or opportunity, may be due to his preoccupations otherwise, to read the biographies (of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>) and to do research about his claim to Mahdi-ship. Otherwise, he would not have made a cursory remark like this. However, his first sentence is that "Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was true in his claim that he was Mahdi and the conditions prevailing in the country at the time were conducive to the appearance of a Mahdi, and not of a *muzil* (misguiding person) or *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ)." When the period in question was demanding (a Mahdi), and Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> of Jaunpur made the claim of being *a. Mahdi*, in his full senses, as ordained by Allah, and continued to make the claim for years on end, and proved his claim by Quran and *Sunnat* of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> (to the satisfaction of his contemporaries), what, then, is the impediment in accepting him as *Imam Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. *Imam Mahdi*<sup>AS</sup> has stated in no uncertain terms that his claim was not based on *Ilham*, *ruya*, *Kashf*, *Waqia* or *muamala* (various modes of divine communication), but on a direct commandment of Allah. Hazrat Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri's claim is: "I am *Mahdi al-Mauood* (Promised Mahdi) *Khalifatullah* (Caliph of Allah). I follow Prophet Muhammed: whoever follows me is a *momin* (faithful), and whoever rejects me is a *kafir* (infidel)." All those present when the claim was made said: *Aamanna-o-Saddaqla* (We accept and repose faith and it is true). They then took the oath of allegiance to *Imam Mahdi Aakhir al-Zaman*. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

joined it.<sup>50</sup> Among them were Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and his disciple Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>.<sup>51</sup> They were staying in Bayana and by their knowledge of Truth and sacrifice in the way of Allah they enlisted hundreds of disciples. If what the non-partisan and reliable historians have written is true, these people (the Mahdavis) were not ordinary human beings; they were **the holy angels of high heavens** whom Allah had sent in the shape of human beings to His earth for its purification. God takes the work of angels through the earthly humans when the auspicious and blessed days come. Angels of heaven never come and settle down in human habitations. Allah says in Quran: "... *And no change shalt thou find in the way of God.....*" (S. XXXIII: 62 SAL)

Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni in his *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* and *Nijatur Rashid* and Nizamuddin Harvi in *Tabaqat-e-Akbari* have written, in great detail, about these people. But greater detail about them is to be found in *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* in the passage relating to Hazrat Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup>. One gets into a state of ecstasy and devotion by reading about them and one likes to give up everything and go on remembering and talking about these sacred people of Allah. As the Hadith says, "they are good people; when they are seen, one is reminded of Allah." Centuries have passed. This is the effect of remembering these devotees of Truth. Nobody knows what was the effect of their holy faces and remaining in their company.

Shaikh Abdullah Niazi was a well-known spiritual guide (*peer-e-tariqat*), an eminent *khalifa* (vice-regent) of Shaikh Salim Chisti<sup>52</sup>. But later, he became a Mahdavi. He gave up the office of

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<sup>50</sup> Maulana Azad writes: "After the death of Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>, his group flourished and great saints joined it." If the belief of Mahdi-ship was false or the claim itself was void, on what basis did the great saints join this group? Not one or two great saints, but thousands! When the Imam<sup>AS</sup> was in Kaha (in Sindh, Pakistan), there were 900 families in his entourage. They included big nobles, kings, *shaikhs*, *sajjadas*, *ulama* and others, who had renounced the world and lived in uniform conditions. No one was superior to the others. They were all immersed in *zikr* (remembrance of Allah), strict observance of *Shariat*, trust in Allah and patience. — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was the son of Hasan who was from Bengal and was among the eminent *mashayakeen* (religious guides). Shaikh Hasan went on Haj pilgrimage with his younger brother Nasrullah to Makkah and on his way back stayed on in Bayana. Shaikh Hasan was an authority on spiritual guidance and his younger brother in teaching and jurisprudence. Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was a credit to his ancestors in learning and scholarship. He gave up worldliness and temporal business as a follower of Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup>. He made service of the people his life ambition. When he became famous, Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri provoked Sultan Salim Shah Suri to persecute Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> by saying that Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was great threat to the kingdom. The Sultan summoned Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> to his court. When Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> appeared in court and delivered his sermon, the king became almost a devotee. He offered to make the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> the accountant general of his kingdom, if the latter gave up the Mahdavi belief. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> rejected it. At last, Salim Shah asked the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to go away to Deccan. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> went and settled at Handia. Here too the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> became very popular among the masses. Makhdoomul Mulk told the Sultan that the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>'s stay at Handia was again a great threat to his kingdom. The Sultan again summoned the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to the court. This time Salim Shah asked the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to whisper at least this much in his ear that "I have given up the claim to be a Mahdavi," and that the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> would be freed. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> again rejected the offer. Finally, the Sultan handed over the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to Makhdoomul Mulk, who ordered flogging. At the third lash the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> died. This happened in 957 AH (1550 AD). — Malik Ram.

<sup>52</sup> Shaikh Saleem Chishti was a descendant of Shaikh Fareeduddin Shakar Gunj and son of Shaikh Bahauddin. He was born in Delhi in 897 AH (1491-92 AD). From the beginning itself, he was inclined towards religion, piety, prayers and supplications. Returning from Haj pilgrimage in 931 AH (1524-25 AD), he permanently settled in Fatehpur Sikri. He changed his life-style and started living like a wealthy man. However, people were attracted to him. His fame reached every nook and corner of the country. Emperor Akbar too became his devotee. After great solicitude and supplications, Akbar was blessed with a son who was named Salim after the name of the saint. Akbar had great respect for him. He never called his son by the name of the saint: instead, he called him

the *mashayakh* (spiritual guide) and ostentatious piety mongering and became a humble dervish. There was a desolate garden outside the town of Bayana. He put up a small mud hut there to live in. He would fill water in pots by his own hands; he would carry these mud pots of water, he supplied water to the thirsty to quench their thirst and to others for their ablutions (*wazu*) before saying their daily prayers (*namaz*). When he saw elderly people carrying heavy loads of luggage on their heads, he would take their luggage on his own head and run for leagues with them... When it was time for the prayers (*namaz*), he would assemble woodcutters and water carriers (*saqqas*) and say his prayers with them in congregation. When he saw that some of the wage earners were not able to join the prayer congregation for fear of losing their wages, the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> would give his own earnings to such people to prevail upon them to join the prayers. When such people said their prayers the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> would be happy as if he had won the kingship of the whole world. This went on for days on end to an extent where he had no connection or relationship with anything except his devotion to the Creator and service to His Creation....

At about the same time, there was the scion of a highly respected spiritual family from the vicinity of Bihar (now in India) by name Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. He was a past master of temporal and spiritual knowledge and was famous as a *Sufi* saint. His expertise in the knowledge of his subjects was so great that scholars had to bow down their heads before him. He had undergone penance and abstinence of various types for spiritual attainments and he was famous for his endeavours among the people. In spite of all this, he was so selfish that he sat on the seat of spiritual mendicancy (*faqiri*) with a crown of pharaonic [*Fir'auni*] arrogance. When he saw that people tended to move closer to any *Sufi* saint or scholar, other than himself, he would attack him with a group of his disciples. Sometimes on the basis of his debating power, sometimes on the allegations of flawed beliefs or on one pretext or the other, he would defame and disgrace such scholar to an extent where the poor fellow would be compelled to run away from the town. The difference between a worldly *aalim* (scholar) and a worldly sinner is this: the sinner quenches his lust with admission of shamefulness; the *aalim* camouflages his sins in the garb of his religiosity. The deceitful business of Satan and lust are very widespread. People have searched it in pubs and taverns. Had they searched for it in *madrasas* and *khanqahs* (schools and monasteries), they could have easily found it.

Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s family too was settled in Bayana for a long lime. He chanced to meet Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> one day. He saw the latter's way of life. He found things were very different here. He was instantly influenced by what he saw. He told his own disciples that the true path of the worship of God was that of Niazi<sup>RA</sup>. Whatever he had been doing all his life was slavery of lust and idolatry in the garb of the worship of God, he said and added: "I will follow this voiceless *faqir*: whoever is a seeker of Allah, let him come with me...."

Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> asked Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> : "What is the path of seeking the (Ultimate) Truth?"

Niazi replied: "Spend everything you have. And never retain anything other than humility, sadness and abstinence."

With this, Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s life-style changed completely. He plundered the ancestral seat of spiritual guidance and religious knowledge, and the wherewithal of pride, and joined Shaikh

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*Shaikhu Baba*. The Shaikh died on 2 Ramadhan, 979 AH (13 February 1572 AD). The Shaikh is buried in the mausoleum, he had constructed at Fatehpur-Sikri. —Malik Ram.

Niazi<sup>RA</sup>. He did not retain anything of his worldly belongings. In the past, his ego was such that he looked down upon everybody as the scum of the earth. But now he did not feel any shame in doing menial work and rearrange the footwear of the Muslims. He went to everyone he had quarreled with, and asked for his forgiveness with folded hands. In course of time, a large number of ardent seekers of Divine Love joined him and became a big group....

These people lived in a desolate garden on the outskirts of Bayana. They had no association with their families, relatives and friends or hearth and home. Some people went out during the day. Some worked on daily wages. They spent one-tenth of their earnings in the way of Allah. They returned to their desolate garden and jointly ate what they had brought, and spent the rest of their time in their devotion and worship of Allah. Some of them would go to the town in the morning, attend to the sick, prepare and cook the food for the weak and handicapped and brought provisions for the widows. When they saw two persons quarrelling with each other, they politely prevailed upon them to cease the quarrel and embrace each other. If they failed to put an end to their quarrel, they would say: "Beat us or kill us, but be friendly with each other." They were content and free from want. They got nothing to eat for days but looking at their care-free faces and happy hearts, one would think that they had just finished a sumptuous meal Allah says in Quran: "... The unthinking man accounteth them wealthy because of their restraint..." (S. II: 273 MMP). When they felt very hungry, they started saying their prayers and when they rose after the prayers, their faces would lit up like those of emperors. Along with this, they enforced the do's and don'ts of *Shariat*. They were so strict in this that they could not tolerate sins and forbidden deeds. Every one of them was always armed, and, when he saw a sin being committed, he would prevent it by force, in accordance with the Hadith which said: "The sign of faith (*iman*) is to prevent violation of the Shariat". In spite of all this, their patience and forbearance was exemplary; they listened to abuses, starved, got hurt; but never would they give up their mission. They said they relished and enjoyed abuses and curses more than the others enjoying praises and prayers.... One of their companions was exiled seven times. Every time, he said: "Try it again. A Brahmin's idolatry was a thousand times better than the faith (*iman*) that was shaken by the fear of exile."

*"It does not lie in your mouth to call yourself a lover; O disgraced (fellow), you could not do even this"* (Sauda. an Urdu poet).

Mornings and evenings, they all congregated at a place. Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> would comment on Quranic texts. Divine love and burning and melting of his heart had given his tongue a deep penetrating effect that words came from his mouth like arrows and pierced the hearts of the listeners. Howsoever evil-minded or merciless a man was, he would, on listening to Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s sermons, lose his senses to an extent that he would abandon all his worldly belongings then and there, and join the group of Mahdavis. Mullah Badayuni writes: "Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s sermons were so effective and fascinating that whoever heard them would give up his worldly business and joined his companionship. He would abandon his family and hearth and home and patiently bore the hardships of poverty and hunger. He would never go back to his earnings and business." (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. Vol. I, page 397).

An almost similar passage occurs in *Tabaqat-e-Akbari*: "Everyday (Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>) used to give his sermon on the commentary of Quran in a fascinating manner that everybody in the congregation would refrain from going on his usual business. He would give up his family and children and join the Mahdavi Daira. He would repent and become a devotee of Syed

Muhammad<sup>AS</sup>. If he were engaged in agriculture, he would spend the *ushr* (tithe) of his agricultural produce in charity in the name of Allah.” (*Tabaqat-e-Akbari*, Vol. II, page 116).

In another place, Mullah Badayuni writes that after joining the companionship of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>, a new path of the meaning and the foresight into the understanding of Quran had opened up on Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s mind. "When Miyan Alai<sup>RA</sup> joined the companionship of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>, the meaning, the nuances and realities of Quran were revealed (by *kashf*) to him."

It is very true. All that he had studied and was teaching Quran so far was mere skipping of the pages of the writings of Baizavi and Baghavi. How could the reality of the meaning of the Quran be comprehended by a mimicry and turning the pages of books? For the real understanding of the Quran, the (*faiz*) of a Gabriel of Divine Love and the revelation (*ilham*) of an aching heart is needed. Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s companionship opened these closed doors....

In short, Allah has said (in Quran) about the holy men that (they are) “*humble towards believers, stern towards disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah and fearing not of any blamer.*” (S.V: 54 MMP) “*And those with him are hard against disbelievers and merciful among themselves. Thou (O Muhammad) seest them bowing and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking bounty from Allah and (His) acceptance. The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration...*” . (S. XLVIII, 29 MMP).

The Mahdavis were a living portrait of the character and conduct described in these two Quranic verses.

Within a short period, thousands of families joined the group of Mahdavis. Their message had reached all over Gujarat, Malwah and Deccan. Love for the religion and abstinence was so strong that at the times of worship (*namaz*), there used to be complete silence and nobody was seen anywhere except in mosques.

Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni had seen Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> in his childhood. He writes that when Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> started on his pilgrimage to Makkah, he had seven hundred families of disciples with him. “My father had gone to Basawar and there he had met Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>,” he writes.<sup>53</sup>

How could such a group of Mahdavis be allowed to live in peace by the worldly *ulama* and evil jurists (*fuqaha-e-su*). Thieves and murderers could live in peace in their regimes. But where could the reformers of the *ummah* (followers of Islam) and devotees of (Ultimate) Truth get justice and peace!

When Salim Shah ascended the throne at Agra in 956 AH, Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri was made *Shaikh al-Islam* in the kingdom. He decided to persecute the Mahdavi group. He instigated the people by saying that the Mahdavis were wayward and misguided. He told King Salim that when Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> became the Mahdi, his (Salim Shah's)

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<sup>53</sup> From *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, Vol. I: page 399: "In the conditions, he was in, Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> went to Gujarat with some six or seven hundred families, including women and children, with the intention of meeting the spiritual leaders of *Mahdavia Groh* (*Daira-wallas*) and learn their practices and precepts. When Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> came to Basawar from Bayana this author (Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni) went in company of his father to meet Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. — Malik Ram.

government would be overthrown because it had been mentioned in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> that *Mahdi al-Mau'ood* would rule the whole world and since these people were the followers of Mahdi, they would at least conquer India. "Makhdoomul Mulk impressed upon king Salim Shah that this man (Mian Alai<sup>RA</sup>) claims to be a Mahdavi, and Mahdi would be the ruler of the entire world. Salim Shah's military officers had become Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s disciples. Hence there was a threat to the kingdom." (*Tabaqat-e-Akbari*, Vol., II, page 117).

Although Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> were not Mahdavis<sup>54</sup>, they said Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> was the Mahdi and they used to argue favourably about narratives (*rivayat*) which alluded to the kingship of Mahdi and such other things. The basis of their argument and belief was that Mahdi and his group would revive the *Shariat* by their knowledge and practice. Kingship was not necessary for the Mahdi they argued. There was no doubt that this argument was not correct<sup>55</sup> and the words and the explanations of the narratives go against the arguments. But it is obvious that by putting forth this argument, this group had on its own given up (its claim to) taking over the government. And the allegations about this group were false. But since the king could not be incited without a political threat to his authority, Makhdoomul Mulk resorted to the old practice of the evil *ulama*. Consequently, Salim Shah, a simple Afghan, became inimical to the Mahdavis.

According to *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, Makhdoomul Mulk prepared the case to behead Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> thus: "This innovator claims to be a Mahdavi. Since this person is prepared to rebel, he deserves to be beheaded." (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. Vol. I. page 400).

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<sup>54</sup> Both Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> were Mahdavis. It may be mentioned that Sultan Saleem Shah offered to appoint the Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> as the accountant-general of his kingdom, if he renounced his faith in Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri as the Promised Mahdi. Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> rejected it. On a later occasion, after Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s return from Bihar after meeting Shaikh Budh, Salim Shah asked him to tell in his ear that he (Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>) had given up the Mahdavi faith. Again Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> refused to comply. Similarly, Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> too continued to remain true to his faith in Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. When he was facing untold misery at the hands of his detractors he did not give up his faith. How could such a person retract when he was no more subject to persecution by his opponents? The stories of the retraction of the two Mahdavi stalwarts are a figment of the imagination of hostile historians. Maulana Azad has himself written about the persecution of the righteous "this is the reward the righteous people got at the hands of this oppressive world."

Maulana Azad appears to be in two minds about Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. He pays glorious tributes to the two Mahdavi stalwarts for their righteousness, truthfulness and steadfastness in their faith and beliefs on the one hand and on the other, he joins the evil *ulama* in declaring that they had given up the Mahdavi faith. — Abulfatah Syed Jalaluddin and Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

<sup>55</sup> Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>, who was the monarch of the whole world (including the lands and the oceans), had cursed the world. He did not cherish dominions and domination and conquests and annexations. How then could Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, who was a perfect follower of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>, like dominations and treasures, instead of religious and spiritual leadership, renewal and restoration of *Shariat*, which was justice and fair play of the highest order? The following incident during the life of the Imam elucidates the point:

Once, Miyan Malik Gauhar<sup>RZ</sup> asked Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> about the statements of *ulama* that Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> would be the monarch of the world. Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> said: "What is the trouble? Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> would certainly be the monarch of the whole world, but he would not make people clean the stables" That means he would not maintain any army and run an administration like the worldly monarchs. His rule would be like that of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> and other apostles before him. Those on earth and in the heaven would be contented and pleased with him." — Syed Muhammad Hayat<sup>RA</sup>.

It can be gauged from this one point alone that the reformers of the (Muslim) *Ummah* had to face what kind of deceitful and tricky *ulama* and blood-thirsty *Qazis* and what excuses were propped up to create hostility between government and such reformers.

There is no relationship between the Islamic beliefs and somebody's being or not being a Mahdi. Nor is this the basis of sinfulness and piety, nor of *iman* (fidelity) and *kufr* (infidelity). If someone accepts as Mahdi a person who invites people to and accept *Shariat* and its do's and don'ts, his Islamic beliefs do not suffer from any infirmity. At worst, it could be said that he had committed an interpretative mistake (*ijtihadi ghalati*).

Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> had expected that people should repose faith (*iman*) in Allah and whatever He had bestowed (upon the Creation).

What is to be seen is whether he is among the pious people or not. Allah has defined the *muttaqeen* (pious and God fearing people) in Quran: "*Who believe in the unseen, and establish worship, and spend of what We have bestowed upon them; And who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter.*" (S. II: 3,4 MMP). Hence the person, who has faith (*iman*) in these things and acts accordingly, is among those whom Allah describes thus: "*These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful.*" (S. II: 5 MMP). Whether such person believes somebody to be Mahdi or Dajjal (Anti-Christ) is immaterial. "Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct." (S. XLIX: 13 MMP). But it would be ascertained whether the person who is believed to be Mahdi is pious or an innovator. If it is proved that his deeds or innovations or sayings are impious and wrong, his follower too would be deemed to be an innovator and impious. And he would be dealt with suitably under the *Shariat*. But such treatment is not meted out on the basis of his belief in *Mahdaviat* but on the basis of his deeds prohibited by *Shariat*. But if his deeds are righteous, he can be considered to be wrong on a minor issue. We can find his mistake. But we can neither say that he is bad nor find fault in his Islam or his faith (*iman*). If his deeds are good, he has love and devotion to Allah and Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>, he follows (the *Shariat*) and he sacrifices in the way of Allah and for Allah, he would certainly be in a better position before Allah and we all will be in a very poor light even if we are perfect as Ash'aris<sup>56</sup> and Mataridis<sup>57</sup>. There, the pride of being like Ash'aris or Mataridis will not help...

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<sup>56</sup> *Ash'aris* are the followers of Imam Abul Hasan Ash'ari's school of thought. Imam Ash'ari is a descendant of Abu Musa Ash'ari ibn Qais<sup>RZ</sup>, a companion of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. He was born in 260 AH (873-74 AD) in Basra. He was a righteous pupil of the famous *Mu'atezala* scholar Al-Jab'yi Basari, but, later, he gave up the *Mu'atezala* doctrines and joined the *Ahl-e-Sunnat*. He became the follower of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal<sup>RA</sup>. He spent his last days in Baghdad, where he died in 324 AH (935-36 AD).

The *Ash'aris* are strict followers of Hadith (traditions of the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup>) and *Sunnat* (practice of the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup>), but they are not opposed to *Ilm-e-Kalam* (Scholastic Theology). The *Ash'aris* differ from the *Mu'atezala* on the following issues: (1) The essence (*zath*) of Allah and His attributes are eternal (without beginning); (2) The words "*Yadullah*" and "*wajhitullah*"<sup>1</sup> (meaning the hand of Allah and the face of Allah) *et cetra* are correct literally, although they are free of matter and we are incapable of comprehending their true meaning; (3) The Quran is non-created (*ghair Makhluq*) because the divine attributes of speech (*kalam*) is also eternal (*azli* — without a beginning). (4) The vision of Allah in the Hereafter is *Haq* (true), even if we are not capable of comprehending its (the vision's) essence. (5) Their (the *Ash'aris*') inclination is towards compulsion (*jabr*). They say that the human capability to achieve is "created" (*makhluq*) by Allah. Therefore, what is achieved as a result of this effort too will be from Allah. (6) Contradicting the *Mu'atezala* doctrine that man is neither helpless nor master, they believe him to be somewhere between the two extremes and therefore, a *musalman* would remain a

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The details of the subsequent events are long. In short, Makhdoomul Mulk prevailed upon King Salim Shah to summon Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> to Agra. Many famous *ulama* like Syed Rafiuddin Muhaddith and Shaikh Abulfatah Thanasari<sup>58</sup> were also called upon to take part in the debate. Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> reached the royal court along with his companions. He and his companions were clad in old and tattered clothes. They looked like a group of poor and distressed *faqirs* and dervishes. But their magnanimity and eminence of the divine truth was such that they greeted the courtiers in the manner of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> and retired to a corner throwing a contemptuous glance at the gathering, as if this was not a group of proud human beings but just a heap of inert stones. This attitude of self-respect was hard for Salim Shah to swallow. When the debate began, Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> recited a few verses from Quran and started explaining them in his sermon:

"My (musical) instrument emits no melody other than that of love." (Ghalib, *Kulliyat-e-Farsi*, page 434).

Badayuni writes that the sermon consisted of the condemnation of the worldliness, particulars of the Hereafter, decision of the evil *ulama* and the duties of the nobles and the kings. The style of his speech was so effective and pathetic that while words flowed from his mouth on one side and on the other, the stone-heartedness of the gathering was melting like wax. Despite all their hard-heartedness and forgetfulness of Truth, Salim Shah and his noblemen could not control themselves. Tears flowed down their cheeks.

*Ask about the warmth of my hot tears.*

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*momin* in any event, although he may be punished (by Allah) for his misdeeds. Similarly, they believe in *pul-sirath* (the bridge over which the righteous would pass into Paradise), *meezan* (the weighing of good and bad deeds on Doomsday), *shifaat* (intercession) and other things, in their literal sense. The *Muatezala* either do not believe in them or try to laboriously explain them. — Malik Ram.

<sup>57</sup> *Mataridis* are the followers of Abu Mansur Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Mahmood al-Hanafi al-Mutakallimal-Mataradi Samarqandi. Matarid is a village near Samarqand. He was a native of that village. The *Mataridis*, like the *Ash'aris*, belong to the *Ahl-e-Sunnat wal-Jamaat*. People, holding the *Mataridi* belief, mostly live in the country north of Oxus River (*Ma Wara un-Nahr*). Abu Mansur Mataridi died in Samarqand in 333 AH (944 AD).

The purpose of Imam Mataridi, like that of Imam Ash'ari, too was to defend Islam and prove the veracity of the beliefs of the early period of Islam from the attacks of the *Muatezalas* and the *Kalamis* (scholars of Scholastic theology). But the differences between the *Asharis* and *Mataridis* are both literal and intrinsic. The most important difference between them is that while the *Ash'aris* commonly believe that human being is helpless, the *Mataridis* consider him to be the master of himself and therefore, liable to be rewarded and/or punished (for his deeds). Another important difference in beliefs is that *Mataridis* consider salvation as obligatory while *Ash'aris* repudiate it.

The common belief that *Mataridis* are in reality the followers and supporters of the *Fiqh* of Imam Abu Hanifa appear to be correct. Nasafi, whose book *Aqaed* is the basic text of the *Hanafi Fiqh*, was a *Mataridi*, but a commentary on his book was written by Tuftazani who was an *Ash'ari*. — Malik Ram.

<sup>58</sup> Shaikh Abul Fatah Thanasari (and later, Akbarabadi) was the son of Shaikh Abdul Ghafoor. He was a great scholar of his times. He was the favourite disciple of Syed Rafiuddin *Muhaddith*, in the science of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. He taught religious sciences for over fifty years in Agra. Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni, author of *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* is his pupil. He died on 21 Jamadi-I, 976 AH (11 November, 1568 AD). — Malik Ram.

*From the skirt (of your garment) and the cuffs of sleeves (which absorb the tears).* -- (Maikash)

When Salim Shah saw all this, his attitude changed: he lost his poise. He gave great respect to Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. He asked: "Why, despite all these virtues, people oppose you?" What could the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> reply?

Salim Shah ordered that food be served to the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> and his companions. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> refused to partake the meal and said: "Your food in fact belongs to the people; you are violating *Shariat* by taking more than your share of it."

The debate continued the next day. All the *ulama* of the court were on one side and the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> alone was on the other. Whoever started to speak, was defeated, disgraced and silenced. He did not allow Makhdoomul Mulk even to talk.

Repeatedly, the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> admonished him by saying: "You are among the worldly *ulama*, a thief of religion. You have committed many things not permitted by the *Shariat*. You violate *Shariat* to an extent, which throws you out of the pale of justice. Even now sounds of music are openly being heard from your house." (*Muntakhab al-tawareekh*. Vol.1 page 401).

Seeing the course of the debate, Salim Shah realised that the *ulama* of his court had become unnecessarily hostile to and persecuting a Truth worshipping (*haq parast*) dervish. But he was under duress. The ordinary people were under the influence of these *ulama*. And the issue at stake was religious. He could not interfere in it. Daily, the case of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> came before the Court but he [the king] would evade it. Badayuni writes: "Makhdoomul Mulk tried to persuade King Salim Shah to behead Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>."

Simultaneously, reports were heard daily that one or the other *sardar* or *amir* (noblemen) of the court turned a disciple of the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> after listening to his sermons and giving up his (the *amir's*) worldly possessions. Finally, Salim Shah was content to order the exile of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> to Deccan. Saying: "...Allah's earth is spacious..." (S. XXXIX: 10 MMP), Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> started his journey southwards.

But how could the thirst of the ferocious *ulama* of the world be quenched on such minimal punishment? A few days later, taking advantage of an occasion, Makhdoomul Mulk tried to provoke Salim Shah to issue an order to behead Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. The greatest crime of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was that, wherever he went innumerable people crowded around him. When the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> was exiled to Deccan, Bahar Khan, ruler of Handia, and thousands of others became his disciples.

It was not the case of the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> alone. The guilt of every righteous man, who invites people to the Ultimate Truth, in the eyes of oppressive kings and the *ulama* of deception and intrigue, is that large number of people flock to them. Alas, they cannot absolve themselves of it!....

Finally, Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was summoned back to Agra. It appears that Salim Shah had got the impression that the court *ulama*, particularly Makhdoomul Mulk, were selfish, hostile and jealous of the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup>. He had come to the conclusion that the opinion of these *ulama* could not be impartial. Hence, he now sent Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> to Shaikh Budh of Bihar who was one of the famous contemporary *ulama*. Salim Shah wrote to Shaikh Budh: "Your judgement would be enforced."

Badayuni writes in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* that, at the first instance, Shaikh Budh truthfully wrote that Islam and *iman* (faith) did not depend on the issue of *Mahdaviat*. There are many narratives (*rivayat*) in respect of the signs of Mahdi: they contradict each other. On this minor point, a scholar of Truth should not be subjected to *the fatwas* (religious edicts) of *kufr* (infidelity) and other punishments, he concluded.

But then, alas, worldly wisdom won the day! Shaikh Budh's sons prevailed upon him to change the writing. They told their father that Makhdoomul Mulk was the powerful *Shaikh al-Islam* currently, and therefore, it was not prudent to give an opinion against him. If he prevailed upon Salim Shah to summon him (Shaikh Budh) for an enquiry into the matter, it would be difficult for him (Shaikh Budh) to undertake a long journey from Bihar to Agra in his old age.

This pleading did the trick. He (Shaikh Budh) tore the first letter and wrote another, which said; "These days, Makhdoomul Mulk was a great scholar doing research. His *fatwa* alone is correct." (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*, Vol. I., pages 407-8).

What could now be said about people who are dead? Their affairs are in Allah's hands. "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record." (S. XX: 52 MMP) And, in any event, we supplicate: "Forgive us and our brethren who were before us the faith." (S. LIX: 10 MMP).

But, consider! In every period, the selfishness and forgetfulness of Truth by evil *ulama* has been a curse for this world. The love and worship of the short life in this world has made this group of the slaves of lust conceal the truth. Shaikh Budh felt that it was great trouble for him to travel to Agra but it did not bother him if truth was suppressed and the righteous people were beheaded. Is there a worse species of humankind that had brought greater disaster to the world? Can there be a dacoit or robber who could be deadlier to the human race? If this was the attitude of the *ulama*, what could have been the attitude of the common people?

Be it known that Shaikh Budh was considered to be among the great *ulama* of that era. Badayuni writes that King Sher Shah used to perform menial services, like arranging properly the shoes of Shaikh Budh. The Shaikh has written a fine commentary to explain *Irshad-e-Qazi*<sup>59</sup>. In spite of all this, when Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> reached his house in royal handcuffs, sounds of songs and musical instruments were heard from inside the house. Other things, prohibited by the *Shariat* and too evil to be described, were seen in his congregations. Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> could not bear this blatant violation of *Shariat* and chided Shaikh Budh. (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. Vol. 1, page 406).

It would have been better if Shaikh Budh had not studied: and acquired the religious knowledge, he did not written the commentary on the book, *Irshad-e-Qazi*, had become a wood-cutter, sold wood in bazaars but had not prevented his mouth from saying words of truth. This would have been a thousand times better than his religious knowledge, *maulviat* (scholarship) *mashikhat* (pride of religious guidance). He would have been closer to and more adored by Allah. His commentary of *Irshad-e-Qazi* will not win him his salvation before Allah on the Day of Judgment, but a word of truth would have made Allah pardon him and his sins of a lifetime....

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<sup>59</sup> The author of *Irshad-e-Qazi*, which deals with Arabic grammar and syntax, was Qazi Shihabuddin Daulatabadi. He is a prolific writer. He died on 15 Rajab, 849 AH (27 October, 1445 AD) and was buried at Jaunpur. — Malik Ram.

Salim Shah had been touched by the truthfulness of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. But he was not himself an *aalim* (scholar). He wanted the support of at least one religious *aalim* to save Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> from the clutches of the worldly *ulama*. But. Alas! Everyone turned out to be a worshipper of the earthly wealth. When Shaikh Budh too came in support of Makhdoomul Mulk, the king became helpless. He finally assigned Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>'s case to Makhdoomul Mulk.

Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was very sick in those days. There was a gaping wound on his neck and his tiresome journey to Bihar and back to Agra had left him half-dead. Makhdoomul Mulk ordered that the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> be flogged. The executioner had administered the third lash that the martyr of Truth, Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>, breathed his last. "*In an assembly of Truth, in the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent.*" (S. LIV: 55 AYA). Mullah Badayuni has extracted the chronogram of the year of his death by "*Zakirullah*" and the Arabic Verse from Quran: "*Wa saqaahum Rabbuhum Sharaban Tahuuraa*" (*And their Lord will give to them to drink of a wine pure and holy.*) (S. LXXVI: 21 AYA). The year was 957 AH. .

Alas! The thirst of the persecutors was not quenched even after the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> had died. They subjected the body of this godly man (Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>) to a treatment even the dead bodies of the infidels in the wars of Badr and Uhud were not subjected to. Badayuni writes that the dead body of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was tied to the leg of an elephant and the elephant was let loose to graze in a field. The body was later cut into pieces and was exhibited in various places in the royal armed forces camps. Then, it was ordered that the dead body should not be buried. Royal guards were deployed for the purpose. This is the reward that the righteous people always got at the hands of this oppressive. "Within it will be mercy throughout, and without it, all alongside, will be (Wrath and) Punishment!" (S. LVII: 13 AYA).

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This was the story of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. The story of his spiritual guide (*murshid*) Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> was no less pathetic. Badayuni writes: "Sometime after Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> was banished to Deccan, King Salim Shah started going to Punjab on hearing about the revolt of the Afghans of Frontier. Details can be seen in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. Vol. I, pages 403-5) When the royal entourage and the army reached Bayana, Makhdoomul Mulk, who had a penchant for persecuting righteous people, found a moment convenient to incite the king against Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>. He told Salim Shah: "We got a respite from smaller mischief of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> for some time. But the greater mischief persists."

Salim Shah asked: "Who is he?"

Makdoomul Mulk said: "Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup>, who lives here in Bayana, and is the spiritual guide (*murshid*) of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>."

Salim Shah ordered Miyan Bahwa Lohani, the Governor of Bayana to bring Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> before him (Salim Shah).

Miyan Bahwa was the disciple of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and tried to prevail upon the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to flee Bayana that very night. He said. "I will make some excuse (to the King)".

Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> replied: "Allah's will is the same, whether it is here or there, now or in the future. Whatever is destined will happen."

Miyan Bahwa was now compelled to take the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> with him to Salim Shah. Salim Shah was all set to embark on his journey. Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> came near Salim Shah. He was undaunted with a raised head and said. "Assalam Alaikum".

Miyan Bahwa wanted somehow or the other to save the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> from the wrath of Salim Shah. He took the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> by the nape of his neck, tried to cause the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> to stoop before the king, said: "One salutes the King thus."

The Shaikh became angry; he raised his voice and said: "This is the salutation according to the tradition of the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup>. I know no other form of salutation."

Salim Shah was annoyed; he gestured to the soldiers who started beating the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> with batons, blows and kicks. The Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> became unconscious. As long as he was conscious, he recited the Quranic verse: "... *Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and anything we may have done that transgressed our duty: establish our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist faith.*" (S. III 147 AYA).

When Salim Shah saw that the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> was reciting something he asked Makhdoomul Mulk: "What is he saying?"

Makhdoomul Mulk said: "He is calling you and me *kafirs*."

Salim Shah was infuriated and continued to order the beating of the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> till he felt that the Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> was dead.

Alas, this is what has always happened to the devotees of Truth and they never saw a moment of peace at the hands of the enemies of the Truth. This has been happening and may continue to happen. If the enemies of Truth thought that their lives were the most precious things, the devotees of Truth always thought their lives were the most worthless things.

Allah be praised. The divine law of retribution is working in its own way in this very world. And the punishment in the Hereafter is yet to come: "... *if they but knew.*" (S II: 102 AYA).

And, finally, a time did come: it was the same Makhdoomul Mulk. It was the same India. He (Abdullah Sultanpuri) had lost the post of *Shaikh al-Islam* and the religious leadership. He could not spend his last days in peace and honour. During the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, he was subjected to humiliations and disgrace at the hands of new (jurists and legists who issued *fatwas* or religious edicts). According to Mullah Badayuni, the picture of the Quranic Verse that - *The Day that (all) things secret will be tested*" (S LXXXVI: 9 AYA) was manifest. At one time movement of the *Shaikh al-Islam* Makhdoomul Mulk's pen could sound the death-knell of the lives of the righteous people of Allah. But things had changed now. Greenhorns like Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi and Shaikh Abul Fazal came to pronounce verdicts on Makhdoomul Mulk's piety or impiety in open court. He had to face the retribution for his evil deeds all through his life....

(10)

Mullah Badayuni writes that the wealth of Makhdoomul Mulk was so great that not only the trunks and boxes of the household, but also the graves of his ancestors were filled with bricks of silver and gold. "...*And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah.*" (S. IX: 34 AYA). All this wealth had been amassed during his tenure as the *Shaikh al-Islam* in the service of the state by usurpation and misappropriation. He had made many

innovations and used to rob the servants of Allah. When Emperor Akbar ascended the throne, strange things came to light. Among them was that Makhdoomul Mulk had never paid *zakat* (poor-money) throughout his life. Every year, before the year was out, his wealth was transferred to his wife. Before the end of the subsequent year, the wife would re-transfer the ownership of the wealth to the husband. That way, the period of one year was never out on the ownership of the property and the *zakat* was never due legally on the husband or the wife....

(12)

This is the story of the Mahdavia group, Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>, about whom the author of *Tazkirat al-Wasileen* has written in the details relating to Hazrat Shaikh Jamaluddin. And all those details are about his (Jamaluddin's) opponents, in particular about Makhdoomul Mulk Mullah Abdullah Sultanpuri, whose persecution and bigotry had caused indescribable hardship to the righteous people's determination and endurance. Shaikh Jamaluddin and his spiritual guide (*murshid*), Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal had supported these very people (the great members of the Mahdavia community) and that was why Makhdoomul Mulk had given the battle cry against the two (Jamaluddin and Jahniwal). I have deliberately dealt with the (Mahdavia) group in some detail. On going through the excerpts copied from *Tazkirat al-Wasileen*, many uninformed people may be wondering and concerned why these people had written books asserting the sainthood and righteousness of Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri and had openly opposed *the fatwas* (edicts) of *takfir* (infidelity) and ordering the killing of Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and other members of the Mahdavia group. Makhdoomul Mulk who was the Shaikh al-Islam at the time had issued the fatwas. Thus (in the opinion of the persecutors), they (Jamaluddin and Jahniwal) had joined an innovative group. But after going through all the details, any fair-minded person would come to the conclusion about the credentials of the Mahdavia group and the wickedness of the evil *ulama*. They would also realise whether supporting the Mahdavia group, which was chaste, virtuous and reformist, was liable to be reproached or suspected or it was their righteous marvel.

Would one be surprised at Makhdoomul Mulk's hostility towards these two eminent personages?

The truth is that if all the historical evidence of virtues, sanctity, knowledge and deeds of both Shaikh Jamaluddin and Shaikh<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal were not known to us and we had known only that they had opposed Makhdoomul Mulk and supported Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup> and had written books in praise and confirmation (*tauseeq*) of Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri, this one deed of theirs would have sufficed as evidence of eternal respect and divine greatness for them. The reader is already acquainted with the trying times these eminent people had to face. Everywhere the evil *ulama* were in abundance and the rank, grandeur, power and authority, in particular of Makhdoomul Mulk had silenced the tongues of almost all the truthful *ulama*. There are many instances, which show that even a whimper against Makhdoomul Mulk would have resulted in being beheaded. Syed Rafiuddin Muhaddith Dahlavi and Shaikh Jalal Thanasari<sup>60</sup> were great scholars of rank and grandeur, but they could not open their mouths, despite knowing and understanding the truth, in favour of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>. They even joined

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<sup>60</sup> Jalal Thanasari, who was the disciple and vice-regent (*khalifa*) of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, is a famous Islamic scholar of Mughal Emperor Akbar's reign. He wrote a book. *Tahqiq-e-Arazi-e-Hind*, which tried to prove that the land of the country was owned by the king who had the right and authority to give it to anybody, he pleased. He died in 989 AH (1582 AD). — Malik Ram.

the opponents of the two Shaikhs in the royal court. Shaikh Budh was the spiritual guide (*murshid*) of King Salim Shah. He ran no risk if he had opposed Makhdoomul Mulk. Despite this he had no courage (to tell the truth): he was compelled (by his sons) to support Makhdoomul Mulk. The greatest trouble is that whatever the court *ulama* do, they do in the name of the king and opposition to these *ulama* is deemed tantamount to rebellion against the king. Taking all these factors into account, think of the disturbing situation that prevailed in those days: the deafening silence of the *ulama* in respect of the truth and the acquiescence to the domination of falsehood (*batil*) and oppression of the righteous. In these trying circumstance, Shaikh Jamaluddin and Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> Jahniwal were indifferent to the might of the contemporary government and not only did they raise their truthful voice against the government and Makhdoomul Mulk, but they also went ahead in writing a book in favour of the righteous people (the Mahdavis). They openly declared that the result of the persecution would be certain ruin of the kingdom.

**(Pages 294-297)**

Some more points about Maulana Jamaluddin:

Having gone through the conditions prevailing in those days, as detailed above, the truth about the allegations of subscribing to the faith of the Mahdavis must have been obvious. These accusations were also made against Maulana Jamaluddin's spiritual guide (*pir*), Hazrat Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup>. The reason for them was the same and has been dealt with in detail. Another reason too is obvious.

In those days, the wealthy *ulama* and the worldly *mashayakheen* had no business other than to cater to their own contemptible desires and political way. They had lost the craving for the guidance of the followers of Islam and enforcing the do's and don'ts of *Shariat*. Hazrat Shaikh Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri and his followers laid the foundation of their *dawat* (invitation) on the basis of the revival of *Shariat* and, looking at the needs of the time; they spent all their energies on this count alone. The first condition of their *modus operandi* was that wherever one was and whatever the condition one was in, one's first duty was to prevent wrong and disseminate the commandments of *Shariat*. Since the common *ulama* were doing the opposite of this, enforcing the do's and don'ts of *Shariat* became the identifying mark of the Mahdavis. When a group of people starts doing what everybody else has stopped doing, then it becomes the symbol of that group. The result was that this became an ideal tool in the hands of the oppressors to persecute and torture the reformers of the people to follow the religion of the Truth. When the oppressors saw that people had been making a beeline to some *aalim-e-Haq* (the righteous scholar), the rival *ulama* immediately sprang to allege that he was a Mahdavi. Their argument was that if this *aalim* (scholar) had not been a Mahdavi, he would not have forcefully enjoined good and forbidden evil in the way of Allah, and would not have undergone a life of poverty and starvation. Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>, father of Emperor Akbar's courtiers, Abul Fazal and Faizi, was also accused of being a Mahdavi and persecuted. Another great scholar of the same period was Miyan Hatim Sumbhali<sup>61</sup>. In his congregation, Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>'s name was mentioned. Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni writes that he praised Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>'s piety and knowledge.

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<sup>61</sup> Miyan Hatim Sumbhali was a great scholar of his times In *Tariqat* and *Sulook* (ways of *Sufis*). He was the disciple of Shaikh Azizullah Danishmand and Shaikh Alauddin Chisti Dahlavi. He died in 969 AH (1561-62 AD). — Malik Ram.

Sumbhali said: "We too have heard similar praises about him, but they say, he follows the creed of the Mahdavis."

Mullah Badayuni said: "Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> admits the greatness and sainthood of Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. But he does not believe in his Mahdi-ship."

Sumbhali said: "There is no doubt about the greatness of Mir Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri."

Syed Muhammad (of Amroha), who was the *Mir Adl* (Chief of Justice Department), was present in the congregation. He asked: "Why do you call Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> a Mahdavi?"

Mullah Badayuni said: "Because of his enforcing the good and forbidding the wrong (do's and don'ts of *Shariat*)."

After this, Miyan Sumbhali said: "One day Mir Abdul Hai as condemning Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> before Sadr-e-Jahan Khan Khanan. Do you know why? The reason was that Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> had written a letter to him (Mir Abdul Hai) condemning his abstention from the prayer congregation at the mosque. This he could not tolerate and he accused Mullah Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> of being a Mahdavi."

Mir Muhammad (of Amroha) said: "This case depends on the argument that Shaikh Mubarak<sup>RA</sup> was enforcing the do's of *Shariat* (*amar bil ma'roof*), and whoever enforced the do's of *Shariat* was a Mahdavi, and therefore, Shaikh (Mubarak<sup>RA</sup>) was Mahdavi..."<sup>62</sup> (*Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. Vol III. Page 68).

There are many incidents of this period, which confirm this. This is utter misguidance that treading the right path should be considered waywardness and adopting wrong and sinful attitudes was considered a virtue. No wonder that Shaikh Muhammad Dawood<sup>RA</sup> and Shaikh Jamaluddin were accused of being Mahdavis on this very basis....

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<sup>62</sup> Only Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni reports the story of Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s giving up the Mahdavi faith in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. The later historians have copied it from his book. Many critics treat the Mullah as a biased writer. The Mullah himself reports that Emperor Akbar called him to his court and told him: "We thought you (Mullah Badayuni) to be a *Sufi* (mystic), but you turned out to be a prejudiced man...." Maulana Niaz Fatehpuri has written in his magazine, *Nigar* (November. 1930 AD), "Mullah Badayuni hated the courtiers of Emperor Akbar and was a bigoted *Sunni* and his irreverent criticisms have rendered his book, *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh* unreliable..." Muhammad Husain Azad, author of *Darbar-e-Akbari*, also says that though Mullah Badayuni deals with Imam Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri and Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> very respectfully, but when he gets a chance, he comes in his true colours and distorts facts. And the story of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s giving up Mahdavi faith could be one of these distortions... Shaikh Abdullah Niazi<sup>RA</sup> died in 1000 AH. This story of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s apostasy has not been reported in any of the history books of the Mahdavis written within 150 years of his death. The three books, which mention the story of his apostasy, are: (1) *Taleemat-e-Saida Sahib*. (2) *Tazkirat al-Murshideen* and (3) *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani*. Many respected authorities (*buzurgan*) believe that many of the reports were later accretions. *Tazkirat al-Murshideen* says that Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> gave up the Mahdavi faith. *Tareekh-e-Sulaimani* has relied upon the version of *Tazkirat al-Murshideen*. But the two versions differ from each other. *Sharah-e-Siraj al-Absar*, also known as *Zia al-Quloob*, was written in 1100 AH. But it does not mention the story of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s retraction. Its writer, Maulana Hafiz Abul Qasim, had embraced Mahdavi faith after reading *Siraj al-Absar* by Miyan Abdul Malik Sujawandi. Abul Qasim's writing indicates that there was some friction between Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> and Miyan Sujawandi. Had he known that Niazi<sup>RA</sup> had retracted, he would have certainly mentioned the fact in his book. In view of this, it is difficult to believe the story of Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup>'s retraction. Shaikh Niazi<sup>RA</sup> is said to be a disciple of Hazrat Shah Ne'mat<sup>RZ</sup>, third Caliph of Imam Mahdi al-Mauood Syed Muhammad<sup>AS</sup> Jaunpuri. (Excerpts from *Mazameen-e-Mahmood*. Syed Mahmood Yadullahi. Vol. I. Karachi. 1986 AD, pages. 61-68). — Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi.

All the history books of that period are unanimous that they (the Mahdavis) fearlessly enforced the do's and don'ts of *Shariat*. (Quran Says :) "... Fearing not the blame of the blamer...." (S. V: 54) The Mahdavis were the living picture of this Quranic Verse. It is obvious that in those days there could be no argument more effective than calling a righteous *aalim* a Mahdavi, because he enforced the do's and don'ts of *Shariat*. This is proved from a passage of Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahalvi. The passage reads: "Shaikh Qutb-e-Alam used to say that when I reached him, (it is not clear who), I found that in his congregation, the style of sermonising was very aggressive. I thought that he followed the Mahdavia creed. As the thought occurred in my mind, the Shaikh lifted his head and without any introductory remarks, said: 'Mahdavis are an upward and false sect....' (*Akhbar al-Akhyar*. page 207).

(Page 300)

*Tazkirat al-Wasileen* says that Shaikh Jamaluddin was a past master in the science of *Tariqat* (dervish orders) and other branches of open and secret divine knowledge. He had no equal in imparting instruction in Hadith (the science of Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>'s traditions). He was the only teacher in Hadith who taught in the manner of the Muhadditheen (scholars of Hadith). Shaikh Jamaluddin was the disciple of Shaikh Rafiuddin Salami, who, in turn, was the disciple of Hafiz Shamsuddin Sakhawi. Shaikh Jamaluddin is the first to spread the teaching of Hadith in India...

(Page 306)

*Tazkirat ul-Wasileen* says that, seeing the oppression, and persecution of the dervishes, Hazrat Shaikh Dawood<sup>RA</sup> had said that "now the time of the decline of the Pathan government has arrived." This prophecy had reached every house and the people were convinced of the fall of the Pathans. They were actually waiting for it. The last two years of Salim Shah's life were miserable. He died of a disease, no physician could diagnose. His son, Feroze, was killed and that put an end to the line of his descendants.... Finally, four years after the brutal killing of Shaikh Alai<sup>RA</sup>, in 961 AH, Mughal Emperor Humayun returned via Khyber and the Pathan kingdom vanished.... The blood of the righteous martyrs was avenged....

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[Relevant pages from Abul Kalam Azad's book "**Tazkirah**" were translated with footnotes by Faqir Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi Sahab.]