

# World Leader of the Bektashi Community Has Left This Life



## Kryegjysh Boteror Haxhi Dede Reshat Bardhi (1935-2011)

By Stephen Sylejman Schwartz

April 2, 2011 - The Center for Islamic Pluralism has received, with great sadness, news of the death of Haxhi Dede Reshat Bardhi, world head of the Bektashi Community of Sufis, in Tirana, Albania on April 2.

We join the millions of Bektashis in the Albanian lands and the Albanian diaspora, including those who maintain the Bektashi center in Taylor, Michigan, USA, in mourning the departure from this life of one of the greatest and most progressive religious leaders in the world.

We note that Haxhi Dede Reshat Bardhi was one of the first prominent figures in the Muslim lands to denounce the terrorist attacks against America on September 11, 2001. The day after those atrocities, he addressed a message to President George W. Bush, referring to America as "the pride of this world" and declaring, "May Allah be, as always, on the side of the American people and the American state!"

While this recollection is especially poignant at the present moment, we also point out that the death of the beloved Kryegjysh comes when the Bektashis of the Harabati Baba teqe in Tetova, Western Macedonia, are suffering continued aggression by radical Islamists, including a recent arson attack.

Reshat Bardhi was born in Kukës, Albania. Under the Satanic oppression of the Communist dictator Enver Hoxha, this exemplary man of religion was first interned, from 1958 to 1967, and then sentenced to forced labor until 1990. With the fall of Hoxha's regime and his liberation, Reshat Bardhi attained the title Haxhi by making the pilgrimage to Mecca.

He then dedicated himself to the recovery and restoration of some 140 Bektashi institutions, making possible the successful revival of the Bektashi spiritual community, as a vessel of democratic and secular values, based in dedication to Allah almighty and service to humanity.

In the words of the Albanian national poet and Bektashi figure Naim Frashëri, "Above all things, Love is the beginning and guidance of the Path." Kryegjysh Boterorë Haxhi Dede Reshat Bardhi dedicated his life to the realization of this principle.

Long live the spirit of Haxhi Dede Reshat Bardhi!  
Long live the Bektashi Community!  
Long live the alliance of faith and freedom!



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Other American mourners include Mark Taylor (California) and Paul Nagy (North Carolina).