

INVESTIGATION OF HISTORY OF HURUFISM

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ABSTRACT

Hurufism, an Iranian movement during the Timurid dynasty, was founded based on exaggerative and eclectic beliefs in the intrinsic meaning of the Persian or Arab alphabets concerned with the commentary of the Quran, creativity of human beings and other creatures, as well as personality and instructions of Fazlullah Naeimi Astarabadi (796/ 1394). A disparty of factors contribute to the formation of movements. The denominational Hurufism was founded under Fazollah Astarabadi's leadership following people movements in the late 8th-early 9th century, which attracted a multitude of followers in Iran and many parts of the world through its thoughts. People, at the time of the advent of the movement, lacked piety and purity that were considered as the leading characters of Fazl and his followers. The manner of Hurrufism is completely evident in the number of their remnant works and life stories. Instructions and ideology of the movement were a mixed bag of different ideas; to put it simply, the knowledge of Fazl about the beliefs of his time led to practising a new religion which was well-known for Hurufism due to its emphasize on the mysticism of letters and superiority of word over meaning. The movement also had different thoughts compared to beliefs of its time. The present article aimed to study the history of Hurufism by taking the advantage of remnant works regarding the movement.

Keywords: Hurufism, Fazlollah Astarabadi, Timurid dynasty, Iran, Shi'ism, Sufism

INTRODUCTION

Hurufism is one of the most well-known and affective Iranian movements during the Timurid dynasty Iran history under the leadership of Fazlollah Astarabadi. Recognizing the beliefs, objectives and historical themes of this movement has attracted historian's attention and there have been produced some interesting findings thereof. Analyzing the role and place of Hurufism in its own period, could be effective in demonstrating hidden social-political aspects of the Timurid dynasty. Fazlollah Astarabadi was brought up in a society where, due to the cruelty of its governors, humanity decseneded to the lowest level, and lynig and prudery prevailed among people. He also witnessed to the formation of diffierent movemets for changing the society's condition.

He said his prayings and piety under the influence of sociopolitical conditions of his time and established a socio-political movement with different fundamental belifes after his journeys and mortifications.

It should be noted that Hurufism exerted its greatest historical effect after the death of Fazlollah, so his followers took a new path in this movement in order to propagate his mentality.

The ideologies of Hurufid was also a combination of Iranian Shi'ite and Sufi thoughts that was mostly existent in ancient Iran`s history and Hurufismcould gain a new religion through their combination; however, due to the indulgence in beliefs, in most cases, it led to doctrine inclination and accordingly the opposition of jurisconsults and learned scholars of that time. The

present paper aimed to study historical themes, as well as Hurufism thoughts and beliefs into two sections.

The history of belief in letters' features in Islam

Special attention and consideration of Fazlollah Astarabadi on the importance of letters dates back to the ancient history of the old memories. The holiness of some numbers and words has been taken into account since the antiquity and then it was continued in Islam during the ruling of Ma'mun in the studies of Abu Muhammed Sahl bin Harun bin Rahebun; moreover, the importance of letters has attracted the attention of a multitude of polymath including Kenedy, Aviccena as well as Al-Ghazali.

It should be noted that, belief in the holiness of letters has not been a new subject in Islam because al-Mughira bin Saeed al-Ajali, in the 2nd century, believed that God is a shiny object, so by making an analogy between His organs and Muqatta'at, he said "the first and 21st letters of Arab alphabet are similar to God's feet and His eyes, respectively. Al- Mughira developed the doctrine of assuming God in the form of letters and figures. He has been considered as the first leader of Hurufism, mainly because there was a great deal of common ground between beliefs and statements of Mansour Ajalli and Fazlollah Naeimi. Fazlollah Naeimi believed that letters have formed the basis of creation and called himself a symbol of Christ whose name is Allah. The followers of Abu Mansour placed a high value on the word "Allah" to some extent that they tended to swear at Allah. Moreover, Fazlollah and other previous leaders, as well as Abu Mansour, maintained that God has been sent them forth for explication. Sahl bin Harun was the only man one who has carefully studied mysticism of letters. From his viewpoint, Arab alphabet is consisted of 28 letters that equals to the number of lunar stations.

Each Arab word has less than seven letters, so the longest Arab term is consisted of seven letters which fails to exceed the number of planets; moreover, Arab verbs derived from the root *solasi mazid* are equal to 12 stars, so the first half a word, namely solar letters, is combined with articles (Al- in arab language) while the second half, lunar letters, is not so. Dr. Kamel al-Shoaybi, had made a reference to impressive results concerned with beliefs of Sahl bin Harun and said, according to Ibn al-Muqaffa' that there were 7 common scripts in the ancient Iran. In the same way, the most important one had 28 letters, while the script used in prediction and divination have had 365 letters. From al-Shoaybi's viewpoint, mysticism could be also derived from the abovementioned numbers, namely 7, 28 as well as 365, especially, the latter showing the number of a solar year, also known as agricultural year.

Abu Zayd al- Balkhi was a Persian polymath who has also studied the mysticism of letters. According to Ibn Nadim writings, he has studied the Quran and mysticism of letters and wrote a book on commentaries, a dissertation on the Quran rhyme and its miracle, a dissertation on the commentary of the first chapter of the Quran, al-Fatihah, as well as a dissertation on Muqatta'at at the beginnings of some Surah of the Quran. It seems that Abu Zayd was mostly aimed to find out the precise date of reappearance of Muhammed al-Mahdi, the Twelve Imam in Shia Islam, which has been contemporary with his occultation.

Moreover, he prepared a dissertation on the importance of al-Fatihah and has called it "the mother of the Quran", and he has denied the validity of a well-known hadith, which says "God has ninety nine names". His conclusion failed to gain the acceptance of scholars concerned with the mysticism of letters, unless Hurufism. Furthermore, Ibn Nadim had enumerated seven books



entitled “regarding spot and shape”; however, based on his writings, the books have been written by different authors. Mysticism of letters has received a great deal of attention by a disparity of sects in the late 3rd century.

Shi’ite, especially, Ismaelian, Sufid, Philosophers as well as Mo’tazalian, have studied mysticism of letters depending on their objectives; to take an example, Hallaj who was contemporary with Ahmad bin Balkhi has declared that the Quran have a great deal of knowledge about everything, including Muqatta’at at the beginnings of some Surah, mysticism of letters as well as Geomancy and foreknowledge that is in the hands of God.

Hallaj has not been completely satisfied with such investigations and analyzed such names as Muhammed and Azrael and represented a suitable meaning for each letter. After the death of al-Ghazali, studying mysticism of letters has been discussed again in Sufism, to the degree that the science characterized Sufid. The effects of knowledge of this type also exists in the opinions of Ibn Arabi that was followed by Fazlollah. Hence, ideological approach of Fazl, leader of Hurufism, to the value of Arab and Persain letters is not only practicable, but also highly intelligent and ordinary.

Ahmad bin Abdullah (Abouzar), a contemporary polymath with Fazlollah, was famous for his knowledge about mysticism of letters; moreover, Sayyed Ali Hamadani, the author of *Asrar al-naqtuh fi Sharh Asmaollah*, was also among scholars who has received attention of the ruler of his time.

Ibn Khaldun (1311-1385) has written an introduction to the history in clause 22 of chapter 6 of the *Pentateuch*, and he has made some comments concerned with the title “the science of madis and talismans’ which was useful for understanding Hurufism; moreover, he has introduced the ancient religion in detail in clause 23 of the same chapter under the title “the science of mysticism of letters”.

According to him, the science is called Simiya and introduced it when Sufid Ghulat rised in Islam and tried to achieve beyond senses, placed a high value on descending and ascending orders, as well as considered spirits of cosmos as celestial symbols of God, mainly because God’s names which form the world consisted of letters, so letters are taken into account as the building blocks of all worlds and they are taken into account as sprite of the world, so people would be able to affect the nature by taking the advantage of these letters and names of God.

Moreover, there was some disagreements about the effect of letters; some believed that the reason behind this effect was the constitution of letters. To take an example, they believed that letters, like classical elements, have four constitutions, including seven fire letters, such as ا، ه، ط، م، ف، ، seven aether letters, such as ذ، س، ن، ض، ت، ظ، seven earth letters, such as ح، ل، ع، خ، ش، and finally seven water letters such as ج، ث، ز، ص، ع، ق، ك.

For example, cool temper diseases are treated through the use of fire letters by temperament, while waterly letters have the adverse effects. However, some believe that the effect of letters is hidden in their number.

It means that, each word represents a number, e.g., ا، ب، ج، د which are equal to 1,2,3, and 4. From their viewpoint, the alchemy has been aimed to study the effect of a substance on another one, while Simiya was aimed to study the effect of spirit on the body (Zekawati, 2006: 169-170).

The effect of Hurufism on the history



Hurufism as well as Bektashi Order played a significant role in spreading islamic, iranian and shi'ite culture throughout Anatolia and Balkans. Hurufism continued its efforts as Noqtavi which was an underground offshoot of the movement consisting of socially and nationally exterimists; however it has finally lost its strenght during the ruling of Abas the Great. Its remnants have been reappeared in the next philosophical theories.

Vahid Qazvini who was contemporary with Suleiman I says, the dancing is called Sufid or Naqtuvi which shows a background of both movements in the mind of poet. Hurufism moved towrds western Islamic countries due to having more numbers of eclectic sects, like Semitic people and Gnosticism, while Noqtavi religon which was consisted of Iranian and Eastern people was attracted by Indian.

Shaykh Mohi al-din Arabi, the author of "Al-Janib al-Gharbi fi Hale Moshkelat" (1683) says: one who interprets should have honesty not atheism and philosophy, like Shaykh Shahabodin as well as Hurufism, Noqtavi, and followers of Mahmoud Pasikhani. By and large, such Sufid-Shi'ism movements as Sarbadars, Marashis, Hurufism, Musha'shayyah, Nourbakhsiyan etc, created situations for establishment of the Safavid dynasty that was one of the most independet national iranian governments untill the modern age; moreover, the reason why the dynasty destroyed all remnants of aforementioned movements shows that it was facing the threat of them. Ismail I accused Musha'shayyah of overestimating and suppressed the movement. With regard to thinking and conception, Hurufism were esoterics who interpreted like Ismailion as well as Ghulat. In the same way, excesses turned into defect in this field.

Hurufism sometimes is likened Western Nominalism who have had belif in names and said: every thing is consisted of letters; or name has an exact meaning. Fazl rejected one of his followers, Mahmoud Pasikhani, mainly becasue he had declared that Fazl's intructions have had objectivism concepts. Not only Mahmoud, but also some members of Hurufism highly contradicted bodily ressurection and tradition.

It has been said that Chaghtayids, namely military of Sharukh, spread permission propaganda. Furthermore, the the adverse effect of propagand broadcasted by Hurufism adversaries shouldnot be ignored; however, such a social big movemet naturally needed egalitarianism.

Enmies have interpreted the same justice and equality as anarchism or communalism. Active participation of women characterize Hurufism, to some extent that Fazl's daughters and sisters were among leaders of the movemet. High level of women's participation in Naqtuvi movment was also important. After the death of Fazl, he became legend. Then, Hurufism tried to implement a program on rising against those who were irrational: the main contention is Fazl's idea. Like other previous Messianism, Hurufism believed that worlds and people would regularly repeated and it had a strong belief in the advent of divin individuals. According to Hurufism, Noah, Ibrahim, Joseph, Musa, Christ , and Muhammed have been a symble of a new world. All of them have been a typical human being, while the last one was the same Fazlollah.

Espcially, christian were belived that Fazl was the same Christ, while shi'ite believed that Fazl has been Al-Mahdi.

In the same way, Hurufid could convinced some christians of Anatoliaa as well as Balcani to accept Islam; however a Ghulat islam in which christian and even pegan traditions have been mixed. Hurufism moved towrds Western islamic countries due to having more numbers of eclectic sects, like Semitic people and Gnosticism, while Noqtavi religon which was consisted of Iranian and Eastern people was attracted by Indian. Hurufism has also affected poem and



literature. Using local languages characterizes Hurufism as well as Noqtavi works. Moreover, Hurufids have composed a multitude of remarkable mystical and religious poems. Fazlollah himself was a poet and he had adopted Naeimi as his pen name. Two poets, Ali A'jami as well as Nasimi were both Fazl's followers. The following lyric obviously shows his anti-government and anti-Mufti views as a great ruinous.

*I am completely cuckoo, I have destroyed hundred cities
I vomit up on kings crown, I vomit on Caesar palace
Kings are not important in my eyes, does Mufti know my religion?
If king Ardodar don't accept my reign
I am the lord of world, I will attack his tribe
Hey caravan, hey caravan I am not a crackman
I am a world champion who encounter problems*

Emadodin Nasimi (decedent, 821-821 A.H) is the most well-known poet among Hurufids; according to narrations, the only authentic publication of his *divan* has been published in Baku (Mohammad Zade, 1972). Yadollah Jalali Pandari has recently provided Nasimi's *divan* based on an ancient, as well as other printed or manuscript copies. His book includes two detailed introductions. The first one explains Hurufism as an extremist Ghalut sect which has been founded by Fazlollah Naeimi Astarabadi in the late 8th-early 9th centuries. Moreover, it provides biography of Naeimi as well as Nasimi, the author of aforementioned *divan*.

The second introduction is a translation of a French research paper of Reza Tofigh, a philosopher, on Hurufism into Persian by Gholam Reza Samei.

Although Nasimi is not considered as a well-known poet he has great importance for researchers mainly because a religious-social movement has been developed based on his *Divan*; moreover, he is taken into account as a famous narrator among Hurufids, to some extent that his poem predominates of Fazl, the founder of Hurufism; so it is obvious that he has been willing to make sacrifice in order to preserve the movement.

Hurufism itself is tantamount to unity; however, since Mohiodin Arabi, author of "the bezels of wisdom" was Sunnite, his mate, Sadrodin Qunawi, the author of *Fakk al-khutum* and Mohiodin have been suffered the assault of Hurufids.

*Hey, the ludicrous man, do not claim to have done something
God fails to need our lying*

It refers to a preposterous individual, so it is a kind of aggression against "the bezels of wisdom", while the sonnet itself is full of meanings used by al-Arabi and his mates as follows:

We are lovebird and G is our house

Indeed, the earth is our nest

The fire which burns atheism

The theism fire is one of our offshoots

The wine you are not allowed to drink is produced in our pub



I emphasized its importance mainly because some contemporary writers believed that Hurufism was as an atheist movement, while some consider it as a moderate Twelve Imam Shi'ite. However, both theories have made a mistake. Hurufid are unitarian not moderate Shi'ite; so, according to Edward Brawn and Sadegh Kia, PhD, it could be said that they are an introduction to the recent Ghulat or even Babism. Hurufism had even overtaken Ismailieh in extremism. From Reza Toufigh's viewpoint, hutrufism is nothing more than a caricature of great religions.

Or according to another researcher, Jewish superstitions have played a pivotal role in establishing this Iranian religion, namely Hurufism. The question is what would be the result of studying beliefs of this movement which are nothing more than superstitions? In answer to question above it should be noted that, first, we need to understand our past and recognize reasons behind movements of people in past centuries. Therefore, it becomes perfectly understandable whatever we approach to the recent period.

There is no doubt that Hurufism was an evolutionary movement; however, six hundred years ago, official bodies suffered from riots against their beliefs, and ordinary people were also gathered around an individual having charisma, mainly because it was unlikely to attract people only by justice motives, so making claim about Wilaya or Mahdiwiya was essential; naturally enough, everything that is established on exaggeration would not be succeeded; however, justice seekers would gather around someone else who issues a new invitation or repeats that absurd claims covering in up to date words. However, Sufid as well as Hurufism struck against Timurlan and the Timurid dynasty:

West and east is full of Gog corruption

Timur is a cruel

Fig, rooster, and the beast were all accursed

He is thoroughly deserved damn

that infidel whose name is Miranshah

According to the poem above, devil has been a devotee of Miranshah, the son of Timurlan, who was a follower of Fazlollah but executed him on his father's order. The movement lost its strength by the Timurid dynasty; although a member of Hurufism, Ahmad Lor, was failed to assassinate Sharukh Teimuri some devotees of the dynasty was arrested and tragically killed (Zekavati, 2009, 1-4).

Historical reasons behind the development of Hurufism

Sufism quickly attracted the attention of people after Mongol attack and played a marked role in people's life as well as poems of this time. Sufid Sheikh during Iranian Mongol society were uncrowned kings who ruled over people. In this period, a multitude of endowed properties as well as alms have been given to abbeys. Not only all ministers were Sheikh devotees but also kings knelt on the floor and gave Sheikh's hand a kiss. It was not surprising that almost every Shaikh had relation with grandees in this time (Bayani, 1992, vol.2, 669). Poems and proses of this period clearly shows a great influence of Sufid Sheikhs.

To take an example, it has been quoted that, a Shaikh was dreamed that a king had been in Eden while a Shaikh was in the hell. He asked the reason behind it and answered kings are in Eden

mainly because of respecting shaikhs while the hell is the place of those shaikh who approaches to kings (Sa'adi, 2536: 78).

It could be said that Iran has been faced to many movements against strangers or cruel rulers throughout its history; although a multitude of them have lost strength apparently people felt their permanent effects. Moreover, some of the movements have been changed regarding social conditions over time. However, some movements emerged out of concern for human right and justice in the late 8th - early 9th centuries. It should be noted that just before the advent of the Safavi dynasty, as the most effective social reform movement in Iran which resulted in a shi'ite government, there has been some social movements based on reform instructions among which Sarbadars in Khorasan as well as Hurufism had a pivotal role in the social field.

He spread his ideology when he made a journey to Isfahan. Unused to walking, he suffered a foot injury by the time he arrived. He learned dream interpretation in Isfahan, and thence called interpreter (Ajand, 1970: 10).

When he was in Tabriz he dreamed vivid dreams which strengthened his courageous beliefs and brought him into conflict with scholars of his time. Hurufism movement was prosecuted by the government, so one of its sects well-known as Noqtovi under the leadership of Mahmoud Pasikhani Gilani was forced to leave the country and escaped to India; however, Hurufism continued to live in Anatolia after some reforms for centuries.

It should be noted that, joining Islam has been taken into account as a religious policy during the lifetime of Fazlollah, while Timurlane and his accompaniment needed a legal excuse to have the right for committing any crime and despoliation. Accordingly, they built a multitude of holy places and took care of scholars in order to accustom people with religious instructions while they were busy with jollity and cruelty.

Superstition as well as ignorance were increased during the Timurid dynasty mainly because of continual wars and riots, provoking political crises and challenges, and hypocritical piety, while a disparity of sects have been quelled under the influence of religiosity. Brutal repression resulted in establishing such rebellions against the Timurid government as Hurufism and Sarbadars. In the eyes of Iranian, Timurlane was a cruel imperialist as well as the continuator of Genghis Khan ambitions, to some extent that he has committed any crime to occupy Iran. Clavijo had emphasized on enforced Timur's rules and regulations. Furthermore, Timurlane has assigned his relatives some affairs because he failed to control everything. According to Clavijo, three judicial systems within the Timurid dynasty accompanied Timurlane wherever he went even during wars.

Investigation into criminal affairs, inquiring embezzlement of governmental funds, as well as dealing with civilian's complaints concerned with state agents throughout the country were under the supervision of these three judicial fields.

Judges were obliged to make a report about legal actions to Timur before issuing final judgment (Clavikho, 2005: 291). It should be noted that official agents had to fulfill affairs under Timur's supervision.

Therefore, people had been beaten to death due to government officials' abuse of power; for example, Clavijo describes condition of villages en route as follows: people have ensconced themselves in houses when official agent arrived as if Ezrael was chasing them.

Agents of Timurlane had violent conduct; for example they scolded and compelled aldermen to satisfy their needs. They killed people and behaved disgracefully toward villagers while no one



dared to complain though abuse of their power (Clavijo, 2005: 195-196). A multitude of craftsmen abandoned their birthplace and went to Samarkand, the capital, on Timurlane's order. To take an example, expatriate Tabriz craftsmen went to Samarkand in 788 A.H (Fasihi, 1960: 115). He also tried to quell disturbances after civilian's riot against revenueurs in Isfahan.

According to Clavijo, when Timurlane decided to find a place in Samarkand for selling import goods, he gave an order to build a new road in the middle of the city, while he did not taken into account complaints of people concerned adverse effects of his affairs on their property to some extent that people were obliged to abandon their houses near the given area. No one dared to compliant even some of *sadat* for whom Timurlane had a great respect. To take an example, one day a *sadat* has been playing chess with Timurlane and said, I think it was better to recompensed those people who left their house, in the meantime, Timurlane has got angry and said, I have bought all lands of Samarkand so the entire city belongs to me (Clavijo. 2005: 276).

Therefore, the system within the Timurid dynasty was on the basis of precaution against power division, not clearly work division. Hence, Timurlane has tried to preserve those traditions which were in his favor, while discarded that one which put its ruling in jeopardy (Forbes Manz, 1998: 178).

In the same way, domestic competitions between feudal societies as well as other timurid rulers, lack of centralization, instability and anarchy in the society, extortion of rulers and tax officials, slaughter of civilians, and a lack of supervision over vast areas of territory resulted in dissatisfaction and weakened the Timurid dynasty (Sheikh Nouri, 2003: 20).

Since Hurufism approaches were against policies of its time, and on the other hand, it was taken into account as a movement against injustice and cruelty of rulers at that time, not only there is not enough historical official references about the movement but also the available limited works has been written in favour of rulers.

To take an example, Hurufism has been referred to an aggressive movement in governmental official scripts, to some extent that its followers have been called gangsters.

Works of Fazlollah Astarabadi are recognized as authentic references to understand historical changes of the movement in which his beliefs and thought streams have been stated as well. Moreover, some biographies provide people with useful information about his character and suggest that Fazlollah and his followers have had a pivotal role in developing Hurufism. Such books as *Taddkarat al-Shoara* as well as *Riad al-Arefin* written by Dolatshah Samarkandi and Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat, respectively, are among the most well-known biographies.

Beliefs and ideologies of Hurufism

According to the historical study of Hurufism that had been mentioned above, ideas of Fazlollah Astarabadi and Hurufid were consisted of a disparity of beliefs. He had established a new religion with respect to thoughts and beliefs of that time. Regarding he had knowledge about mysticism of letter, he studied all religious laws by making reference to 28 and 32 Arab and Persian letters, respectively. He firmly believed that words form the basis of God knowledge mainly because He is not observable (Mir Ja'fari, 2006: 170).

According to Hurufid, objects will lose their identity without their names. Inanimate nature without names is barely imaginable; moreover studying nameless objects is impossible. When an individual asks about the nature of an object, the answer would be provided based on its name and features. However, belief in mysticism of letters had been also discussed before the



rise of Hurufism. It has been introduced in a disparity of forms among different doctrines. Hurufism provided a multitude of commentaries on religious texts based on words, so it was believed that discovering the reality of religions, as well as mysteries of creation, is contingent upon decoding letters.

Mystery of letters was also taken into account by learned scholars in the early centuries of Islam, so most of commentaries on Quranic verses have been made through decoding words.

It seems that Islamic scholars had arrived at the conclusion that understanding meaning of figures is not considered as an impressive accomplishment, however it is important to deduce a series of significant notions based on spiritual subjects from mysterious words and verses in order to call people's attention to them.

Abu Muhammed Sahl bin Harun, the custodian of House of Wisdom (literally Bayt al-Hikmah) during the Ma'mun Empire, was obviously the first one who studied the mystery of Arab letters and understood that they are equal to 28 lunar stations; from his viewpoint, the longest Arab word, that equals to the number of planets, is not longer than 7 letters (Al-Shoaybi, 1980: 179). Philosophers, Ismaelid Shi'ites and Sufid had a disparity of ideas about mystery of letters.

To take an example, Avicenna, a Persian polymath, has written a dissertation entitled "the meaning of Muqatta'at (literally disjoined letters) at the beginning of some surah of the Quran" where his theory about creation and different forms of the worlds and understandings have been accord with results obtained from studying figures. Al-Qazali had been also written a multitude of dissertations on this field but unfortunately almost all of them have been lost over time.

After the death of Al-Qazali, investigation into the mystery of letters was discussed again during Sufism to some extent that it is now taken into account as features of the Sufid order (Al-Shoaybi, 1980: 183-184).

So, God could be understood in the form of words. According to Hurufism, the value of every thing in the world increases by letters and word should precede meaning.

Regarding God is not observable, letters can be used to speak about God. Furthermore, the value of substance is also expressed through letters and their position in a substance, mainly because every word has a special place (Ajand, 1990: 311).

From Zarrin Koub's viewpoint, Fazlollah Astarabadi has written some papers on the meaning of letters and their association with God as well as reincarnation and solidity, and some papers similar to sayings of Ismailism and some Gnostic and Ghulat sections; furthermore, he decided to renew some allegations attributed to Al-Hallaj. It should be noted that like followers of Al-Hallaj, followers of Fazl acknowledged him as the symbol of divinity (Zarrin Koub, 1990: 55). From Fazl's viewpoint, he has been savior of Islam and risen to develop a new religion in 9th century. He invited people to Mahdaviat and introduced himself as the deputy of Mahdi when he dreamed Imam al-Mahdi was dressing Fazl with his own apparel (Rither, 1962: 24). According to Hurufism, human being is a symbol of God, so a type of severe humanism is seemed in their beliefs. Moreover, they have seriously distorted prayers but a multitude of distortions have not been referred in their books mainly because of strong disagreement of scholars during that period. According to Hurufism, the title of human being as a worthy successor of God on the earth shows his perfection, so human should be taken into account as a criterion for everything and the movement have had emphasized on his centrality. In the same way, Fazl deemed that he is the deputy of God like Adam, Christian and Muhammed (Mir Ja'fari, 2006: 170). From his point of view, the period of divinity has begun while the period of prophecy has



eneded, accordingly, he made a claim about the extinction of tradition which led to his exocommunication by scholars.

Hurufism was thought of as Twelver, also known as Immamiyah, mainly because they had a strong belief in Imam Ali and his children, so they appreciated the significance of Imamate and tried to affirm their view by declaring some hadiths. Hurufism had strengthened special beliefs among people concerned with survival and living and they believed that their leaders were immortal. To take an example, they declared that Fazlollah is still alive because the word "Allah" is an eternal word.

Hurufism and Christians were alike in their beliefs, so it shows that Hurufism had been under the influence of Christianity (Gravand, Shahbazi, 2002: 91). Regarding the political view of Hurufism it could be stated that they had encouraged people to obey rulers of that time for moving toward the acceptance of their thoughts and penetrating into their governmental organs. However, their political strategy failed (Mir Ja'fari, 2006: 171). Affairs of the movement and their thoughts caused to widen the gap between Hurufism and the government and trust needed for establishing relationship between Hurufism and the government never took place due to a variety of reasons.

Indeed, affairs of Sabzevar and Amol mendicants who were related to the followers of both Shaykh Khalife and Shaykh Hassan Jouri movements, as well as private meetings and provocative statements of Fazl's followers, ambitious claims of some mendicants and sufids of that time like Sayyed Muhammed Nourbakhsh, Shah Nematollah Wali as well as Qasem Anwar at the late Timurid dynasty contemporary with Shahrukh Empire, created a climate of distrust of any Sufid assembly (Zarrin Koub, 1990: 58).

CONCLUSION

Hurufism, a movement founded by Fazlollah Astarabadi, started during a critical period of the history and exerted a powerful influence on the stream of consciousness of that time and people who were under the cruelty of Timurlane and his successors. Hurufism attracted a multitude of followers in the course of a period full of immorality and sociopolitical corruptions mainly because of its piety and honesty. The movement exercised many excess and defect that some of them could deflect its main stream away, however, the movement was gained strength against strict policies of that time and reached its peak in 830 A.H in the form of the assassination of Shah Rukh Timury.

When Fazl was killed by Miranshah, the movement lost its strength in Iran and it could spread its ideology throughout Isfahan, Tabriz, and Herat with difficulty, however its main power was in other parts of the world. Not to adopt an attitude of indifference towards the cruelty of rulers was the lesson people draw from Fazl and his followers mainly because the valuable position of human being fails to accept abjection and injustice.

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