

# Enshrining Divinity: The Death and Memorialization of Fażlallāh Astarābādī in Ḥurūfī Thought

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**A**s with other mortuary structures, the story of Fażlallāh Astarābādī's shrine begins with the fact of a death. In this case, it is a violent death perpetrated as a lesson for the decedent's sympathizers and other observers. Fifteenth-century historians Aḥmad b. 'Alī Maqrīzī and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī mention Abd al-Raḥmān, popularly known as Sayyid Fażlallāh *ḥalālkhūr* (one who eats only legally sound food), famous for his asceticism, simplicity and excellence in religious and literary writings. The historians' very brief reports state that some jurists and scholars in Gīlān and Samarqand found Fażlallāh's written works objectionable and declared him a heretic worthy of death. The conqueror Timūr (d. 807/1408) ordered that the sentence be implemented. Timūr's son, Mirānshāh (d. 810/1408), obliged by personally beheading Fażlallāh at the fort of Alanjaq near Nakhchivān, Azarbayjan, in the year 804/1401-2. Timūr later acquired Fażlallāh's head and body and had them burned.<sup>1</sup>

This is virtually all that can be gathered about Fażlallāh Astarābādī's life and death from historical sources. The scant coverage of his execution in official historiography reflects the marginality of the matter for contemporary chroniclers. Fażlallāh was one minor threat among many others easily dismissed by Timūr and his lieutenants in this unusually violent period in the history of the Islamic East. For Fażlallāh's followers, however, called "Ḥurūfīs" due to their emphasis on the attributes of the Arabo-Persian alphabet, Fażlallāh was no mere sociopolitical agitator and his death was far from ordinary. To them, he was the culminating figure in the grand

narrative of cosmic history, and his martyrdom was simultaneously a horrendous tragedy and the portent of ultimate salvation. The shrine they built and kept alive around his grave was, therefore, both a tribute to Fażlallāh's earlier presence among them and a physical commemoration of their fervent millenarian belief. For them, the shrine itself and its location near Alanjaq replaced the Ka'ba and Mecca as the holiest sites on earth, a displacement they justified through an extensive theoretical discourse regarding the beginning and final end of the universe. From the perspective of Islamic religious history, the shrine provides a look into the worldview of a community of faith on the margins of fifteenth-century Muslim society, a community which considered itself the bearer of salvation in the face of imminent apocalypse.

I intend herein to sketch the formation and functioning of the shrine of Fażlallāh Astarābādī in the context of Ḥurūfism as a distinct religious system rooted in the Islamic esoteric (*bāṭinī*) tradition. Towards this goal, the paper is divided into three sections: first, a brief summary of Fażlallāh's life and the circumstances leading to his execution; second, a discussion of the physical and cosmological significance of the shrine in Ḥurūfī religion; and last, the shrine's place in the eschatological beliefs of Fażlallāh's followers in the decades after their leader's execution. I contend that the shrine represented the theoretical as well as social focal point for Fażlallāh's followers during the brief period in the fifteenth century when Ḥurūfism flourished as an autonomous religious movement. The ensuing discussion encapsulates, therefore, the fundamental ethos of Ḥurūfism in the period following the death of the movement's founder.

## The Life and Death of Fażlallāh Astarābādī

In contrast with historical sources, Ḥurūfī writings by both Fażlallāh himself and his disciples provide significantly better insight into his origins and activities. While a complete assessment of the sources on Fażlallāh's life is beyond the scope of this paper,<sup>2</sup> it is useful to begin here with a basic biography. Fażlallāh was born in Astarābād, Iran, around 740/1339-40 and first acquired social standing by inheriting his father's job as the city's grand judge (*qāzī al-quḏāt*) as a child.<sup>3</sup> After acquiring a reputation for precociousness and piety at a young age, he gave up his occupation, put on Ṣūfī garb, and immersed himself in ascetic practice before reaching the age of eighteen. The remainder of his life (approximately thirty-eight years) was spent as an itinerant mystic moving between Iṣfahān, Khurāsān, Khwārazm, Azarbayjan, Shirvān and Arabia. During this period, his fame as a mystic was based largely upon a gift for dream interpre-

tation, which won him converts among both the common people and the elite in various cities in the Islamic East.

The most decisive moment of Fażlallāh's career occurred in Tabrīz during Ramazān, 788 (September-October 1386) when he saw a special dream that he and his followers equated with Muḥammad's first prophetic revelation.<sup>5</sup> On this day, Fażlallāh learned the secrets of primordial entities called the Letters (*ḥurūf*),<sup>5</sup> which enabled him to understand the true meaning of God's scriptures. The event was purported to be the fulfillment of a prophecy contained in a ḥadīth report in which the prominent companion Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī asked the Prophet about what constitutes the message received by God's messengers. The Prophet replied that the message was the descended book (*kitābin munazzalin*) sent down to Adam, explaining further that the book contained the twenty-nine letters of the alphabet (*ḥurūf al-muʿjam*). When Abū Dharr remarked that the Arabic alphabet has only twenty eight letters, Muḥammad became intensely angry, his eyes turning red, and said that the compound *lām-alif* is a single letter in addition to the regular twenty eight letters. He then proclaimed that whoever fails to regard the *lām-alif* as a single letter is not connected to him and is bound for eternal punishment.<sup>6</sup> From this ḥadīth report and Fażlallāh's claims, Ḥurūfīs believed that, among other things, the twenty eight letters were the "names" which God had taught Adam before presenting him to the angels according to the Qur'ānic account of genesis (2:31).<sup>7</sup> The twenty-ninth 'letter' was of crucial significance because its four distinctive constitutive sounds (l-m-a-f) were seen as stand-ins for letters added to the Arabic script to write Persian (p, ch, zh, g). In one formulation, the replacement of the *lām-alif* was an instance of abrogation (*nāsikh-mansūkh*) utilized in the science of scriptural interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

Fażlallāh's dream and its interpretation marked two different displacements from normative Islam which formed the basis for the construction of Ḥurūfī religion in subsequent years. First, the experience provided an opportunity for Fażlallāh to argue against the literal meaning of the scriptures, essentially making way for him to propose a new revelation. Second, the interpretation of the dream implied that Persian supercedes Arabic as a scriptural language, since its additional letters were the true referents for the *lām-alif*, which was a mere symbol. Ḥurūfīs also justified this elevation of Persian by referring to the alleged ḥadīth stating that the languages of paradise are Arabic and Persian.<sup>9</sup>

In the years following the dream, Fażlallāh gradually made his vision public and acquired a considerable following.<sup>10</sup> He and his followers saw him also as the promised Mahdī during the last sixteen or so years of his

life (1380-96). He recounts in his collection of dreams that one night, "I saw that my clothes were white, pure and extremely clean; I saw that these were both my clothes and those of the Mahdī, the Imām, meaning that I knew that I was (he)."<sup>11</sup> This messianic designation is commemorated in numerous works by Faḏlallāh's followers. Some Ḥurūfis, in fact, expected Faḏlallāh to return in a second coming based upon this idea.<sup>12</sup>

After several years propogating his revelation throughout central and southwestern Asia, Faḏlallāh spent the last days of his life in the province of Azarbayjan. The proceedings leading to his execution began during his visit to an ailing associate named Qāzī Bāyazīd in Shamākhī, the capital of Shirvān. The Qāzī told Faḏlallāh that he had had a dream in which someone was being sacrificed, which he understood as an omen for his own approaching death. Faḏlallāh assured him that the dream was not a premonition about the worsening of his illness but rather an indication that Faḏlallāh himself would be put to death in the near future. He was subsequently arrested as he stepped out of the Qāzī's house and was taken to Alanjaq, the headquarters of Timūr's son Mīrānshāh, the Timūrid governor of Azarbayjan.<sup>13</sup> A versified report of the incident by the prominent Ḥurūfi poet Nasīmī (Turkish: Nesimi) confirms historians' accounts that the arrest was made at Timūr's behest and that Faḏlallāh was put to death on the sixth of Zū l-Qa'da, 796 (September 2, 1394).<sup>14</sup>

Ḥurūfis imply that Faḏlallāh had been aware of the fate awaiting him even before he heard Qāzī Bāyazīd's dream in Shamākhī. His death, however, was not the sum total of his legacy, as is evident from his response to a dream he had had ten years before the execution (Ṣafar 786/ March-April 1384). In this dream, he was beheaded by enemies inside a public bath (*ḥamām*). His followers were saddened upon hearing of the vision, but Faḏlallāh consoled them by suggesting that, like Jesus, he would have a second coming.<sup>15</sup> Two versions of Faḏlallāh's last will and testament contain the following verses, which evidence his feeling that he had been betrayed by the people of Shirvān:

All my life I never found a single friend in Shirvān  
 What to say of a friend, never was there even an acquaintance  
 I am the Ḥusayn of the age, and my unworthy (enemies) Shimr and Yazīd  
 My life is altogether 'Āshūrā and Shirvān my Karbalā.<sup>16</sup>

After his death, Faḏlallāh's followers also saw the drama of his execution as part of the cosmic struggle between good and evil, exemplified in the battle between Ḥusayn and Yazīd.<sup>17</sup> They further exalted Faḏlallāh's death by interpreting it as the *final* such struggle, since Faḏlallāh was the promised messiah who had attempted to save humanity through his knowledge,

and his executioner, Mīrānshāh, was the Dajjāl or antichrist described in Islamic eschatology.<sup>18</sup>

While the manner of Fażlallāh's death led his followers to celebrate him as the ultimate righteous martyr, they had already considered him a crucial part of predestined cosmic history. Ḥurūfī cosmology states that the history of creation can be divided into three cycles whose boundaries mark the gradual unfolding of divine mysteries. These are: the cycle of prophethood (*nubūwah*), from Adam to Muḥammad; that of sainthood (*valāyat*), from 'Alī, through the eleventh Shī'ī Imām Ḥasan al-'Askarī, to Fażlallāh; and, beginning with Fażlallāh, that of divinity (*ulūhīyat*). The initiators of the three cycles are progressively more explicit forms of God's self-manifestation, with Fażlallāh being the complete representation of the divine in human form, as he begins the cycle of divinity.<sup>19</sup> The physical elimination of the initiator of the divine cycle naturally marked a transformative movement in world history.

Based upon the combination of their cosmological ideas and their experiences as an embattled religious community, the Ḥurūfīs rationalized Fażlallāh's death in two ways. In one interpretation, he was the promised savior and his demise connoted significant omens for those still living. He was also the most noble of all human beings, a man who represented divinity in the form of flesh and blood. His death, therefore, was the ultimate indictment of the forces of evil in the world. It is in the crosswire of this double meaning of his death that Fażlallāh's shrine was constructed and put to ritual use in the early part of the fifteenth century.

## The Formation and Uses of Fażlallāh's Shrine

Reconstructing the history of Fażlallāh's shrine presents a number of problems. First, there is disagreement about the year of his death. As already mentioned, the historians Maqrīzī and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī place the death in 804/1401-2 and suggest that Fażlallāh's body was burned on Tīmūr's orders soon thereafter. However, internal Ḥurūfī tradition puts the death on the sixth of Zū l-Qa'da, 796 (September 1394).<sup>20</sup> The discrepancy between the two sources can be resolved in favor of the internal Ḥurūfī tradition on the basis of circumstantial evidence. First and foremost, Ḥurūfīs were intimately aware of the significance of the death, and the texts provide no reasons to believe that the date needed to be changed to accommodate their greater cosmological concerns.<sup>21</sup> Second, independent sources tell us that Tīmūr relieved Mīrānshāh, Fażlallāh's executioner, from the governorship of western Iran in 802/1399, following reports that he had started vying for greater independence.<sup>22</sup> The son then became a part of

Timūr's entourage until the conqueror's death in 1405, making it impossible that he would have given the order for Faẓlallāh's execution at Alanjaq in 804/1401-2.

Unfortunately, our sources do not provide a detailed description of Faẓlallāh's shrine. A brief note in Turkish (and hence from late in the fifteenth century) in a Ḥurūfī manuscript states that the burial chamber was underground and that it contained the graves of both Faẓlallāh and 'Alī al-A'lā (d. 822/1419-20), one of his principal disciples.<sup>23</sup> Our only information about the day to day functioning of the shrine comes from certain verses in 'Alī al-A'lā's *Kursināma*, completed in 810/1407,<sup>24</sup> which indicate that a man named Mūsā was its caretaker. 'Alī al-A'lā also implies that the shrine had become dilapidated in later years and was reconstructed by devout Ḥurūfis either six or fourteen years after the initial burial.<sup>25</sup> Other authors suggest that Ḥurūfis used to frequent the shrine as an auspicious place for religious intuitions such as divining dreams.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the lack of a direct description, we can surmise the shrine's shape and the underlying architecture from its uses and the place it occupied in Ḥurūfī cosmology. Most significantly, for Ḥurūfis the shrine replaced the Ka'ba in Mecca, since it was the final abode of the incarnated divine being. In a step reminiscent of Faẓlallāh's initiatory dream, the shrine was declared the "true Ka'ba (*ka'ba-yi ḥaqīqī*)" in comparison to which the older house of God was a mere symbol. Just as Faẓlallāh had exteriorized the hidden truth of Islam through his knowledge of the meaning of Letters, the new Ka'ba superseded the older as a truer center of the universe, towards which all heavenly bodies and angels prostrated.<sup>27</sup> The symbolism and rituals attached to the old Ka'ba were shifted to the shrine and the Ḥurūfis now performed *'umra* and *ḥajj* around it in a pattern slightly different from normative Islamic practice.<sup>28</sup> The new *ḥajj* took place in the month of Zū l-Qa'da rather than Zū l-Ḥijja, culminating on the fifteenth of the month in which Faẓlallāh had reached his end.<sup>29</sup> The participants were required to put on pilgrims' clothes (*iḥrām*)<sup>30</sup> and perform circumambulations of the shrine in multiples of seven. Emulating the stoning of Satan in the Meccan ritual, the last rite of the Ḥurūfī *ḥajj* included three successive occasions where pilgrims cast twenty-one stones at the nearby castle of Sanjarīya, seen as the abode of Mīrānshāh.<sup>31</sup>

Surviving textual evidence indicates that the shrine occupied a very special place in the minds and hearts of devoted Ḥurūfis. The impassioned verses of an anonymous Ḥurūfī poet declare that he prostrates in the direction of Tabrīz (in the general vicinity of Alanjaq), since it is the home of the manifestation of God's essence.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the prominent Ḥurūfī

author Sayyid Sharīf, in his *Ḥajjnāma*, completed during his journey to the shrine, recalls Faẓlallāh's exhortation to his followers to come to his grave and do circumambulations (*tawāf*) in order to "clean the rust from the mirrors of their hearts."<sup>33</sup> Comparable references can be found in the extant works of virtually all of Faẓlallāh's prominent disciples.<sup>34</sup>

The rites of the Ḥurūfī *ḥajj* were elaborately explained in accordance with the notion that Faẓlallāh's revelation had exteriorized the hidden meanings behind symbolic ritual action. Thus, the four walls of the Ka'ba's square shape represented the elements earth, wind, fire and water, which formed the physical universe. The set of seven circumambulations were performed four times (once for each wall/element) and the total came to twenty-eight, the number of letters in the Arabic alphabet.<sup>35</sup> The seven circumambulations themselves referred to the seven levels of meaning which were thought to lie underneath all symbols.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Mīrānshāh's abode was stoned three times with seven stones, once each for the elements earth, water and wind since he himself represented fire in the form of Satan.<sup>37</sup> These rituals exemplify the perfect internal symmetry of the Ḥurūfī cosmos, which was within human understanding as long as one knew the secrets of numbers and letters.

The shrine also became prominent in Ḥurūfī cosmological thought based upon the idea that God had formed Adam's face from the clay of Mecca (i.e. Alanjaq, the true Ka'ba).<sup>38</sup> The Ḥurūfī worldview saw the human body and the earth as parallel structures, with parts of Adam's body corresponding to the following locations:

head	Ka'ba = Alanjaq/Mecca
upper torso ( <i>ṣadr-o-zabr</i> )	Sanctified House ( <i>bayt al-maqdis</i> ) = Astarābād/Jerusalem <sup>39</sup>
right hand	earth of the East
left hand	earth of the West
thighs ( <i>fakbz</i> )	Yemen
forelegs ( <i>sāq</i> )	Egypt
feet	Ḥijāz <sup>40</sup>

Since Adam had been created in God's image, this formulation tied God, Adam's face, and earth into a triad that encapsulated the story of creation. The revolt of Satan, the disruptive principle in the cosmos, occurred because Satan considered fire, his own source, a higher element than earth and water, which made up the clay that had fashioned Adam. Satan's aversion to these elements meant that he could never enter into a state of ritual purity, which can only be achieved by handling one of the two elements to perform the ablutions.<sup>41</sup>

Following creation, God taught Adam the Letters which form the metalanguage that became the narrative force propelling the flow of universal history from creation to the final destruction.<sup>42</sup> Ḥurūfī sources portray this process as a scene in which God took a lump of clay in his hands, fashioned it into human form, and then etched the details of creation on it in the form of Letters. As a structure, the human face in particular came to parallel God's words or scriptures in a literal way, so that the seven verses of the *Fātiḥa* which open the Qur'ān were equivalent to the seven 'lines' (of hair) shared by all human faces (i.e. hairline, the two eyebrows, and the four sets of eyelashes).<sup>43</sup>

In the developed Ḥurūfī view, the perfection of the human face is carried forth through history in the form of written and spoken language. The capacity for language sets human beings apart from all other creatures. Ordinary human languages are a reflection of this status, though behind them all lies a metalanguage composed of the thirty-two Letters (*ḥurūf*). The Letters as an aggregate represent the general intellectual principle in the cosmos, perceived as the building blocks through which all existent entities relate to one another. What Adam received at the moment of creation was the capacity for this metalanguage, through which he could comprehend the cosmos. This idea is reflected in the thirty-two teeth of the normal human mouth,<sup>44</sup> which is capable of producing only thirty-two distinct sounds.<sup>45</sup> The Persian alphabet with its thirty-two letters comes closest to metalanguage, an idea also found in Muḥammad's saying that speech in paradise would be limited to Arabic and Persian.<sup>46</sup>

As in the account of genesis, the end of the world is again reflected in the human face since its seven openings (two ears, eyes, and nostrils each and the mouth) are the seven doors of paradise.<sup>47</sup> Since it is the apogee of the process of creation, the face is seen also as the "farthest lote-tree" (*sidrat-i muntabā*) near which Muḥammad saw God according to the Qur'ānic account of his ascension (53:14).<sup>48</sup> Accession to heaven at the end of time is therefore a kind of return to the perfection of Adam's face, whose potential is inherent in every human being. The shrine at Alanjaq holds a key role in this return since it beckons humankind to paradise through Faḫrallāh's teachings.

In summary, Faḫrallāh's shrine at Alanjaq was a crucial element in both Ḥurūfī ritualism and cosmology. As the site of the yearly *ḥajj*, it provided (or at least was meant to provide) a central focus for the Ḥurūfī community. In addition, it was seen as the source of the human being, so that travel to it was the equivalent of a return to the place of one's origin.<sup>49</sup> While God's creation of Adam in his own image began the connection between divinity



and humanity, Fażlallāh's body, interred in the shrine at Alanjaq, most fully and explicitly realized the potential divinity within all humans. The shrine was, therefore, the earthly home of God, the source of Adam, and the point of eventual return for the righteous all in one. The Ḥurūfī system saw the cosmos as an organic whole in which one's ability to correctly interpret one 'system,' such as the alphabet or the human face, enabled one to understand hidden matters such as life after death. The shrine was the most concrete representation of this complex ontological unity since it literally and metaphorically contained Fażlallāh's being after his death.

## The Eschatological Significance of the Shrine

As already mentioned, the Ḥurūfīs regarded Fażlallāh as both an embodiment of divinity and the deliverer who was to save humanity in the end, as predicted in Islamic messianic tradition. Based upon Fażlallāh's own ideas, the Ḥurūfī community clearly espoused an apocalyptic world-view in the first half of the fifteenth century, although what the advent of the apocalypse implied was a matter of contention between two factions.<sup>50</sup> The opposing parties essentially took two different strands in Fażlallāh's discourse to their logical conclusion, also incorporating the fact of his martyrdom.

The eschatological apocalypse was, for all Ḥurūfīs, first and foremost a revelation of the mystery underlying the cosmos. They believed that God had pledged exactly such a momentous revelation for the end times,<sup>51</sup> and that the Ḥurūfī science of Letters fulfilled this promise.<sup>52</sup> Fażlallāh's knowledge, as well as the historical circumstances of his life, were indications of the messiah's appearance (*'alāmāt-i żubūr*), which is to precede the eschaton.<sup>53</sup> His status as the true progenitor of all beings and the collection of all knowledge in his revelation meant that his appearance on earth was the Gathering (*maḥshar*) which precedes judgment day in Islamic eschatology.<sup>54</sup> This was also the fulfillment of well-known sayings by Muḥammad such as that paradise lies under the feet of mothers. What Muḥammad had meant by "mothers" was, in fact, the unexplained letters found in the beginning of some suras in the Qur'ān. Their true meaning was what was under their feet, so that those who acquired the science of letters by heeding Fażlallāh's revelation drew close to the ultimate bliss of paradise.<sup>55</sup>

Fażlallāh's status as a martyr (*shahīd*) also connected him to statements in the Qur'ān. An author who refers to Fażlallāh with the letter *shīm* (the first letter in the word *shahīd*) throughout his work explains this by pointing to four Qur'ānic references in which the word *shahīd* has different

connotations: it refers to members of a righteous community, God's messenger, God himself, and one who has the knowledge of the book (*ilm al-kitāb*).<sup>56</sup> Faḏlallāh is the only person in cosmic history for whom all these meanings of the *shahīd* are true, and his becoming a *shahīd* in martyrdom is the natural fulfillment of this designation.<sup>57</sup>

While united in their sense of Faḏlallāh's mission, his Ḥurūfī followers split in their understanding of the accession to paradise promised after their acceptance of Faḏlallāh's message. The community was divided between those who thought that knowing Faḏlallāh's science already guaranteed them paradise, and those who expected additional cosmic events prior to the realization of paradisiacal joys. Evidence of the first viewpoint is available only in the form of criticism leveled against it by its opponents in the second group which included all of Faḏlallāh's major disciples. This group, quite popular among non-scholarly believers in Rūm, Iraq, Kurdistān, Shirvān, Gilān and Azarbayjan, believed that paradise and hell were states of knowledge rather than actual places. Consequently, the fact that they espoused Ḥurūfī doctrines, the truth behind the cosmos, implied that they were already in heaven and no longer needed to perform requisite Islamic rituals.<sup>58</sup> Opponents of this viewpoint felt this was the height of disbelief, since attempting to be a true believer while not obeying the *sharī'a* was the equivalent of trying to learn a language but refusing to understand its grammar.<sup>59</sup> They likened the pens of proponents of this view to the venomous forked tongue of a snake which poisons everything it touches. The paradise-dwellers' most significant departure from Ḥurūfī (and general Islamic) norms was the removal of the distinction between allowable (*ḥalāl*) and forbidden (*ḥarām*) foods and acts. For them, the new dispensation implied that wine made from ordinary grapes had become the purified drink (*sharāb ṭabūr*) mentioned in the Qur'ān (76:21) as a delight of paradise.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, others believed that paradise and hell were in fact real places populated by inhabitants deserving of each. The author of a major source on the internal controversy states that one night in a dream he saw four of Faḏlallāh's children who had perished in a plague in 820/1417-8. They told him that they were in heaven and it was exactly the way it was described in the Qur'ān.<sup>61</sup> To prove their point, the children took him on a tour so that he could see for himself the rivers, shady fruit-laden trees, colorful flowers, and houses filled with silken fabrics.<sup>62</sup> The Ḥurūfīs believed that what one saw in dreams was a true measure of one's fate in the afterlife and so placed much significance on this dream.<sup>63</sup> The opposing group acceded to this viewpoint based upon Faḏlallāh's own teachings,

but argued that dreams had ceased to function in this way since Fażlallāh's death. In other words, heaven and hell had already been 'filled' by those who had accepted or rejected Fażlallāh's revelation, respectively, and one did not need to look into the future to determine the matter.<sup>64</sup>

Those who did not believe themselves to be in paradise supported the continued observance of rituals and the important determination of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*. They pointed to the example of prophets and saints of the past, such as Muḥammad and 'Alī, who had assiduously maintained the purity of their diets and conduct despite their high spiritual status.<sup>65</sup> They further contended that acts of devotion were praiseworthy in all circumstances as expressions of love towards the divine being. 'Alī al-A'ī, one of Fażlallāh's most prominent vicegerents, countered the antinomian suggestion by citing a ḥadīth which states that prayers are the talk of the heavens and are performed even in paradise. Furthermore, he explained in a typical Ḥurūfī vein that the movement of the head and body during prayers was the equivalent of vocalizing words written through the combination of letters.<sup>66</sup> In other words, the human body and the letters of the alphabet are reflections of God in their being but they become 'alive' through the act of prayer or vocalization. Love as the fundamental principle joining humanity and divinity received much focus in Ḥurūfī works. For example, the *Maḥabbatnāma* of Ḥaḳīqī states that it is a mere illusion for human beings to think that they are loving God when they embark upon the mystical path. The truth is that it is God who is the active lover, since the human being is God's beloved. An individual seeker recognizes this truth only when s/he comes to understand the esoteric aspects of the laws that constitute the *sharī'a*.<sup>67</sup>

The schism in Ḥurūfī thought was more than just a matter of doctrine. The two perspectives diverged dramatically with respect to their prescriptions for human action. Some of those who believed that they were already in paradise took the idea even further by suggesting that they had the right to the lives and property of those outside the group. They declared "Whatever is in creation is the due of the knowledgeable person (*insān-i 'arif*). He should procure and utilize everything obtainable to him, and, for things beyond his reach, he should regard them as his right and should strive to get them out of others' hands."<sup>68</sup> The suffering caused to the victims of such taking was presumably justifiable, since they were in hell and deserved punishment.

While the paradise-dwellers believed themselves entitled to satisfy their desires, the opposing party began to wait for Fażlallāh's post-mortem return to avenge the transgressors and set in motion the total destruction of

the physical world. These Ḥurūfis began to scrutinize events in light of Faẓlallāh's teachings to find out more about the messiah's resurrection.

The cryptic evidence for the beliefs of this group comes from the versified *Kursīnāma* of Faẓlallāh's disciple 'Alī al-A'ḷā. It is clear that, as the new house of God, the shrine at Alanjaq and its geographical context were at the very center of an imminent expectation. Here the Ḥurūfis made use of three common prophetic traditions about the Maḥdī. According to these prophecies, the messiah would raise the flag of rebellion in Khurāsān, acquire the allegiance of a party of the righteous in Mecca, and conquer the city of Constantinople.<sup>69</sup> 'Alī al-A'ḷā's writings suggest that the Ḥurūfis expected Faẓlallāh to begin his movement in Khurāsān and then travel westward to Shirvān and Azarbayjan.<sup>70</sup> The oath of allegiance was, of course, to occur at Alanjaq, the new Ka'ba, an event at which Faẓlallāh would be united with his followers. He would then move westward, eventually conquering Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine empire. Paralleling the changes underlying Faẓlallāh's initiatory dream and the construction of the Alanjaq shrine, the Ḥurūfis thus shifted the Islamic messianic expectation from an Arabian-centered normative Islam to the Azarbayjan-centered Ḥurūfi religion.

The Ḥurūfis likened Faẓlallāh's first life to the job of a farmer (*bāris*) preparing land and sowing seeds for the events of the return.<sup>71</sup> They were told to ready themselves for a struggle and await the time when Faẓlallāh would reach Bākū and issue a call for his supporters.<sup>72</sup> According to one divination, the numerical value of the Arabic word *biḍ'* (872/1467-8), found in Qur'ān 30:4, was the exact year in which Faẓlallāh would have his greatest victories. This word's literal meaning is "a few" or "a little." The Ḥurūfis decided, based upon its Qur'ānic context, that it referred to the year of the conquest of Constantinople. The first four verses of Chapter 30 state: "The Byzantines (*al-rūm*) have been defeated in the nearer part of the land; and, after their defeat, they shall be victors *in a few years. To God belongs the command before and after, and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's help.*" In his explanation of these verses 'Alī al-A'ḷā states,

The source of all will indeed become apparent at the time of *b-d'*  
Understand the [first] appearance of God's grace (*faẓl-i ḥaqq*) to be the  
seeds the farmer spread on the earth  
Today the believers rejoice in God's aid and the infidels are in  
distress<sup>73</sup>

This explanation extrapolated the Qur'ānic verse from its original context, the struggle between the Byzantine and Persian empires in the seventh century, to Islamic eschatological mythology. The believers whose

rejoicing is predicted were now not the early Muslims, but the Ḥurūfis, and the nearer part of the land (*adnā l-ard*) where the Byzantines were vanquished was Azarbayjan.<sup>74</sup>

By incorporating military victories in the imminent messianic expectation, the Ḥurūfis justified their desire to use force in overthrowing the existing socio-political order. Various Ḥurūfī works contain direct language instructing believers to take up arms at the right moment and to not hesitate in killing disbelievers.<sup>75</sup> The Timūrids were Ḥurūfis' natural enemies, since Timūr had given the order for Fażlallāh's execution and his son Mīraṇshāh had carried out the sentence. Ḥurūfī literature consistently demonizes Mīraṇshāh as the Dajjal, particularly pointing out the fact that his face was extremely hairy and, unlike other human faces, did not have seven clear hairlines.<sup>76</sup> The Timūrids were equated with the hordes of Ğog, who are to flood the earth before the apocalypse.<sup>77</sup> The rulers for their part watched for overt subversive activity by the Ḥurūfis. Later Iranian history records two significant political incidents involving Ḥurūfis, following which the sect was subjected to intense persecution. In the first case, the Timūrid ruler Şāhrukh was attacked with a knife on Friday 23 Rabīʿ II 830 (21 February, 1427) in Herat by a man named Aḥmad-i Ēur. The king was grievously injured but not killed. His guards put the assailant to death right there on the scene. A search of Aḥmad-i Ēur's clothing produced a key, which led officials to his dwelling in the bazaar. It was discovered that he was a member of a seditious Ḥurūfī group comprised of the city's drapers, tailors, and capmakers who had been busy planning a revolt.<sup>78</sup> Members of the group confessed to a conspiracy against Şāhrukh's life but argued that Aḥmad-i Ēur had anticipated them and had acted alone. The excuse failed to convince the authorities, who executed and burned a number of people, including Fażlallāh's maternal grandson, 'Azud al-Dīn Astarābādī. In addition, the famous poet Qasim-i Anvar (d. 837/1433) was expelled from Herat based upon the incident.<sup>79</sup> Two of Fażlallāh's surviving sons were also arrested and shuttled between Tabrīz, Herat, and Samarqand, where Timūrid court scholars attempted to incriminate them in the assassination attempt.<sup>80</sup>

'Azud al-Dīn's mother, Fażlallāh's daughter Ķalimatallāh al-'Ulyā (d. 845/1441-2), whom at least one of Fażlallāh's major disciples regarded as the master's principal spiritual heir,<sup>81</sup> was herself involved in an incident in Tabrīz a few years later. She and a man named Mawlaṇa Yūsuf headed a Ḥurūfī group in Tabrīz which exercised considerable influence on the Ķarakoyunlu ruler Jahān Şāh (d. 1467). Fearful of their heretical beliefs, the city's mainstream *'ulāma*' issued a *fatwā* for their deaths, but Jahān

Şah refused to implement the order as long as one major scholar, Najm al-Din Uskū'i, refused to ratify it. In the end, however, Najm al-Din was accosted by a deranged (*majzūb*) mystic who told him that he had been ordered in a dream to make the scholar agree to the *fatwā*. As a result, Jahān Şah ordered the killing of Ķalimatallah, Mawlaṅa Yūsuf and five hundred of their Ĥurūfī followers in 845/1441-2.<sup>82</sup> Ĥurūfī influence declined sharply following this incident and the movement's center eventually moved to the Ottoman empire where it was assimilated to the Bektashi order.<sup>83</sup> Ĥurūfism's demise in central Iran probably meant that the shrine at Alanjaq, too, fell into disuse sometime around the middle of the fifteenth century. The only late report on the shrine comes from an anonymous Turkish note in a Ĥurūfī manuscript, which states that the coverings over Faẓlallah and 'Alī al-A'la's graves were black and green, respectively,<sup>84</sup> implying that the shrine was still being visited and cared for after 'Alī al-A'la's burial there in 822/1419.

## Conclusion

The formative years of the Ĥurūfī sect are the story of the creation of a new religion. Faẓlallah Astarābādi was, in both his own eyes and those of his followers, a new prophet whose message transcended previous scripture. Just as Muḥammad claimed that Judaism and Christianity had expected his prophecy, Faẓlallah explained that the primary sources for normative Islam, Qur'ān and ḥadīth, had predicted his arrival and those who did not accept his spiritual authority were rejecting divine will. In the years following Faẓlallah's death, some of his followers saw his coming as the abrogation of all spirituality and morality, while others attempted to collect and systemize his legacy in order to derive a practicable religion. The shrine at Alanjaq was of critical significance for the latter group since it both provided a physical locus for the movement's ritual system and was the meeting point for a number of different ideas in Ĥurūfī cosmology. By commemorating Faẓlallah's life, the shrine acted as a substitute for his earlier charismatic physical presence.

Although Faẓlallah's shrine functioned in typical ways, it also embodied the peculiarities of Ĥurūfism as a religious system. The shrine was an essential element in an apocalyptic faith whose adherents expected the world to come to a complete and cataclysmic end within their lifetimes. The earth on which the shrine stood connected the divine and the human, since Ğod had fashioned a self-image from a lump of its clay, brought it to life and then taught it the alphabet of creation. The secrets of being were

given to Adam here in primordial time. They believed that he who lay buried under the shrine was the only incarnate being to have completely realized their true meanings. While Adam and his ordinary progeny were bound by language, spoken or written, Fażlallāh's knowledge gave him the key to the metalanguage with its primordial Letters, so that, like God, his apprehension of the world proceeded from the beings of things themselves rather than from their ordinary linguistic representations. By circling the shrine in multiples of seven, the Ḥurūfis symbolically made their way through the seven layers of the meanings of all things in an attempt to reach the level of Fażlallāh's knowledge. While they awaited full disclosure of cosmic secrets during the imminent drama of resurrection, their going around and around the shrine dressed in pilgrims' garb memorialized the extraordinary being who had first charmed them and then fallen victim to the world's cruelties.

## Endnotes

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1. Both these sources are cited in Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi' li-abl al-qarn al-tāsi'*; 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992), 6:173-74.
2. For the latest attempt at a biography of Fażlallāh, see my "Deciphering the Cosmos from Creation to Apocalypse: The Ḥurūfiya Movement and Medieval Islamic Esotericism," in *Imagining the End: Millennial Faith from Ancient Middle East to Contemporary America*, eds. Abbas Amanat and Magnus Bernhardsson (London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming 2001). Earlier assessments of the Ḥurūfiya include: Hamid Algar, "Astarābādi, Fażlallāh," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 1:841-44; Abdūlbaki Gölpinarlı, *Ḥurūfîlik Metinleri Kataloğu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973), 2-16; Helmut Ritter, "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit: Die Anfänge der Ḥurūfisekte," *Oriens* 7, no. 1 (June 1954), 6-32, translated by Hashmat Mu'ayyad as "Āghāz-i firqa-yi Ḥurūfiya," *Farhang-i Īrān Zamin*, 10 (1341/1963), 322-93; Şadiq Kiyā, *Vāzhanāma-yi Gurgāni* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh, 1951), 9-47; Ya'qūb Āzhand, *Ḥurūfiya dar tārikh* (Tehran: Nashr-i Nay, 1990), 3-38; H. T. Norris, "The Ḥurūfi Legacy of Faḍlullāh of Astarābād," in *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1992), 87-97.
3. The date appears in brief chronologies of Fażlallāh's life found in manuscripts of Ḥurūfi works. See, for example, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 269, Millet Library, Istanbul, 1a; MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1052, Millet Library, Istanbul, 7a; MS. Or. 6381, British Library, London, 2a.

4. The year is mentioned in the chronologies cited in the note above. In addition, a brief extract from the *Hidāyatnāma* of Hasan b. Haydar Astarābādī calculates the *abjad* value of the *basmala* formula to be 788 and equates it with the year Faẓlallāh received his commission as the Mahdī (MS. Farsça 1132, Istanbul University Library, 57b). The value of *basmala* is usually calculated to be 786 rather than 788.

5. A careful reading of sources reveals that, for the movement's theoreticians, these primordial Letters were not the same thing as the letters used to represent ordinary human languages. To emphasize this important distinction in this paper, I will use 'Letters' (upper case L) to refer to the primordial entities and 'letters' for the Arabo-Persian alphabet with which Ḥurūfīs often worked. For more details on the distinction see my "Deciphering the Cosmos" and other forthcoming publications.

6. Anonymous, *Naṣā'is al-ḥaqā'iq*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 993, Millet Library, Istanbul, 3b-4a. An abbreviated version of the ḥadīth is cited in Naṣrallāh b. Ḥasan 'Alī Nāfajī, *Khwābnāma*, MS. Persian 17, Vatican Library, Vatican City, 66a-67a. For the general significance of letters in Islamic thought see: T. Fahd, "Ḥurūf," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 595-96; idem., "Djafr," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:375-77; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 411-12.

7. The theoretical system underlying Ḥurūfī preoccupation with letters remains to be understood in its details. For some preliminary steps in this direction see my "Deciphering the Cosmos."

8. Anonymous, *Muqaddimat al-'usbsbāq*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 87, Millet Library, Istanbul, 11b-12a.

9. Anonymous, *Hidāyatnāma* in Clément Huart, *Textes persans relatifs à la secte des bouroïfīs* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1909), 10. This idea is repeated in Ḥurūfī works in numerous places.

10. The extent of Faẓlallāh's following can be judged only from vague references in sources concerned primarily with other subjects. The historian Maqrizī states that Faẓlallāh had "countless followers" in all regions at the time of his execution (Sakhāwī, *Daw' al-lāmi*; 6:174). Some Ḥurūfī sources such as *Khwābnāma* of Khwāja Sayyid Ishāq (MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1042, Millet Library, Istanbul) contain numerous stories regarding Faẓlallāh's interaction with his disciples.

11. Faẓlallāh Astarābādī, *Nawmnāma*, MS. Ee.1.27, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, 410b. In other dreams, he saw the sun rising from the west, a common omen for the Mahdī's appearance (407b), and his own execution on the orders of a cripple (*shālmard*) later identified as Timūr (411b).

12. See, for example, Nāfajī, *Khwābnāma*, 83b; 'Alī al-A'ālā, *Kursināma*, MS. Persian 255, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 3b, 15a, 114b, etc.; Kathleen R. F. Burrill, *The Quatrains of Nesimī, Fourteenth-Century Turkic Hurufi* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 127.

13. Ishāq, *Khwābnāma*, 49b. Mirānshāh was appointed governor of the area in 795/1393 (cf. Beatrice Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 72).

14. 'Imād al-Dīn Nasīmī, *Divān* (Persian), MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 439, Millet Library, Istanbul, 106b-107a. The year of death is mentioned also in the chronologies of Faẓlallāh's life cited above and in anonymous verses cited in MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1043, Millet Library, Istanbul, 3a.

15. Faẓlallāh, *Nawmnāma*, 408b.

16. Browne, "Further Notes," 541 (short testament), and A. Gölpınarlı, "Faẓlallāh-i Ḥurūfī'nin waṣīyyat-nāma'sı veya wāṣāyā'sı," *Şarkīyat mecmuası* 2 (1958), 54 (longer version).



17. For other Ḥurūfī references to Ḥusayn's struggles see: Abū l-Ḥasan, *Maṣnavi*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1052, Millet Library, Istanbul, 1a; Nasimī, *Divān*, 106b.
18. Mirānshāh is usually referred to as Mārānshāh (king of snakes), Mārshah, or simply Dajjāl in Ḥurūfī sources (e.g. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, MS. Persian 34, Vatican Library, Vatican City, 28a, 127b-128a).
19. For a concise explanation of the theory of cycles see Khwāja Sayyid Iṣḥāq's *Mabramnāma* in Huart, *Textes persans*, 21-23.
20. For a review of the various Ḥurūfī sources that record the year of death see: Gölpinarlı, *Katalog*, 10-12; idem., "Bektaşilik- Ḥurūfīlik ve Faḍl Allah'ın öldürülmesine düşürülen üç tarih," *Şarkiyat mecmuası* 5 (1964), 15-22; Browne, "Further Notes," 540.
21. The only logical reason for the Ḥurūfīs to displace the death from its actual year would be if the number 796 signified something extraordinary. I have so far not come across any source which allegorizes the date into a marker. It has been suggested that the two dates can be reconciled if we believe that Fażlallāh was executed in 796 but that his body was exhumed and burned on Tīmūr's order in 804. There is, however, no reliable proof to support this idea.
22. Manz, *Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, 72.
23. MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 990, Millet Library, Istanbul, 63a. The manuscript itself gives the copying date as 1148/1735-6 (58a), though this says little about the anonymous note which is in a different hand.
24. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 137a.
25. Ibid., 114b-115a. In this manuscript, the number of years can be read as either "bay va dāl" or "yay va dāl" adding up to 6 or 14 respectively.
26. See, for example, the *Maḥsbarnāma* of Mīr Sharif (Ali Emiri Farsça 1019, Millet Library, Istanbul, 12a) where he states that he was visited by Fażlallāh in a dream which occurred in his sanctuary (*ḥarīm*) at the end of Ramaẓān 817 (Nov-Dec 1414).
27. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 113a, 114a, 116a.
28. Ḥurūfīs' preoccupation with the Ka'ba (i.e. the one in Mecca) dates to the period before Fażalallāh's death. Fażalallāh's *Jāvidānnāma*, extant in both Astarābādī dialect and standard Persian, contains detailed expositions on the matter (cf. MS. Ee.1.27, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, and MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1000, Millet Library, Istanbul). Besides Fażalallāh's own works, the *Bashāratnāma* by his close associate Abū l-Ḥasan also mentions that the author had traveled to the Hījāz to perform the *ḥajj* (MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1041, Millet Library, Istanbul, 5a).
29. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 110a, 113b.
30. Ibid., 113b.
31. Ibid., 134b, 136b. The most detailed instructions for performing the ritual are given in Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma* (127a-128a) and Iṣkurt Dede, *Ṣalāt-nāma* (MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1043, Millet Library, Istanbul).
32. Anonymous, *Divān*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 186, Millet Library, Istanbul, 4a, 34b.
33. Sayyid Sharif, *Ḥajjnāma*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1035, Millet Library, Istanbul, 1b, 88b.
34. For example, 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 111b; Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 78a; Anonymous, *Sikandarnāma*, in Huart, *Textes persans*, 123; quatrains by Nesimi cited in Burrill, *Quatrains of Nesimi*, 68.
35. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 127b-128a; Anonymous, *Risāla* in MS. Laud Or. 224, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 55b.
36. Despite the obvious use of visual symbolism in Ḥurūfī thought, hardly any manuscripts contain sketched representations of important concepts. Two rare exceptions are circular diagrams showing the Ka'ba in the center surrounded by concentric circles

representing the different levels of its meaning. Here the building's physical shape is said to represent the world made of the four elements, while its seven meanings connect it to heavenly bodies such as the spheres and the fixed stars (cf. MS. Persian 140, Vatican Library, Vatican City, 73a, and MS. Fatih 3728, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, 102a).

37. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 128a.

38. Ibid., 62a; Haqîqî, *Mahabbatnâma*, 74b; Anonymous *Risâla* in Huart, *Textes persans*, 71; Anonymous *Risâla* in MS. Laud Or. 224, 53b-54b.

39. Sharif, *Mahsbarnâma*, 5b. Astarâbâd, Fażlallâh's birthplace, had to be seen as Jerusalem since tradition said that the Mahdî would rise in this city.

40. Anonymous, *Muqaddîmat al-'ushshâq*, 13b.

41. Ibid., 12a-b.

42. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 61a-b.

43. Haqîqî, *Mahabbatnâma*, 1b, 10b.

44. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 63a.

45. Hurûfî theory about the thirty two sounds was at one point challenged at the Central Asian court of Ulugh Beg, where Chinese speakers stated that their language required producing more than thirty-two sounds. Fażlallâh's son Nûrallâh defended the Hurûfî viewpoint by trying to prove that the 'extra' Chinese sounds were in fact only combinations of the thirty-two basic ones (cf. Gölpinarlı, "Fażlallâh-i Hurûfî 'nin oğluna ait bir mektup," 47).

46. Anonymous, *Hidâyatnâma* in Huart, *Textes persans*, 2.

47. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 63b, 64a.

48. Ibid., 63a.

49. The idea that things have to return to their origins accounted also for the fact that the face of a corpse is laid facing towards the *qibla* in standard Islamic practice (Anonymous, *Muqaddîmat al-'ushshâq*, 14a).

50. For the overall significance of the apocalypse in Hurûfî thought see my "Deciphering the Cosmos."

51. 'Ali al-A'lâ, *Kursinâma*, 5b; Anonymous, *Risâla* (Turkish), MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 990, Millet Library, Istanbul, 59b; Burrill, *Quatrains of Nesimi*, nos. 36, 130, 137; 'Imâd al-Dîn Nesimi, *Nesimi Divanı* (Istanbul, 1286/1869), 34.

52. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 22a; Anonymous, *Hidâyatnâma* in Huart, *Textes persans*, 11-12.

53. 'Ali al-A'lâ, *Kursinâma*, 106b.

54. Khwâja Sayyid Ishâq, *Tahqiqnâma*, MS. Farsça 1132, Istanbul University Library, Istanbul, 41b; Anonymous, *Risâla al-qaytâgh*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1052, Millet Library, Istanbul, 15a-b.

55. 'Ali al-A'lâ, *Kursinâma*, 15a. For a full explanation of the unexplained letters as *umm al-kitâb* see Anonymous, *Nafâ'is al-haqâ'iq*, 3a.

56. The relevant verses are: "We have appointed you a middle nation so that you may be witnesses (*shuhadâ'*) against people and that the messenger may be a witness (*shahid*) against you" (2:143); "(To) those who disbelieve and say you are not a messenger, say, God and whoever has the knowledge of the book (*'ilm al-kitâb*) is sufficient witness (*shahid*) between you and me" (13:43).

57. Mîr Fâzîlî, *Risâla*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 990, Millet Library, Istanbul, 21a-b.

58. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 54a-b; Mişâlî, *Risâla*, MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 1012, Millet Library, Istanbul, 2a-b; İşkurt Dede, *Şalâtnâma*, 43b.

59. Khwâja Sayyid Ishâq, *Turâbnâma*, MS. Farsça 139, Istanbul University Library, Istanbul, 91a.

60. Ibid., 98a-99b.

61. Ghiyâs al-Dîn, *Istivânâma*, 52a.

62. Ibid. 53a.
63. Nāfajī, *Khwaḅnāma*, 58a-63b; Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 53b-54b; Ishāq, *Turābnāma*, 105b-106a. This interpretation of the functioning of dreams was derived from the ḥadīth report that "sleep was the brother of death".
64. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 54a.
65. Ishāq, *Turābnāma*, 102b-103a.
66. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 55a.
67. Ḥaḳīqī, *Mahabbatnāma*, 7b.
68. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 57a.
69. For the details of these traditions see 'Alī al-Kūrānī, ed., *Mu'jam aḥādīth al-Imām al-Mabḏī*, 4 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Ma'arif al-Islāmiya, 1990), vol. 1, nos. 230, 253, 251, 303.
70. For some Ḥurūfīs, Khurāsān's prominent place in the apocalyptic scenario may have been an echo of the Persian rebellion supported by Shī'ī sympathizers which lead to the 'Abbāsīd revolution of early Islamic history. Sayyid Ishāq, for example, mentions that he was inspired to write the *Turābnāma* (the name of the treatise refers to 'Alī's *kunya* Abū Turāb) after a dream seen in Shawvāl 814/1412 in which he conversed with Faḏlallāh near the grave of Abū Muslim (87a). Similarly, Sayyid Sharif mentions the rising of "black banners" from the east expected to lead to 'Alid triumph (*Ḥajjnāma*, 85b-86a).
71. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 116b.
72. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Qiyāmatnāma*, MS. Browne E.7, Cambridge University Library, 40a, 9a.
73. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 117a.
74. Ibid. It is interesting that the same verses are given a very different gloss by Mir Fāzīlī (*Risāla*, 3a-b) who understands them as references to the creation of Adam and Eve in the beginning of time.
75. Sharif, *Ḥajjnāma*, 24b; Abū l-Ḥasan, *Maṣnavī*, 2a; Anonymous, *Divān*, 21a-22a.
76. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, *Istivānāma*, 28a.
77. 'Alī al-A'ḷā, *Kursināma*, 114a.
78. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Khwāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Khayyām, 1954), 3:615-17.
79. Cf. R. M. Savory, "A 15th-century Ṣafavid Propagandist at Herat," in *Semi-Centennial Volume of the Middle Western Branch of the American Oriental Society* (Bloomington: American Oriental Society, 1969); Sa'īd Nafīsī's editorial introduction in *Kulliyāt-i Qāsim-i Anvār* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanā'ī, 1958), 5-59.
80. One of the sons wrote an interesting account of his and his brother's travails during this period as a letter which is extant and has been edited. Apart from the details of their travels and audiences with various ruling princes, the letter also contains discussions of Ḥurūfī doctrines presented as answers to the inquisitors' charges (cf. Gölpinarlı, "Faḏlallāh-i Ḥurūfī'nin oḡluna ait bir mektup").
81. Khwāja Sayyid Ishāq, *Mahramnāma* in Huart, *Textes persans*, 32, 33, 39.
82. The only substantial report on this incident is found in Ḥāfiẓ Ḥusayn Tabrizī Ibn al-Karbālā'ī, *Rawzāt al-jinān va jannāt al-janān*, ed. Ja'far Sulṭān al-Qurrā'ī, 2 vols. (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjuma va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1970), 1:478-81.
83. For Ḥurūfīs in the Ottoman empire, including an attempt at converting Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, see: Hamid Algar, "The Ḥurūfī Influence on Bektashism," in *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*, ed. Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1993), 41-54; Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: Un mythe et ses avatars* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 116-26, 236-40; Gölpinarlı, "Bektaşilik-Ḥurūfīlik ve Faḏl Allāh'ın

öldürülmesine düşürülen üç tarih," 15-22; John Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), 58-62, 148-61; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zindıklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 131-35; Andrew Tietze, "A Document on the Persecution of Sectarians in Early Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," in *Bektachiyya*, 161-66.

84. MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 990, Millet Library, Istanbul, 63a.