

clude that Sanā'ī intended the *qalandar* and all that was connected with this character as a set of symbols for the preaching of a kind *malamātī* spirituality which remained within the boundaries of Islamic orthopraxis.

VI.

The three forms of the *qalandarī* tradition which we have mentioned at the outset—the theoretical, the practical and the literary—can best be studied separately, at least up to the point where sound documentary evidence for their interrelationship appears. As far as Persian literature is concerned, we have a substantial corpus of poems at hand for the study of the adoption of the *qalandariyyāt* into a homiletic tradition. The remarkable success of these terms and motifs owes much to the succession of prominent Sufi poets in the 13th and 14th centuries, but first of all to Sanā'ī who developed a varied imagery to be used in his own homiletic poetry.

Already in the case of Sanā'ī, a development can be noticed in the use of the *qalandarī* motifs. This development transformed what originally was but daring imagery, derived perhaps from secular poetry, into items of a set of symbolic allegories. In any case, it is perfectly clear that Sanā'ī always used the *qalandarī* motifs in a figurative sense. This leaves no room for speculations either about his personal life or his adherence to antinomian views.

III

The Ḥurūfī Legacy of Faḍlullāh of Astarābad

H. T. Norris

Brother Yves found a book by the head of the Old Man's bed, and in that book were written words that our Lord when on earth had said to St. Peter. And Brother Yves said to him: "Ahi for God's sake, sire, read often in this book, for these are very good words." And the Old Man said he oftentimes did so. "Since our Lord St. Peter," said he, "is very dear to me; for at the beginning of the world the soul of Abel, when he was killed, went into the body of Noah; and when Noah died it returned into the body of Abraham; and from the body of Abraham, when he died, it came into the body of St. Peter, at that time when God came on earth."

When Brother Yves heard this, he showed him that his creed was not sound, and taught him with many good words; but the Old Man would not listen to him. And these things Brother Yves told to the king, when he came back to us.

When the Old Man rode abroad, a crier went before him bearing a Danish axe, with a long haft all covered with silver, and many knives affixed to the haft; and the crier cried: "Turn aside from before him who bears in his hands the death of kings!"¹

Thus wrote De Joinville in his *Memoirs of the Crusades of St. Louis*, in 1309, some thirty years before the birth (in 739-40/1339-40) of Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Bahā'ī-Dīn Faḍlullāh of Astarābad, the founder of what has been variously described as the Ḥurūfī sect, religion, heresy and religious order.²

The Old Man of the Mountains was not a Ḥurūfī, in the sense that he adopted as his revelatory premise the interpretations that were set out in the *Jāwidān-i-kabīr* and those other works that are attributed to Faḍlullāh or to his successors. Yet the fact cannot be ignored that inasmuch as the Ḥurūfīyya are a genuine expression of Sufism at a particular point in its history, the movement is also Janus-faced and peculiar in its visage. I do not apologize therefore for beginning this essay with some comment upon the *Isma'īlī* or *bāṭinī* tradition in the Ḥurūfīyya. I can but cite the close of the *Jāwidān* itself: "He (the Prophet), peace be upon him, said, 'Verily, the Koran has an outward (meaning), and an inward (meaning) and the inward an inward unto seven inwards,'" recalling the revolutionary theory that the Koranic text possesses seven esoteric levels of meaning each of them corresponding to one of the subtle centers of light. Faḍlullāh was both an heir and a legator and it would be

1. De Joinville, in *Memoirs of the Crusades by Villehardouin and De Joinville*, translated by Sir Frank Marzials, Everyman Series, 1908, London and New York, pp. 250-1.

2. For most recent lists of sources referring to the principal articles and books on Faḍlullāh and the Ḥurūfīyya, see the article by H. Algar in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2, pp. 841-4, s.v. 'Astarābādī' and A. Haas, *Die Bektaşi Riten und Mysterien eines Islamischen Ordens* (Berlin: Express Edition, 1987).

H.T. Norris *The Hurūfī Legacy of Faḍlullāh of Astarābād* 89

dishonest to pretend that the syncretism in his teaching did not exceed those bounds that were normally acceptable in the great spiritual movement that we call Sufism.

To what extent the transcendent *Shi'ite* movement that was set in motion by Faḍlullāh was unashamedly Ismā'īlī, or neo-Carmathian, is a question that has excited the minds of those interested for centuries. Al-'Asqalānī, cited in the *Inbā' al-ghumr fī abnā' al-'umr* by Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852-3/1448-9) described Faḍlullāh as an ascetic and a heretic who claimed that the letters were metamorphoses of men, "together with many idle and baseless fancies." Ishaq Efendi in his denunciation of the Bektāshīyya, which was to become the official Sufi depository of the Hurūfī classes, in his *Kāshifī al-asrār wa dāfī' al-ashrār*,¹ refers to the Hurūfī writings as heresies, the "blasphemies of the Jāwīdāns." He perceives the Hurūfīs, Faḍlullāh especially, as the latest in a line that passes from the Ibāhīyya (Mazdakites), through the Qarāmiṭa, through Faḍlullāh to his 'vicars' or *khalīfas*, especially to 'Alī al-'A'īā who allegedly divulged and explained the 'immoral' and esoteric secrets of the *Jāwīdān* to the inmates of the *tekke* of Ḥājī Bektāsh.²

Some qualified views on these lines have shaped the thinking of Orientalists down to the present time. E. G. Browne was of the opinion that the Hurūfīs were without doubt within the Ismā'īlī tradition.³ This view was echoed by F. W. Hasluck, though modified and carefully analyzed by E. K. Birge.⁴ W. Ivanow in his *Isma'ili Literature*, (Teheran 1963), devotes three pages to the Hurūfīs and to the Nuḳṭawīs. He refers both to Faḍlullāh as a "philosopher" and to the *Jāwīdān*. This work displays many contacts with Ismā'īlism, Alamut, even refers to "Sayyidna Ḥasan ibn al Ṣabbāh." Significant are the *Jāwīdān* references, in passages in a West-Persian dialect akin to Bakhtiyāri and Kurdish, where there is a mention of former strongholds of the Assassins: Rūdbār-i-Astarābād, and the fortress of Gird-i-Kūh. To be fair to Ivanow, he also casts doubts on the alleged distortion of the Bektāshīyya by Hurūfī ideas. In the view of Rizā Tefvīq,⁵ the Hurūfīs are part of a "brotherhood" that includes the followers of Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbāh, the Nusayrīs and the Druze. "All these religions (*sic*) are founded upon the principle of the 'epiphany' ... The power that sustains the world is manifest in everything, but above all it manifests itself in Man who is the mirror of its perfection." Rizā Tefvīq saw the self-deified Sufi Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Shalmaghānī, beheaded in Baghdad in 934, as Faḍlullāh's most obvious predecessor. Nikki Keddie links together the Hurūfīs, the

1. On Ishaq Efendi's description of the Hurūfīs, see Browne's, *A History of Persian Literature under Tatar Dominion*, (AD 1265-1502), III (Cambridge University Press, 1920), pp. 450-2. A more recent study of the viliification of the Hurūfīs, is to be read in A. Gölpınarlı, *Hurūfīlik ve Mir-i 'Alem Celāl Bîk'in Bîr Mektuba*, *Türkiyat Mecmuası* (1965), pp. 93-101.

2. An example of the traditional view (aside from Hasluck's writings) is to be found in J. Brown, *The Darvishes*, (Oxford/London 1927), pp. 223-4. J. Birge, in his *The Bektāshī Order of Dervishes*, (London 1937), pp. 60-2, gives a sober assessment of the relationship between the Hurūfīyya and the Bektāshīyya.

3. For a statement of E. G. Browne's view, within the context of the *Jāwīdān* itself, see his *A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, (Cambridge, 1896), pp. 69-86. *The Jāwīdān-i-Kabir* (E.1.9.27).

4. See Birge, *op cit*, pp. 58-62.

5. In C. Huart, *Textes Persans Rélatifs à la secte des Hourouffis* (Leyden/London, 1909), pp. 307-11.

آمین است و بعد از آنکه آمدیم آن شش بارت و شش بار
اندک سرش که دست از شش جهت خالی نیست که هر چه است و در راه
ست و ته که آئی که اگر آن ته که آئی را از ایشان در کشی ایشان
خود موجود باشند چون روشن شد که هر چه آئی که از باره و سنگ که
از یک کوره خدای طاهر شود نو آن کلمه را بفرص و موسم از وجد توانی
کرد و سخن نیست و اگر بر سهیل و موم و فرض از وجد کنی از آن سخن و سخن
او جدا شدن باشد هیچ چیز باقی نباشد مگر آنکه اطلاق شیشه بروی
چیزی بماند باز نقل کلام کتب باقی اسم خواهد داشت و او آئی با لغت



Folio from the *Jāwīdān-i kabir*, MS. Ee.1.27. by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Nuşayrīs, the Ahl-i-Haqq and Kizilbas as popular groups within the ideology that fueled and sustained the Safavid movement.¹ Irène Mélikoff attributes these similarities to her notion of an original nomadism; the nomad to her is one who "lives to the rhythm of the seasons, with a conception of cyclic time and of the eternal return." Day succeeds night, spring follows winter and life follows death. These beliefs are, she says, at the base of all the sects that are called "extremist," be they Turk like the Kizilbas, Iranian or Kurdish—like the Ismaelians and Ahl-i-Haqq—or Arab like the Druze or the Alawites.²

The Druze might be selected in order to illustrate certain similarities in the evolution of the doctrines though, of course, in an earlier age. They draw upon such Ismā'īlī notions as were expressed by the *dā'i* Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī (d. 322/934) in *Irīqīyyā* in his *Kitāb al-zīna fī'l-kalimāt al-islāmīyya al-'arabiyya*.³ "We hold by tradition that (the *Imām*) Ja'far (al-Šādiq) ibn Muḥammad said: 'In the first place a thought surged in God, an intention, a will. The object of this thought, this intention of this will were the letters from which God made the principal of all things, the indices of everything perceptible, the criteria of everything difficult. It is from these letters that everything is known.'"

According to David Bryer, Ḥamza ibn 'Alī (b. 374-75/985-86), "like some juggler threw up the whole Ismā'īlī system into the air." He reshaped what he needed to furnish the keystone of his beliefs, namely the divinity of al-Ḥakīm and the falsity of all previous *sharī'as*.⁴ In this religion of *lawḥid* God is existence itself. All existent beings derive their existence from Him. Passages from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, where relevant, make their appearance. This is also a feature in Ḥurūfī writings where Matthew and John are also quoted. Ḥamza, hailed as Messiah and "Universal Mind" by Bahā' al-Dīn (d. 422/1031), after whom "the door of the Unilateral religion was closed" was reinterpreted and expanded by the latter, in his *al-Juz' al-awwal*. Here there is a resort to Pythagorean subtleties, to the occult art of letter manipulation and the assignment of numerical values to letters. Seven is a sacred number; the Heavens, the Earth, the Climes, the Height of Man by his own span, the Prophets and the *Imāms* are also sacralized.

However, by the fifteenth century it is significant that these and other long-held or refashioned Druze beliefs are transformed in the many writings of the Amīr Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abdullāh al-Tanūkhī (1417-1479). Especially in his treatises on the attributes of the Universal Intelligence, and on the conduct of the Elect, and in his fifth epistle, *al-Mitḥāq*, in particular, al-Tanūkhī's writings are indebted to Sufism. Referring to his library of "500 volumes," Nejlā M. Abu-Izzeddīn remarks: "That the works of the Sufis figured among the contents of the library is to be

expected, for the Sayyid was a Sufi himself and often quoted Sufis in his writings and teachings."¹ This observation is significant. Not only has it a relevance for the late mediaeval age wherein Faḍlullāh was born, lived and died, but it illustrates a flexibility and a power to transform and to reshape in the Sufi-trained mind of a creative thinker a received legacy that had been viewed by others as alien or heretical.

That Sufism lies at the heart of Faḍlullāh's seeming Ismā'īlism is revealed in his biography in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*² provided by Ḥamid Algar, who stresses that Faḍlullāh was strongly drawn to Sufism at an early age, when his mind was fired by words of Rumi about the Light of God as the essence of Eternity. He regularly attended the *dhiḥr*. After his second *ḥajj* he dreamt vivid dreams about Solomon, about the hoopoe, and about the raven, symbolic of God, the spirit and the soul. He dreamt of a star rising in the East. All of this appeared to herald a mission that would bring him to fame after meeting saints and visiting cities and eventually to martyrdom. His following in Isfahan included Sufis who are referred to as "ḥalāl-eating and truth-speaking dervishes." Even in Tabriz, after 775/1373, when Faḍlullāh gained an elite following in the Jalayerid court, including Sultan Uways ibn Ḥasan and where the descent of the essence of beings into "the luminous consciousness" of Faḍlullāh, the 'Lord of Time' (*Šāhib al-zamān*) allegedly took place in 788/1386, and where the writing of the *Jawidān* commenced, one is constantly aware of a continuous inspiration from main-stream Sufi tradition. Though failing to convert Timūr and executed in Shirwān by the latter's son, Mirānshāh (d. 802-03/1400-01), the Anti-Christ of Ḥurūfī legend in 1394, the theodicy of suffering which Faḍlullāh's execution (ordered by Timūr) inspired amongst his Ḥurūfī followers, draws upon a Ḥallājīan inspiration, even if one suspects with Massignon,³ that it is Nesimī who achieves this identification to its fullest in his verse.⁴

Faḍlullāh's dilemma was not unlike that which was to be faced by certain of the Protestant reformers in Europe. A radical break with a medieval Orthodoxy posed problems as to how to interpret revealed scripture with the help of an alternative channel of revelation, or by some hitherto unknown 'hotline' direct to Divinity. This problem faced the revolutionary saint, a contemporary of Luther, Münstzer of Zwickau:

Münstzer had not been troubled like Luther as to how to get right with God, but as to whether there is any God to get right with. The Scripture as a mere written record did not reassure him because he observed that it is convincing only to the convinced. The Turks are acquainted with the Bible but remain completely alienated. The men who wrote the Bible had no Bible at the time when they wrote. Whence, then, did they derive their assurance? The only answer can be that God spoke to them directly, and so must he speak to us if we are so much as to understand the Bible. Münstzer held, with the Catholic Church, that the Bible is

1. Nejlā Abu-Izzeddīn, *The Druzes, A New Study of Their History, Faith and Society*, (Leiden 1984), pp. 96 and 174-7.

2. The Sufi activities of Faḍlullāh in his earlier years are brought out in the article by H. Algar, *op. cit.*

3. See Louis Massignon, 'Imād Nesimī and the poets of the Jamisettes' in *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, trans. H. Mason, (Princeton University Press 1982), II, pp. 249-56.

4. On Nesimī, see in particular, E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. 1, (London 1958) pp. 343-68.

1. See N. Keddie's, *Scholars, Saints and Sufis, Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500*, (University of California Press, 1972), pp. 217-9.

2. Mélikoff, 'Un ordre de derviches colonisateurs: Les Bektachis,' in *Memorial Omer Lutfi Barkan*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, XXVIII (Paris, 1980), pp. 149-57, 156 in particular.

3. See G. Vajda, 'Les lettres et les sons de la langue arabe d'après Abu Ḥatīm al-Rāzī Arabica, VIII, (May 1963), pp. 113-30.

4. See David Bryer, 'The Origins of the Druze Religion,' *Der Islam*, (Berlin/New York, 1975-76), p. 47ff.

inadequate without a divinely inspired interpreter, but that interpreter is not the Church nor the pope but the prophet, the new Elijah, the new Daniel, to whom is given the key of David to open the book sealed with seven seals.¹

To Faḍlullāh, the key to open the seven sealed book, the Koran, is a cabalistic system of letters that is expounded, by him, or by others, in the *Hidayat-nāma*, the *Jāwīdān*, and in the *Mahram-nāma*. and elsewhere. The universe is eternal and moves by rotation. God's visage is imperishable and is manifest in Man, the best of forms—*zuhūr kibriyā*. Each atom is a manifestation of Deity (Koran XXVIII, 88). Faḍlullāh is the manifestation of God's force after Adam (to whom were revealed nine letters), Moses (to whom were revealed twenty-two letters) Jesus (to whom were revealed twenty-four letters) and Muḥammad (to whom were revealed twenty-eight letters). There is no fixed *wird*, no open *dhikr*, but rather a communal agape, a breaking of bread and a drinking of wine. The 28/32 letters are God's attributes. Adam's visage was the exact replica of the face of God and, as with the Druze, seven is a key number corresponding, as it does, to the parts of the face, the verses of the *fātiḥa* (the *bā* of which, in the *basmāla*, is the secret of the Koran itself since the dot in the *bā* is 'Ali who is the secret through which the revelation to Muḥammad was made known), and likewise the verbal confession of faith. Man is a universe (*kawn jāmi'*) in whom all is resumed. He is the supreme copy (*nusḥa kubrā*) and the key to the *Ḥaḳīqa*. The location of this 'supreme copy,' according to Faḍlullāh, is to be found in the substance of the letters rather than in the Imām's person. As B.S. Amor-etti has observed, Faḍlullāh's revelation is "a new type of Koranic *ta'wīl* related to what might be called the materials rather than the symbolic form in which the word as revealed was incorporated in the sacred text."²

A careful examination of the *Jāwīdān* (in this instance the Cambridge University Library copy: E.1.9.27, entitled *Commentarius Persicus in Alcoranum dictus Jawīdān Cabīr*, a manuscript purchased in Istanbul in 1681) reveals this to be so. In this text appears an inflated, yet not disorganized, kind of *ta'wīl*, with extensive Arabic passages, even whole folios, where certain Surahs are repeatedly introduced (for example, *al-Baqara*, *al-A'raf*, *Al-Imrān*), and with a concentrated comment on Islamic characters, beliefs and pillars of faith, that stem directly from holy writ (for example, Yūsuf, Hūd, the Meṣsiāh as both human and divine, the *Mi'rāj*, dreams and visions, ritual ablution, alms-giving and the Prophet himself, who is everywhere exalted). The Koran is nowhere superseded. However, it is, of necessity, explained. *Umm al-Qur'ān shifā' min kullī dā'*. An obsession with seven is to the fore and *Sūra XV, 87 (al-Hijr)* opens the entire massive work with *wa-laqaḍ ātāyānāka sab'an min al-mathānī wa-l-Qur'ān al-'azīm*, a significant quote in view of its intended parallel to the *fātiḥa*. Adam is the prototype link betwixt God and man, furthermore he is, in his corporeal form, one with the Ka'ba and the divinely created *milieu*, or 'Gaia,' of which man himself is an integral part:

Khalaqa Allāha ta'ālā ra'sa Ādama wa-jabhatahu min turba-i-l-Ka'ba wa-sadrāhu wa-zahrahu min Bayt il-Maqaḍis wa-fakhdhayhi min arq il-Yaman wa-sāqayhi min

1. See Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, (Tring, 1978), pp. 260-1.

2. 'Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods' in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 623-5.

God, Almighty, created the head of Ādam, and his forehead, from the earth of the Ka'ba, his chest and his back from Jerusalem, his two thighs from the Yemen, his two legs from the land of Egypt, his two feet from the land of Hijāz, his right hand from the land of the Arabic East and his left hand from Morocco and the Maghrib.

Much of the substance of Faḍlullāh's cabalistic scheme, insofar as its complexities may be understood, was current in Sufi circles well over a century before his lifetime. Another prominent figure in the elaboration of such a system was Abraham Ben Samuel, Abū'l-'Āfiya (1240-1291), who besides being a cabalist, composed in 1273 mystical essays and lived at Parras in Greece. There he wrote his Prophetic books signed with a pseudonym which was the numerical value of his name. According to Gershom Scholem, who has contributed to the article on Abraham Ben Samuel in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, the latter "based his ecstatic mysticism on rational foundations." Scholem adds, furthermore, that "points of contact can be found between it and the doctrine of the Muslim Sufis at the height of its development."¹ Speculations and facts regarding the debt owed by Faḍlullāh and Hurūfism (and by Sufism in general) to this particular source have been aired for some time and have been commented upon afresh in Abdilkadir Haas's recent book *Die Bektaşi*.² That Faḍlullāh, his successor, 'Ali al-A'lā (d. 822/1419), and other members of their fraternity, were acquainted with a source of this kind would seem to be a reasonable assumption.

Diffused ideas of cabalism they were, far beyond the Hurūfiyya, and independent of Faḍlullāh's peculiar contribution. Annemarie Schimmel in her 'Letter Symbolism in Sufi literature'³ has furnished a number of examples indicating how such ideas predated Faḍlullāh, and how they continued in unexpected corners long after he had written the *Jāwīdān*. She herself remarks: "The idea that the face of the Beloved is like a marvelously written manuscript of the Koran is widely accepted even outside Hurūfī circles... Man is the perfect copy of the Well-preserved Tablet, in which all wisdom and beauty take shape."

Hurūfī-type speculations and fancies, lingered on in both courtly and plebeian, but especially artisan, circles in Mamlūk Egypt (centered around the *tekke* of Kaynuseh Sulṭān). Nesīmī's poetic bouquets of Faḍlullāh's doctrines were admired by Sulṭān Qānsawh al-Ghawrī (1500-16), who venerated the memory of both martyred Nesīmī and Hallāj. Among the most popular of the Mamlūk era's literary works, its recension of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, shows structural or symbolic traces of these *bātinī* sources, according to Ferial Jabouri Ghazoul who comments:

1. *Ibid.* pp. 150-1 and 154, and Haas, *Die Bektaşi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-67. See Gershom Scholem, 'Die Jüdische Mystik in ihren Hauptströmungen,' (Frankfurt, 1980), p. 145ff. A composer, such as Jacob Obrecht (1430-1505) was indebted to the speculations of Pico della Mirandola who, in Renaissance Italy, penetrated the Cabbalah. Numerical progressions and the symbolics of figures and of names are to be found in Obrecht's Masses.

2. *Ibid.*, Haas, pp. 150-64.

3. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 411-25.

The one thousand and one can stand equally for the New Era. In Islamic civilization, the millennium has a particular appeal to the masses who feel that after the millennium the promised Mahdi comes and a new era of justice and benevolence begins. Shahr-azad's condition is transformed on the night after the thousandth, ushering in a new regime and a new life. The significance of one thousand and one as leading to metamorphosis is exploited in some of the esoteric Islamic sects. The Truth worshippers (*Ahl al-Haqiq*) who are prevalent among the Kurds of Iran and Iraq, and of whom the first substantial account was given by Gobineau in *Trois ans en Asie*, possess a rigorous theological system based on the central belief of metempsychosis. Human beings supposedly pass through one thousand and one incarnations. Here are some quotations from their Shaykh, Nur Ali-Shah Elahi: "Each soul has a path to trace and this consists in dominating one thousand and one 'corporeal habits'. Our souls, we who belong to the human species, once the one thousand and one vestments have been donned, no more appear in human guise."¹

The number one thousand and one suggests a terminal transformation.

Ḥurūfī beliefs of an Ismā'īlī or a cabalistic origin were a very important element in Persian and Turkish poetry of the later Timurid period. It is not certain that Qāsim-i al-Anwār (d. 835/1432) was a wholehearted Ḥurūfī. His Sufism was catholic, his poetry akin to that of Maghrībī (d. 810/1408). Browne, however, has translated verses by Qāsim that indicate both a taste for numerology, as well as a deep-rooted belief in the divinity in every atom.

*"In six days" runs God's Word, while Seven
Marks the divisions of the Heaven,
Then at the last "He mounts His Throne,"
Nay, Thrones, to which no limit's known.
Each mote's a Throne, to put it plain,
Where He in some new Name doth reign.
Know this and so to Truth attain!"*

In his study of the poetry of Nesimi of Baghdad, or Tabriz, (d. 820/1417-18 in Aleppo) Gibb pointed out that already by the 15th century cabballism was subordinate to those features that united the Ḥurūfīs with main-stream Sufism; particularly to the example of Ḥallāj and to the self-revelation of God in humanity framed within the physical form of man. He writes:

It is therefore the Ḥurūfī element in his work that really gives Nesimi his unique position. Being a true poet, he selected and presents almost exclusively that aspect of Ḥurūfism which alone is capable of poetic treatment. Except for a stray line or two, chiefly in the quatrains, where the mystic import of the numbers 28 and 32 is suggested, the cabballistic side of the doctrine is largely ignored. What took captive Nesimi's imagination, and what he lovingly dwells on in every poem in his book, is the conception embodied a little while ago. The root of this conception, the self-revelation of God in humanity, is a perfectly familiar Sufistic idea; but to the Sufi the fair human form is only a mirror in which is reflected the Divine Beauty, and so the love which such mirror inspires is merely the 'Typal Love' which is but the 'Bridge' to the 'Real Love', that is, to the love of the Reality shadowed therein. To the Ḥurūfī, on the other hand, the fair human form is not simply a reflection, it is an incarnation

1. *The Arabian Nights: A Structural Analysis*, (Cairo: UNESCO, 1980), pp. 62-8.

2. See E. G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*, III, pp. 474-81.

H. T. Norris *The Ḥurūfī Legacy of Faḍlullāh of Astarābād* 95
of the Deity; and the love which it inspires is not a mere 'bridge' to something else, but is itself a goal.¹

Rafī'ī, brought to the truths of the Ḥurūfīyya by his teacher, Nesimi, expressed his thoughts in his *Bisḥārat-nāma* (812/1409), a work that provides a typically orthodox and authoritative account of all Ḥurūfī beliefs, giving equal emphasis to all the tenets of the sect, lauding Faḍlullāh himself, embracing his cabballisms and accepting the *Jāwīdān-nāma* as the uniquely divine revelation.² Farther on in his work, Rafī'ī composed a panegyric on Faḍlullāh, the founder of his sect. Whatever exists, he says, are but the Divine Names; but the Most Great Name is he, he who showed to us the true path. All that exists is the Word, but the Sultan of the Word is he, to wit, Faḍlullāh, the Grace of God, the Lord of the Worlds, he to whose *Jāwīdān-nāma* the poet refers the reader for proofs of what he has just advanced.

Nesimī's love of beauty and of Ḥallāj and of *muwashesḥahāt* on God's unity had other followers besides Rafī'ī, Timinnā'ī, Uṣūlī and Sārī 'Abdullāh Çelebi, Niyāzī, and Kani. He inspired Azeri poets and popular poets of the Jamisseries, poets such as Ḥabībī and Ruṣenī.³

It is probably in the Balkans, above all, in the remote and majestic mountain terrain of Shqipëria and its borderlands, that the legacy of Faḍlullāh survived the longest, cherished, as it was within the bosom of the Bayrāmīyya-Hamzawīyya and especially in the literature and pictorial art of the Bektāshīyya. Degrand visited the stronghold of that Order (founded, circa 1700, by Bābā 'Alī Khurāsānī) at Kruija, once the capital of Skanderbeg, around 1900.⁴ He learned that 'Fazil Yezdan' of Khurāsān was the 'master' of Ḥājī Bektāsh. He was the author of the *Jāwīdān* and he was a follower of Ḥallāj. His informants had added that the *Jāwīdān* was the book of rules of their Order. Faḍlullāh had died before its completion. It was Ḥājī Bektāsh or 'Alī al-A'la who had completed it.

How the Bektāshīyya became the principal depository of the Ḥurūfīyya is far from clear. Whether Bālim Sultān the reformer, was a Ḥurūfī is doubtful. What is known is briefly set out by Irène Mélikoff in her 'Ahmed Yesevi and Turkic Popular Islam,' where she writes:

1. E. J. W. Gibb, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-68.

2. *Ibid*, page 375.

3. In every respect the most recent major contribution to Ḥurūfī studies, especially the legacy of Ḥurūfism, and that of the poet, Nesimi more especially, is the book by Kathleen R. F. Burriell, *The Quatrains of Nesimi: Fourteenth Century Turkic. Ḥurūfī, with annotated translations of the Turkic and Persian quatrains from the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Ms* (Mouton: The Hague/Paris, 1972).

In her fifth chapter, especially pp. 72-84, she surveys the varied poets, Sufis and men of letters who were influenced by Nesimi, and through him by Ḥurūfī concepts, for example: Niyāzī (d. 1693), the founder of the Mīsrīye branch of the Khalwā'iyya, Muhyī'l-Dīn 'Abdal, Gūl Baba (Mīsalī), Ibrahim Efendi (Oğlanlar Şeyhī), Kani, Refī'i, Uṣūlī, Ruḥī, Vīrānī, Ḥallīlī of Diyarbekir, Sultan Süleyman, the Law-giver, Bakī (1526-1600), poets of Khurāsān and Transoxania, a number of Azeri poets, for example Ḥabībī (1515-19), Fakrī (d. 1467), Halālī (Şah İsmail d. 1594), Ruṣenī (d. 1486). The latter resided in Baku where he became a dervish under Şīrvānī Seyit Yahya.

There is hardly a page in her study that does not illustrate the impact of Faḍlullāh's ideas through Nesimi, within the Near and Middle East and beyond it.

4. *Souvenirs de Haute Albanie* (Paris, 1901) pp. 228-36.

In Anatolia and Rumelia the name of Ahmed Yesevi is connected with the Bektashis. Hadji Bektash was certainly a heterodox dervish; 'Ashk-pashazade is there to state it and he is well aware of the facts, being himself a descendant of Baba Ilyas-i Horasani whom Hadji Bektash is said to have followed. But the heterodox elements of the Bektashis were still to be developed and amplified after the XVI th century, where the order acquired a syncretistic character through the addition of Hurufi doctrines and the incorporation of the Kizilbash belief in the divinity of 'Ali. To these elements must be added the belief in reincarnation and sometimes metempsychosis, but these creeds may have existed amongst the pre-Islamic Turks.¹

When Birge followed in Degrand's steps he found the Hurufi books listed and stacked side by side with the Bektaşhiyya works in the library of Sulo Bey Çela of Tirana. The doctrines, he concluded were deemed distinct. A Bektashi might find them edifying, inspiring, uplifting and helpful. There was however no obligation for him to follow the Hurufi path. Faḍlullāh's revelation left its mark on those who studied in the libraries of the Albanian tekkes. The Hurufiyya are especially notable in such poets as Hoxhe Dobi of Gjirokastra, where certain Sufi tekkes were founded, circa 1700, by 'Aşim Baba. His verse is permeated by its doctrines with reference to 'Ali's presence in the *basmala*, to Adam's in the letter *Alif*, and, in its form clearly built on Hurufi models. The great poet Naim of Frashër (the ash tree) (1846-1900) had, as a boy, attended the tekke (founded by Nasib Tâhir Baba) amidst the wildly beautiful terrain that was to fill his verses and to stir his patriotic heart. A master of Persian verse, lettered also in Turkish and Arabic, he absorbed the teachings of Faḍlullāh, just as he absorbed *mathnawis* of Nesimi, and verses of the earlier Albanian Bektaşhi poets of Kosovo. In his *Flowers of Summer (Lulë e Vërësë)* published in Bucharest in 1890, Naim's couplets, in Mann's translation, re-expressed those same epiphanic concepts, with which we have been particularly concerned:

*The road that leads to God's own mind
Is nothing more than of mankind.
If man holds man in high esteem,
He has revered his Maker's name.
Look in our hearts, and He is there;
Our hearts are homes with Him to share.
When God first sought to show His face
He made mankind His dwelling-place.
A man who knows his inward mind
Knows what God is. It is mankind.²*

Man 'arafa nafsahu 'arafa rabbahu

1. See Irène Mélikoff's article in *Utrecht Papers on Central Asia*, (Utrecht Turkological Series, No 2, 1987), p. 90. The Hurufi face of the Bektaşhiyya among the Albanians, in essence was neither Sunni nor Shi'ite. Hurufi ideas penetrated the Balkans and Eastern Europe independent of that specific order which had adopted it. Traces of Hurufi doctrine have been found in the ideas and beliefs of the tiny Polish Lithuanian Orthodox Tatar community and in other scattered Muslim communities in the Soviet Union.

2. See Stuart E. Mann, *Albanian Literature* (London, 1955) p. 41. As for the West (and here a detailed study of what elements in Baha'ism share some common ground with Faḍlullāh's doctrines has yet to be undertaken I suspect) it would be very hard indeed to find a direct or an indirect inspiration amongst the sundry translations of Oriental literature, Sufi poetry included, that had such an impact on Western literature during the last century.

1. *Continued from the previous page:*

Yet, in a way, the kernel of Faḍlullāh's non-cabalist message is nowhere better expressed in English, though unwittingly, than in the writings of Thomas Carlyle, who, in a lecture delivered in May 1840, and published in his *Sartor Resartus, On Heroes and Hero Worship*, phrased his firmly held beliefs in words of a high artistry. That Carlyle had a passing acquaintance with Sufism is hardly surprising in view of his friendship with Edward Lane and his pioneer essay, advanced for its time, on the Prophet Muḥammad. However, Carlyle had no true sympathy for the Muslim's mystical quest. This is readily apparent from the following passage:

"Religion," I said: "for, properly speaking, all true Work is Religion: and whatsoever Religion is not Work may go and dwell among the Brahmans, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that of the old Monks, *Labore est Orare*, 'Work is Worship'."

Only slightly more sympathetic is the following description of a "Whirling Dervish," both of these passages being quoted from *Past and Present*, ed. A. M. D. Hughes, (Oxford, 1858; 1918) pp. 181 & 232:

Again, are not Spinning-Dervishes an eloquent emblem, significant of much? Hast thou noticed him, that solemn-visaged Turk, the eyes shut; dingy wool mantle circularly hiding his figure; — bell-shaped; like a dingy bell set spinning on the tongue of it? By centrifugal force the dingy wool mantle heaves itself; spreads more and more, like upturned cup widening into upturned saucer: thus spins he, to the praise of Allah and advantage of mankind.

Elsewhere (*Heroes and Hero Worship* [Dent: London 1940] pp. 247-8), however, Carlyle's sentiments undoubtedly come close to those of the Hurufi's, though the conception of the idealistic vision that he espoused was not Faḍlullāh's and owed much to Novallis, to Fichte and to Goethe:

But now if all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. You have heard of St. Chrysostom's celebrated saying in reference to the Shekinah, or Ark of Testimony, visible Revelation of God, among the Hebrews: "The true Shekinah is Man!" Yes, it is even so: this is no vain phrase; it is veritably so. The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I," — ah, what words have we for such things? — is a breadth of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? "There is but one Temple in the Universe," says the devout Novallis, "and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!" This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well-meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact; the expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles, the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so.

On a link between Edward Cowell (d 1903), Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Cambridge, Edward Fitzgerald and Thomas Carlyle, see Peter Avery, 'Fitzgerald's Persian Teacher and Hâfez,' in *Sufi: A Journal of Sufism* (Issue 6, Summer, 1990), pp. 10-15.

P/S Recent thinking about the relationship between the Ismā'īlīs, the *bāḥinīyya* tradition, Persian Sufism and the beliefs of Faḍlullāh and his supporters and his successors in the Nuḳṭawīyya (Ahl-i-Nuḳṭa), may be read in Farhad Daftary's book, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, (Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 455-457.