CHAPTER - II

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS UPHEAVALS IN IRAN
Religious Policy of Timur

By the ninth century A.H., the society over which Timur ruled had virtually entirely turned to Islam. However, conversion to Islam did not eradicate the prevalence of pre-Islamic, even anti-Islamic superstitions, beliefs and practices at almost all levels of society. Muslims were of course divided among several sects, chief among them being the Sunni and the Shia.

Timur, himself a Muslim, was more zealous and enthusiastic, than any other Muslim ruler or Caliph, and never shied in showing his devotion towards Islam. He implicitly declared himself the successor of the prophet and claimed to be the eighth restorer of Islamic faith. He professed to have established the foundation of his Sultanate (empire) on the morality and religion of Islam, as he himself says: "And the first regulation which my heart dictated unto me, was the promulgation of the true faith, and the support of the sacred tenets of Muhammad (Gods' peace be upon him). And I encouraged the progress of the holy laws and the religion of Islam through all the cities and the provinces, and the Kingdoms of the earth; and I adorned my empire by the sacred laws". ¹ We must of course keep in mind that announcement of adherence to the tenets of Islam by a ruler upon his accession also fulfilled a social expectation; its value as a policy statement was rather moderate.

In support of his declaration that he was sincerely devoted to the Islamic tenets, he founded charitable institutions which were given to the charge of those pious Muslims who claimed to be the descendants of the Holy Family of Ali,

¹. Turbati, Nizukat-i-Timuri, p.174.
son-in-law of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as he says in his Tuzuk:

"Thus I regulated the promulgation of the true faith, I appointed a man of holiness (Sadr) and of illustrious dignity, to watch over the conduct of the faithful, regulate the manner of the endowments, and appoint superiors in holy offices; and establish in every city and in every town a judge of insight, and a doctor learned in the sacred law, and a supervisor of the market (mohtaseb), of the weights and measures: and that he might ordain pensions and salaries for the descendants of the prophet, and for superior ecclesiastics, and for holy men, and for men of knowledge."\(^1\)

"And I established a judge for the army and a judge for the subjects and I sent to every province and territory an instructor in the law, to forbid the faithful to practise those things which are forbidden, and to lead them to the path of truth."

"And I commanded them to build places of worship and monasteries in every city; and that they should erect hospices for the reception of travellers on the high roads, and that they should make bridges across the rivers."

"And I appointed ecclesiastics and religious teachers in every city, to instruct the followers of Islam in the abstruse and the fundamental principles of our holy law; and to preach to them the doctrine of religion together with the holy traditions and the sacred commentaries upon them."\(^2\)

"And I ordained the Sadrus-sudur (the chief judge) should lay before the Sayourghal (grant given from the crown land) of the descendants of the prophet, 

1. Ibid. p.176.
2. Ibid pp.176-178.
of the stipendiaries, and pensioners, and that the ecclesiastical judge should communicate unto me all ecclesiastical concerns, and that the civil affairs should be laid before me by the civil judge".  

The clergy supported this religious policy and approved of it and declared him the eighth restorer of Islam as mentioned earlier. They went so far as to bracket him with the earlier restorers who appeared at the turn of every century in the following manner: (1) Umar Abdul Aziz (2) Ma'mum (3) Almuqtadir billah (4) Azudud daula Dailami (5) Sultan Sanjar (6) Ghazan Khan (7) Uljayto Khan and (8) Timur himself.

Timur had inherited this religious policy from earlier rulers of Persia, i.e., the Saljouqi dynasty (429 A.H./1063 A.D--485 A.H/1092 A.D), in order to prove himself the lawful ruler of Muslims and the Islamic states. It is also worth mentioning here, that the Saljouqis were not the first to introduce themselves as the lawful rulers of Islamic countries, but they had also acquired this concept from the Ghaznavis, who had sent their credentials to Abbasi Caliphs and obtained some title to declare themselves the Sultans (the rulers under caliphate of Baghdad). They ruled as arrogant sovereigns by ignoring the weak caliphs, who were merely puppets in their hands; they claimed to be the lawful heirs, ignoring even the caliphs who also claimed to be lawful rulers, being the descendants of the family of the prophet. The Ghaznavis assumed unlimited

1. Sadrus Sudur was the supervisor of the affairs related to the descendants of the holy prophet, the incharge of trusts, and all legal matters. Under Sadrus Sudur functioned judges (Qazi) and civil judges (Qazi-i-Ihdas). These offices also existed in the pre-Timurid Persia. (See Turbati,Ibid, pp.179 and 304). In the same manner, the mohtaseb was also the supervisor of religious affairs, he looked after the public affairs, by maintaining law and order in the empire, particularly in public places and on highways.
power under the titles of the shadow of God and the vicegerent of God on the earth. To wrest even religious authority from the hands of the waning caliphate, they assumed charge of crushing all reformers accusing them of being propagators of heretical thoughts in the tenets of Islam. With this in view they crushed two sects, known as Qaramathian and Mubtadea (the innovators). This then was the tradition that Timur had inherited, a tradition reinforced by his claim to be the eighth restorer of Islam for the reason that the caliphate of Baghdad had been ransacked by Holagu Khan (656 A.H/1258 A.D). He could thus combine in himself the power derived from both temporal and spiritual wellsprings.

As an extension, Timur's conquest of several vast territories were proclaimed as Ghazva (holy war, in which prophet or any of his descendant was present), so that he might be called ghazi (the champion of Islam). Timur's attack on Hindustan was thought to be a Ghazva. Every war campaign that he carried on in this country was therefore, called Ghazva\(^1\) by Nizam uddin Shami. The contemporary historian reinforces Timur's claim of being a holy warrior: The main aim of his campaigns, observes the historian was "to cleanse the region (of India) of corrupt infidels". In the same manner, in the last days of his life, he attacked China and named it the holy war against the infidels of Khata.\(^2\)

When Timur resolved to attack China, he called the council of his nobles and addressed them thus:

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"Now, I have made up my mind that, I shall persist in the job which could compensate for all the sins. A good deed that cannot be done by every one is war with the infidels, exterminate the dualists and the irreligious persons. This task requires full power and strength. It is advisable that the same army should proceed towards China and Khata that eradicated the crimes, because, that region belongs to infidels and it is proper that the holy wars should be waged there against them, so that I may ruin the places of idol worship (Viharas) and fire temples. There should be built mosques and places for the worship of God."¹

But conquering territories for unprooting infidelity was not the only preoccupation of Timur. he was equally unsparing in the conquest, of regions which had Muslim rulers. For this too he had ready justification, couched in entirely political terms; suppression of turmoil and sediitiion. Timur's focus on the religious sanction of his political power was hardly new but he nevertheless gave it an accent that was rather pronounced. It became the legacy for his successors.

Subsequently, when Timur's son Shahrukh, came to power he laid much emphasis on this idea that Samarqandi, his contemporary historian, wrote about it in these words: "(His Majesty, Shahrukh) laid extreme stress upon extirpating the prohibited deeds and unlawful acts." He further wrote that " He was the only person who could be called true restorer and in fact he restored the faith".²

¹. Ibid.

On the whole wherever Timur and later his successors established their
governments they gave specific significance to Islamic rituals, laid stress on
paying homage and respect to saints and scholars, and this practice continued in
every country and region. It is also worth mentioning here that the concept that
Timur was the restorer of faith in the eighth century got further strengthened by
his emphasis on reverence to religion, religious rituals and restoration of faith.
The descendants of Timur were bound to believe him the eight restorer of Faith.
Although, they knew that after the downfall of Abbasi Caliphs in 656 A.H/1258
A.D., the seat of Caliphate had shifted to Egypt and was in the hands of
Mamluks (1254-1811 A.D), they (the Timurids) did not recognise the spiritual
supremacy of the Mamluk on the specific ground that they were not the
descendants of the family of prophet Muhammad. This prompted Timur to
declare himself the eighth restorer of Faith and hence his contemporary
historians started to attribute to him epithets like Khilafat Panah (protector of
caliphate) and Khilafat panahi (protection for caliphate)\(^\text{1}\) together with the other
titles that he had adopted. In the same way, the successors of Timur and their
court historians resorted to the practice and prefixed such titles to his name. In
the court chronicles, Shahrukh has been mentioned as the lawful heir to the
office of caliphate,\(^\text{2}\) and was considered the morning sun, which had risen in

\(^{1}\) Shami, Ibid, pp. 171 and 269.

the realm of the caliphate. In the same manner Sultan Abu Said Mirza was entitled as His Majesty the refuge of caliphate.

Some salient features of politico religious movements

Before speaking about politico religious movements of the time of Timur and his successors we should keep in mind some important points given below:

1. Proclamation to be Mahdi by those leaders who launched Darvish movement.

All the Muslims firmly believe that there will appear a Saviour named Mahdi (a guide deliverer from miseries and sins). This is also confirmed by the verses of glorious Quran. "God has promised ---." He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: ....

Prophet Muhammad has also forecast the appearance of a saviour who will come with Christ, some time before the Doomsday.

1. Ibid.

2. Samargandi, Ibid, p.5 From p.1019 this title has been mentioned time and again. It is worth mentioning that Timurid rulers, along with the titles like, Khilafat panah and Khilafat panahi, used Turkish titles also, among them the most prominent was "Khaqan". It is for this reason that in all the court chronicles, Shahruk has been called as the Khaqan Sa'id (the blessed Tartaric King) and Sultan Husain Baysunqur, was addressed as "Khaqan Mansur" (the victorious Khaqan). See Mir Khand, Rauzat us Safa, Khayyam publication, 1339 A.H./1960 A.D., Vol.7, pp.3 to 5


Ali has also spoken in one of his sermons that when tyrannies, oppression, crimes and sins will reach their peak there will appear, one of the descendants of the prophet Muhammad who will relieve the oppressed people from hardships and will maintain social equity and justice in the world.¹

Hafiz Shirazi, the celebrated Persian poet, also gives glad tidings in his ghazal (lyric poem):

\begin{align*}
&Muzhda aye dil ki Masiha nafasi mi ayad \\
&ke ze anfas-i-Khushash buy-i-Kasi mi ayad \\
&Ze gham O dard makun nala O faryad ki doush \\
&Zada am falsi O faryad rasi mi ayad²
\end{align*}

[Oh, heart! this is a glad tiding (to you) that there would appear (a person), possessing miraculous breath of Christ. His sweet smelling breath is giving the good news of his arrival.

Do not make laments and shouts with grief and anxiety, because last night I got this good omen that their would appear one who would redress our grievances.]

Whenever the tyrannical acts of a particular class (i.e., the ruling class) reached their climax in a society, the reformers of that society took advantage of these omens and gave religious tinge to their political movements to get the support of common people by exploiting their religious sentiments. Some saints who wanted politico social reform in the society also claimed to be Mahdi,

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¹.   \textit{Nahjul Bala\=a}, Ali bin Abu Talib, Compiled by Faizul Islam, Tehran, Hikmat. 147.


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Though they did not bear such miraculous signs which have been predicted in Islamic traditions about the appearance of Mahdi, but as they wanted to launch their movement against the oppressive ruling class, therefore, they used this concept as crowbar for the moral uplift of their society.

The pioneers of Hurufi, Nurbakhshi, Nuqtavi and the other movements alike took advantage of the appearance of the predicted Mahdi and revolted against tyrannical behaviour of the oppressing class to maintain social equity and justice. For this cause they lived saintly life. Fazl Ullah Naimi Astarabadi made himself a model of piety and was so strict in his conduct that he did not take even his bread from any person. It was for this reason he became known Saiyid Fazl Ullah Halalkhor (the eater of lawful bread). He used his pious conduct as a sharp weapon against the oppressive conduct of Timur and his successors.

Timur as well as his successors took positive attitude to neutralize the effect of these movements. For this purpose they posed themselves not only highly religious minded but also the protector of Islamic faith.

Timur declared himself endowed with authority and championship of Islam, which on one hand served as a weapon to encounter these movements and on the other gave sanctity to his rule all over the world of that age. This viewpoint also helped him to expand his territories by annexing other countries by subduing them.

It should also be pointed out here that to exploit the sentiments of the people, this policy had already been put into practice by the rulers who lived before Timur. For example, Mansur, the Abbasi Caliph named one of his sons Mahdi and propagated that he was the same person (Mahdi) for whose
appearance people were anxiously waiting for long. The common people believed it blindly and promised to him their loyalty.

In Islamic traditions all the fictitious persons who claimed to be Mahdi have been marked a Dajjal\(^1\) (the single eyed imposter) and it has been predicted that some time before the doomsday there will appear many persons to declare themselves Mahdi, as the celebrated Persian poet Hafiz says:

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\textit{Kujast an Sufi -i- Dajjal Chashm, mulhid shakl}
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\[
\textit{begu besuz ki Mahdi-i-din panah rasid.}^{2}
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(Where is that Sufi, who bears a single eye like Dajjal and tell him that, he should consume himself (in the fire of jealousy), because Mahdi, the protector of the faith has appeared).

The Safavi order, in the form of purely a sufistic movement, was started by Sheikh Safi Uddin of Ardbil. But, at a later stage, particularly during the time of Sheikh Junaid, commonly known as Sultan Junaid completely changed its course and became simply a political movement, which continued in the religious covering. Then, there came a time when Shah Ismail declared himself Mahdi to materialize his political objects. But, unfortunately he proved very tyrannical and oppressive to his own people.

It is also worth mentioning here, that the religious beliefs of the pioneers of some of these movements, like Hurufi and Nuqtavi, did not accord well with Islamic faith. From some sources, of course recorded by their opponents, it is revealed that their concept about God, Day of Resurrection, human beings and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Derivid from Syriac language, pronounced Daggala, a lier.}
  \item \textit{Lesan ul Ghayb Hafiz Shirazi,} Ibid, p.238.
\end{itemize}
Imams was quite different from that given by Islam. It is a hard and fast rule of Islam that if a person deviates from its fundamental principles, he is declared any unbeliever or infidel. The religious beliefs of the founders of the above mentioned movements and their followers will be fully discussed in the following pages.

It should also be pointed out here, that in every period of history a horrifying incrimination has always been existing in Persian society, which was applied by the ruling class, with the help of its puppets to crush, rightly or wrongly, its opponents. Since the rise of Sassanis (224-652 A.D.) down to the extinction of Suljuqi power (431-682 A.D./1039-1283 A.D.) many liberty seekers and non-conformists were charged as atheists and therefore, put to death, either by cutting their throat, or by hanging, or burnt alive or thrown in the prisons. Manes 9215-276 A.D.) raised voice against Sassani kings and demanded equity and social justice, but was killed by Bahram I (272-276 A.D.).

The same practice was followed by Abbasi caliphs (136-656 A.H./753-1258 A.D.), particularly during the reign of caliph Mansur (136-158 A.D./753-774 A.D.). In his time racial discrimination between Arabs and the Persian, called sarcastically Mawali (the masters) became extremely wide. It should also be pointed out here, that the Ummayya (660-750 A.D.) caliphate was overthrown by Abbasi, with the help of the Persians, but after coming to power they also became enemies of the Persians. During the reign of Jafar al Mutavakkil (232-247 A.H./846-861 A.D.) differences became so wide that he sought help of Turks to suppress the Persians. When the Persians demanded equity and social justice, on the principles of Islam, they were charged with
Manichism, or dualism and therefore were declared apostates. Mansur started the campaign to annihilate at least the prominent Persians and after him, his successor, Mahdi (158-169 A.H./774-785 A.D.) appointed an officer, entitled *Saheb ul Zanadiqa* (the incharge of the apostate), whose duty was to scrutinize the Persians and kill those alleged to be apostate.

Timur, in crushing, suppressing and annihilating his opponents was no less than any of his predecessors. In his time Hurufis were the victim of his tyrannical and oppressive acts. They were either charged as infidel or apostate and were declared as deserving capital punishment by the mere puppet clergy class, associated with his court.

Nuqtavis also met with the same fate. Their leader one of the disciples of Fazl Ullah Hurufi, declared himself *Maud-i-Ajam* (the promised dot) to get freedom for the Persians, the desire that they cherished since long. But, he was pronounced guilty and put to death.

The Sufi movement, during Safavid period, followed the foot steps of its predecessors and gave practical shape to the cherished desires of their ancestors. The supporters of this movement were successful in their aim and brought political freedom to their country. But, as the Safavids, for maintaining power in their hands, crushed many human rights and many Islamic traditions, therefore they were opposed by Nuqtavis. By that time, Nuqtavis had become so powerful that they posed a threat to the Safavids. But, the ultimate result was that a large number of them were killed, being charged treacherous and many of them migrated to Hindustan to save their lives.
This can be said, in a nut shell, that the movements that came into being during Timur and his successors, took politico-social measures for restoring human rights. Some of these movements in fact, played very significant role, which shall be discussed below.

**Mystic Movements during 8th and 9th centuries A.H.**
(14th and 15th Centuries A.D.)

**INTRODUCTION**

By the end of sixth century and the beginning of seventh century A.H. (12th - 13th centuries A.D.), there came into being two great mystic orders in the Eastern and Western parts of Persia. One of them was known as Suhrawardis order and the other was called Kubravia after Najmuddin Kubra (martyred in 618 A.D./1221 A.D.). The Suhrawardis were divided into two groups. One of them belonged to Persia and the other to Multan (Pakistan). The founder of Suhrawardis order was Sheikh Shihab Uddin Abu Hafs U'mar bin Muhammad Suhrawardi (d. 632 A.H./1234 A.D.). He wrote three treatises on mysticism, namely *Alam Ul Huda, A'warif ul Maarif* and *Rashaf ul Nasaih ul Imania*. He produced many sagacious disciples. Some of them, who rose into prominence, were: Uhad Uddin Kirmani (d.678 A.H./1279 A.D.), Mushrif bin Muslih Sadi Shirazi (d.691 A.H./1291 A.D.), Sheikh Shams Uddin Safi, Sheikh Ahmed Yasvi, A'izuddin Mahmud Kashani Natanzi (the translator of Awarif ul Ma'arif, a treatise on mysticism written by Suhrawardi and the commentator of Ibn-i-Farez's laudatory poem, ending on the letter "Ta" of Persian and Arabic alphabets). A'ezuddin Mahmud and Kamaluddin Abdul Razzaq Kashani were respectively disciples of Abdul Samad Natanzi and Najib Uddin Buzghash Shirazi.
The teachings of Najmuddin Kubra were broadcast after his martyrdom by his disciples. Sheikh Ul Islam Saif Uddin Bakharzi (d.658 A.H./1259 A.D.) in Transoxiana, A'in ul Zaman Jamaluddin Gili (d.651 A.H./1350 A.D.) in Qazvin, Sheikh Sa'd Uddin Muhammad bin Moayyid bin Abdullah Hamavi (d.650 A.H./1252 A.D.) in Khurasan and Baba Kamal Jundi in Turkistan, Sheikh Razi Uddin Ali Lala (d.642 A.H./1244 A.D.) Sheikh Najmuddin Daya (d.654 A.H./1256 A.D.) and Baha Uddin Muhammad, Known as Baha-i-Valad (d.628 A.H./1230 A.D.), the father of Jalal Uddin Rumi as both of them passed their remaining years of life in Asia Minor.

The other renowned sage of this period was Sheikh Ala Ud Daula Abul Makarim Ruknuddin Ahmad biabanaki Simnani (d.736 A.H./1432 A.D.). He lived at Sufi Abad, Simnan (Persia). There he taught his students and trained disciples. He was considered one of the axes of the Kubravia order. Akhi Ali Misri, Akhi Muhammad Dihistani, Abul Barakat Taqi Uddin Ali Dusti Simnani and Khajawi Kirmani were some of his celebrated disciples. Abul Barakat Tagi Uddin Ali Dusti Simnani’s disciple was Amir Saiyid Ali bin Shihabuddin Muhammad Hamadani (d.786 A.H./1348 A.D.). He was also one of the renowned sages of his age. As he belonged to the Kubravia order, he preached its teachings all over the Indian sub-continent.

As has been mentioned earlier, after the Mongol invasion Muslims living in Asia, Asia Minor and in some parts of Africa became the victim of the ruthlessness of the heathen Mongols and then of their heartless successors, called the Timuris. The heart broken, frustrated, disappointed and disgusted people who had lost confidence in the ruling class, got solace in the sermons of these
saints. It was for this reason that monasteries became the fountain-spring of tranquility and peace of mind.

The successors of the Mongols and the Timuri rulers, having realised the charm and spell which these monasteries cast on the common man thought it wise to show their reverence to the saints for the sake of maintaining and strengthening their social position in Muslim society. Some of the saints, who became aware of their high position in the society, took this opportunity by the fore-lock and took interest in the politico-social activities, and whenever they had any conflict with any ruler, they used their spiritual might as their weapon against him.

The sages of the Shiite sect, who lived at the close of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth century A.H. (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D.), followed suit. They capitalised the situation and established on a firm footing the Shiite ideology and ultimately formed Shiite state. This was the time when a number of Shiite saints burst upon the scene, and founded some particular order. Among them the first that came into being was called Sheikhia-i-Jouria. It was founded in the Khurasan province by the supporters of Sheikh Khalifa, one of the disciples of Sheikh Ala ud Daula Simnani. This later took a political turn and started its activities under the Sarbedaran movement.¹

Sarbedaran Movement:

A comprehensive and detailed account of the Sarbedaran movement of Khurasan and Kirman provinces can be found in the history books like: Maila-i-Sadain (Abdul Razzaq Samarqandi), Zubdat ut Tawarikh (Hafiz Abbru),

¹ A body of the people who were ready to lay down their heads on the gallows.
Rauzar ul Jannat (Moinuddin Asfazari), Rauzat us Safa (Mirkhand), Habib us Siyar (Khand Mir) and Zafarnama (Sharaf Uddin Yazid) Besides, Daulat Shah Samarqandi in his Tazkirah (biographies of the poets) and Ibn-i-Batuta too in his travel account have given a full description of this movement.

The aim of this dissertation is not to write the history of this movement; the purpose is only to refer to those political, social and religious phenomena that caused this movement to come into being. This movement inspired the Mara'shis in Mazandaran and the Hurufis in Azarbajjan provinces to rise against the oppressive ruling class. This is also worth mentioning here, that the supporters of this movement and those of others such as the Baktashis, the Nurbakhshis and the Nuqtavis, being its off shoots targeted the blood shedding Chingiz, Hulaku, the beastly Mughals and that ruling class which danced to their tune. Here, this is also noteworthy that the Sarbedaran movement was the first revolutionary movement started by the Muslims of the shiite sect in Khurasan region, immediately after the death of Abu Said Bahadur Khan (736 A.H./1335 A.D.), the last king of the Ilkhanid dynasty of the Mughals.

Persia, after the death of Abu Said Khan once again became the hot-bed of political crises, under Interregnum between Ilkhani and Timuri period in the history of Iran to which a reference has already been made. During this period there was chaos all over the country; every provincial ruler in every region raised his head and tried to gain power and exercise his authority over all others. Tugha Timur Khan, one of the descendants of Uttakin, brother of Chingiz Khan Mongol was most ambitious. He was egged on by the nobles of Khurasan province to rise against Sheikh Hasan Ilkani, who had established his power and authority, some time before in the region of Khurasan.
Tugha Timur started to expand his territories from Khurasan. In the year 737 A.H./1336 A.D. he first captured Sultania region and plundered it. After that he tried to annex the whole of Khurasan. The nobles of that region, unanimously accepted his supremacy and conferred upon him the title Ilkhan. After having captured the whole of Khurasan, he paid much of his attention towards Astrabad and its surrounding areas, particularly to Radkan and Gorgan, which he respectively used as summer and winter resorts.¹

In the meantime, Amin Ud dawula Abdul Razzaq son of Khwaja Fazl Ullah Bashtini, a native of Baihaq district, Khurasan, revolted against Tugha Timur Khan. From the paternal side he was a descendant of Imam Husain son of Ali, and from his mother's side, he was linked to the family of Yahya bin Khalid Barmaki.² As a descendant of the prophet Muhammed's family, he was highly revered by the people of the region where he lived. In the life time of Abu Said Khan Bahadur, he was one of his courtiers and served as one of the governors of his kingdom. He also ruled, for some time, as the governor of Kirman province. After the death of that Ilkhani king, he rallied round him the people of Baihaq and organised them to campaign against the commissions of Khwaja Ala Uddin Muhammad, the minister of Khurasan.³ Once he proclaimed that,

³ ibid, p.22-
"Oh, you the pious Ones! a great turmoil has taken place. If we show any negligence, all of us shall be killed. It is a thousand times better to see one's head on the gallows than being killed like a coward".¹

Since then the people who followed him were known as Sarbedaran. Sheikh Khalifa Mazandarani was the first person who took the responsibility of politico-religious leadership of the oppressed people of Khurasan. He raised his voice against the cruelty of the Mughal rulers, their plundering agents and those clergymen who were merely puppets in their hands. Sheikh Khalifa, before coming on the politico-religious scene, had spent some time in the company of some enlightened persons of his time. He travelled long distances and lived with Sheikh Baluye Zahed in Amol, Sheikh Ala Uddaula Simnani in Simnan and Ghayas uddin Bahrabadi in Bahrabad.²

Sheikh Khalifa Mazandarani could not get what he expected from the lectures of his instructors. Mir Khand describing the events of his life has mentioned that, one day Sheikh Khalifa was present in the lecture of his teacher, Sheikh Alaud Daula Simnani, who had gauged the profundity of his knowledge and learning and knew well that he had reached the stage where he could argue with his teachers and differ with them in certain matters. One day Alaud Daula Simnani asked him, which school of Sunnite sect he followed? As Sheikh

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¹. Bahrabad was the town in district Jouvain, a centre of saints, called the Hamavis. There Sheikh Khalifa met and spent some time with Khwaja Ghayasuddin Hebat Ullah Hamavi.

Khalifa a deep thinker and followed the tenets of shiite sect, said, "what I am looking for is not to be found in these four schools". Sheikh Alaud Daula Simnani, was also extra-ordinarily learned and followed the Shafaii school; he did not have patience enough to hear such a blasphemous statement from his student. This statement so enraged him that he struck with the inkpot so violently against the head of Sheikh Khalifa that the head broke.¹

After that incident, Sheikh Khalifa thought it wise to migrate to Sabzewar and settled down in the locality where the Shiite Muslims were in majority. There, he started to deliver lectures in the congregational mosque of the city. The main theme of his lectures was to fight against oppression for maintaining social justice. Though, the clergy class of that city pronounced capital punishment for him but he continued his mission. At last, on the 22nd of the month of Rabi ul Awwal 736 A.H./11th November, 1335 A.D. he was surreptitiously hanged by one of the arches of the mosque and thus he attained martyrdom.²

The movement started by Sheikh Khalifa and which took his life, was carried out by his disciple Sheikh Hasan Jouri. He organised all the disciples of Sheikh Khalifa, called Darvish, and took the oath of loyalty to their leader. He equipped these Darvishes with arms and established himself firmly in the cities of Nishabour, Abivard Mash-had, Herat and Balkh. These darvishes, furious and fearless started to challenge the extortionist Mughals, and resolved to crush all the Turks and Tartars and put them to rout from the soil of Persia for ever.

The revolutionary ideas that the Sarbedaran had in their minds, are reflected in the following Persian verse:

_Az bim-i-Sinan-i-Sarbedaran ta hashr_

_Yak Turk digar Khima be Iran nazadi_

(For the dread of the spear of Sarbedaran, no Turk ever have the cheek to pitch his tent in Iran). Now Sarbedaran had become so powerful and had extended their power so much that they killed, in battle Khwaja Jalaloddin, one of the associates of Alauddin Muhammad, the grand vizir of Khurasan province. They captured Sabzevar in the year 738 A.H./1333 A.D. and seated Amir Abdul Razzaq on the throne, but, as he was cruel and tyrannical he was killed the same year by his brother, Amir Wajihuddin Masud.¹

Amir Wajihuddin Masud, a high ranking officer in the machinery of Sarbedaran government, always defended the interest of the oppressed and the peasantry.² He was such a great supporter of social justice that he was called an ideal man by all and sundry. In the realm of Sarbedaran, law and order was maintained so well that, if a gold or silver coin fell down on the ground in their

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¹. Sheikh Hasan Jouri wrote a detailed letter to Amir Muhammad Beg, the governor of Neshabour and Mash-had, in which he apprised him of the politico religious matters. The extracts of the same are given in the following:

...... This humble servant was invited (by the people) to visit Sabzevar, out of many districts of Khurasan (province). Their destruction, plunder barrenness and wretchedness has reached the extent that it needs to be checked (immediately). A way should be found out so that tyranny and oppression may be wiped off and the crises defused. If the measure is not taken, there will come a time when life and property of all Muslims will be absolutely destroyed" For further detail, See : Samarqandi, Ibid, pp. 149-154.

camp, no body other than its owner could dare pick it up.\textsuperscript{1} It was for this reason that the people, for their own welfare, strongly supported the revolutionary movement of Sarbedaran under the politico-religious leadership of Sheikh Hasan Juri, the enlightened thinker and the deliverer from the burden of hardships.\textsuperscript{2} In a letter to Arghun Shah he laid bare the object of his mission and also broached the reason why he wished to continue it. Sheikh Hasan Jouri made war preparations against Arghun Shah, governor of Khurasan, appointed by Tugha Timur in order to strengthen his movement and hold. When Arghun Shah was Slain, Tugha Timur sent his brother, Amir Ali, from Gorgan to Khurasan to suppress the movement. But, he was also killed.\textsuperscript{3} Tuga Timur personally came to meet the challenge, but was defeated on the bank of the Atark river.\textsuperscript{4} Afterwards, the Sarbedaran soldiers also occupied Gorgan province. In the year 743 A.H./1342 A.D., Sheikh Hasan Jouri led his


\textsuperscript{2} Now, Amir Wajihuddin Masud and his followers say that "We will stand firm for the cause in which lay the interest of Muslims. Every created being, who will speak to us the truth, shall be listen to by us. We are bound to work for the welfare of Muslims. All the leaders of the faith and the elders of the districts of Baihaq and Nishabour agree that repression of oppressoin and release of Muslims is obligatary". See: Samarqandi, Ibid, p.153.

\textsuperscript{3} Amir Mahmud bin Amir Yamin Uddin Tughraii, commonly known as Ibn-i-Yamin (d. 769 A.H./1367 A.D. belonged to the town called Faryoumad. This Persian poet belonged to the Shiia sect and mostly composed verses on moral and social reform. The revolutionary ideas of Sarbedaran too are reflected in his poetical compositions.

\textsuperscript{4} Ghor is a mountainous region lying between Herat and Ghazna. Feruzkuh was its capital city, where were the quarters of the nobles of that region.
followers, along with the renowned Persian poet Ibn-i-Yamin Faryaumadi, to attack Malik Husain Kurt, the ruler of Herat, Ghor and Gharjistan.¹

In the beginning Amir Wajihuddin was very successful in his war campaigns. But, the killing of Sheikh Hasan in the battle pronounced his defeat. After that, he made war campaigns in Mazandaran province which were rewarded with success. But, he was also killed in 745 A.H./1344 A.D. by Rustamdaran nobles.² He was succeeded by some of his followers whose names with the duration of their rule are given below:

Pahlavan Aqa Muhammad Timur (754-747 A.H./1344-1346 A.D.)³
Kulu Isfandyar (747-749 A.H./1346-1348 A.D.)⁴
Pahlavan Amir Shamsuddin Fazlullah (749-Seven month/1346 A.D.)⁵
Khwaja Yahya Karabi (735-759 A.H./1352-1367 A.D.).⁶
Pahlavan Haidar Qassab (760-761 A.H./1358-1359 A.D.).⁸

1. Gharjistan or Gharestan was the country surrounded by Herat in the East, Ghor in the West, Marv ul rud in the South and Ghazna in the North. The nobles of this region were called Ghar. Ghar is derived from Pahlavi word Gar, meaning a mountain.
3. Kulu, means the chief of a guild.
5. ibid, p.620 and Mujmal-i-Fasihi by Fasih Ahmad Khafi, edited by Mahmoud Farrukh Khorasani, p.85.


Khwaja Najmuddin Ali ruled for a longer period than others. Moayyid the last ruler held the power of Sarbedaran government in his hands for seventeen years. He was one of those chiefs of Sarbedaran state "who showed extreme enthusiasm in favour of the Shiite sect", as is observed by Samarqandi. He ordered that the name of twelve Imams should be minted on the coins. Every day he kept ready a saddled horse for Mahdi, the twelfth Imam. he believed that the Imam might come, some day, at any time and he would go with him to make campaign against the oppressors.

In Lebanon, Jabal-i-Amil was an important centre of the Shiite scholars and theologians in the 8th century A.H./15th century A.D. Khwaja Najmuddin Ali was deeply interested in strengthening his relations with that centre. For this purpose, he maintained correspondence with Sheikh Zia Uddin Makki known as Shahid-i-Awwal or the Premier Martyr (martyred on 9th of the month of Jamadi Ul Awwal 786 A.H./30th June 1384 A.D.). He was always invited to visit Sabzvar. Shahid-i-Awwal, in return of the reverence, showed by Khwaja Najmuddin, wrote Allamat al Damashqiya, a book in Arabic on jurisprudence. He dedicated it to him and sent it to Sabzevar through Shamsuddin Avi.


It is said that, during the reign of Khwaja Najmuddin people lived in peace and prosperity. He introduced the post of headman in every village. He always used simple dress. The nobles as well as the plebeians equally enjoyed his feasts. On every New Year festivities he opened the gates of his palace to the deprived and the downtrodden were allowed to take any thing they desired. In nights he used to go round the city to help the poor, particularly the widows, gave them coins or edibles.¹

Sarbedars (or Serbedaran) ruled for about forty five years and were remarkably successful in maintaining social justice, and equity all over their domain. At that time the city of Sabzevar flourished very much and became an important trade centre. In prosperity, magnificence and gradeur it could compete with any flourishing city of Central Asia. They remained as long as they were united. But, just as they formed two groups and came in conflict with each other, they lost their state and authority. The ruling group was moderate, whereas the other group was very much theoretical and fire-brand. It had the support of the peasantry and of various guilds. Its main aim was social justice, and the main prop were those Dervishes who strictly followed the principles of Sheikh Khalifa and Sheikh Hasan Jouri.

These two parallel currents of ideas continued till the total down-fall of the Sarbedars state. But, during the time of Pahalvan Hasan Damaghani (762-766 A.H./1360-1364 A.D.) it took the form of a civil war and there came a time when Khwaja Ali Muayyid, the last ruler of Sarbedaran state and the leader of the moderate group came in conflict with Darvish Aziz Mujeddi, the strict

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follower of the revolutionary principles of Sheikh Hasan Jouri, Darvish Aziz Mujeddi political activities were checked and finally he was murdered. After that Khwaja Ali Muayyid challenged the supremacy of Sheikh Hasan. For this propose he brought into limelight his tomb and the burial place of his disciple, Sheikh Khalifa.  

As a reaction to this measure the revolutionary group, under the leadership of Aziz Mujeddi disciple, Darvish Ruknuddin launched another revolutionary movement, that was crushed by the leader of the moderate group, the ruler of Sarbedars. Consequently Khwaja Ali Mu-ayyid, moderate in his attitude, lost the support of the common people. It was for this reason that he was defeated by the ruler of Herat and lost all the occupied areas, including the city of Nishabour.

The downfall of the Sarbedars power has been described by Ibn-i-Shah in these words:

"When Timur, the Lame, entered Sabzvar, there he met Sharif Muhammad (whom he has mentioned as the chief of Sarbedars and who was known for his shrewdness) and said to him that he had gone there only to see him. 'Tell me how can I release the regions that lie under Khurasan (province) and by which way I can regain them? By what means I can be successful in this difficult task and how I' Timur asked him, 'can put my step in this uneven path'?

Sharif Muhammed, in the beginning was reluctant to tell, but at last on the insistence of Timur, told him about Khwaja Ali-Mu-ayyid. He also sent him the message that when the messenger of Timur reached, he should not hesitate to submit. Finally Khwaja Ali warmly received Timur, and even minted coins in his name."

The surrender of Khwaja Ali Muayyid was reckoned by the sarbedars as an act of treachery and his followers were not prepared to submit to the imposed rule of a stranger. It was for this reason that in the year 785 A.H./1383 A.D. there was a general revolt against Timur, under the leadership of Sheikh Daud Sabzevari, which was crushed badly and Sabzvar surrendered on the 1st of the month of Ramazan (11th of the month of August) of the same year. Timur ordered a general massacre of the people of that city, because they had put up a stiff resistance. About two thousand persons were charged guilty and the feet of the commanders were fastened tightly and were made to stand in a circle. Then the bricks were laid to make the wall. After this brutal action, he ordered that the strong citadel of sabzevar should be completely ruined.

Though, the rule of Sarbedars did not last long. Yet the sacrifices made by Sheikh Khalifa and Sheikh Hasan Jouri might not to be underestimated. It was sincerity and devotion of these two leaders for another movement in Kirman under the same banner. Subsequently, in the year 775 A.H./1373 A.D., during

1. Ibn Arabshah, A'jaeb ul Maqdour, pp.28 to 31.
the reign of Shah Shuja Muzaffari (759-786 A.H./1357-1384 A.D.) the Sarbedars revolted against the landlord class in Kirman province under the leadership of Pahalvan Asad son of Tughan Shah.\(^1\) This movement also penetrated into Samarqand. At the time, when Timur attacked this city, its inhabitants under the leadership of Maulana Zada Samarqandi, Maulana Kharak Bukhari and Abu Bakr Kuluvi Naddaf fought against the external invaders. They adopted the same line of action which was followed by the Darvishes of Jouri order and stood so firmly against them that the soldiers of Timur could not capture that city at that time.\(^2\)

The Sarbedars movement was also the source-spring of several other movements alike. Among them Marashi and Hurufi movements are worth mentioning. A comprehensive description of them will be given in the following chapters. But it should be pointed out here that Saiyid Qawwamuddin Marashi (who remained a prominent source during 740 A.H./1339 A.D. onwards) was one of the disciples of Saiyid A'izzuddin Sughandi (the spiritual guide and instructor of Sheikh Hasan Jouri). He carried the teachings of his guide - instructor to the province of Mazandaran and there he started a parallel movement.\(^3\)

These results of intellectual exercises and religious enlightenment became the focus of attention in the region of Astarabad at the time when Saiyid

\(^1\) For further detail see : *Tarikh-i-All-i-Muzaffar* by Mahmud Katbi, edited by Dr. Abdul Husain Navayee published by Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1369 A.H./1985 A.D.


\(^3\) *Tarikh-i-Tabaristan O Royan*, p.166.
Fazlullah Astarabadi, the leader of the Hurufids was in the prime of his youth. He lived with the Sarbedars and the Marashids like two friendly neighbours.¹ It seems possible that such cordial relations would have brought them to a good understanding, because, Amir Ali Damaghani son of Pahalavan, Hasan-i-Damghani, the leader of sarbedars was one of the disciples of Saiyid Qawwam Uddin Marashi and from this it is clearly evident why Saiyid Fazl Ullah felt so much attached to the Sarbedars.²

**Hurufia Movement**

While studying the religious trends during Timurid period, we come across the movement of the Hurufia order. Though it was a politico-social movement, which came into being in the Timuri society and flourished during that period. Its appearance and consciousness was of a religious nature like that of other politico-social movements such as Sarbedaran, Nourbakhian and Baktashian.

We shall here discuss very briefly three questions about this movement. Why was this movement called Hurufiya (critical)? What was the ideology of its opposition to Timurids and why did this movement fail in Persia?

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1. Majmua-i Rasael i Hurufiya, p.43.

The Sarbedaran movement aimed at gaining social justice by fighting against the tyrannical measures of contemporary rulers. A similar movement also started in the region of Astarabad and Mazandaran by Qawwamuddin Mar'ashi, the disciple of Saiyid 'Aizuddin Soughandi and the successor of Sheikh Hasan Jouri; he received inspiration from the ideology of Sarbedaran, at the time when Saiyid Fazlullah was in the prime of his youth. In fact, he had combined the movements of Sarbedaran and Mar'ashis. It seems obvious that there were also among the followers of Fazlullah some members who belonged to Sarbedaran group.¹

These religious trends left very deep impression upon his mind. Though, he belonged to a rich and renowned family his father being the supreme judge of Astarabad he took to the path of self abandonment and looked down upon everything that led to a life of luxury much before he was of age. At this tender age, he took to performing all the religious obligations and duties with devotion. Most of the time he was on fast and retrained even from his daily bread. This practice of his earned him the nick-name "Halal Khur" (One who gets his sustenance through Lawful means),² as Nafeji has rightly pointed out, in his book entitled Khab Nama (book of dreams), : "God, being glorious and exalted,

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1. One of the leaders of Sarbedaran was Amir Ali Damghani, son of Pahlavan Hasan Damghani. He was the disciple of Saiyid Fazlullah Naimi of Astarabad. This evidently indicates some relations between the members of Sarbedaran movement and Saiyid Fazlullah. For further information see also: Haurt, C a collection of treatises related to Hurufia Majmua Rasael-i-Hurufia published by Mola, Tehran, 1360 A.H./1981 A.D. p.43, Aghaz-i-Firqa i Hurufia (Rise of Hurufia sect) by Ritter H. translated by : Dr Heshmat-i-Moayyed, Farhang-i-Iran Zamin, Vol.10, Tehran, 1341 A.H. p.62 and Zarrin Koub, Dunbala-i-justujou-i-Tasawwuf dar Iran, p.55.

The founder of Hrufiya order or rather the pioneer of this movement was Saiyid Fazlullah Naimi Astarabadi, son of Abu Muhammed Tabrizi. He was born in the year 740 A.H. (1339-1340 A.D).\(^1\)

He was born a few years after the death of Sultan Abu Said (736 A.H./1335 A.D), the last ruler of Ilkhahid Mongol dynasty. This was the time when Persia was passing through a serious politico-social crisis, which had strongly enveloped the intelligentsia of that period and caused great havoc at the level of that class. Fazl ullah was also greatly influenced, materially and mentally, by that situation. At that time, mysticism and shiism also got interpeneterated and gave impetus to the ideas of the agitated leaders like Sheikh Khalifa and Sheikh Hasan Jouri, pioneers of political revolt among the people called sarbedaran (ready to accept the gallows).

\(^1\) There is a great controversy about the definite place of birth, of Fazlullah and the time of his assoication. The contemporary and later sources differ in their views about this matter. Shamsuddin Muhammed bin Abdul Rahman Sakhavi has mentioned his name Abdul Rahman and date of his killing was 804 A.H. (1401-1402 A.D) See: Alzo ul lame le ahl el Qarn et Tase, fascicule VI, published by Maktabatul Qudsi, Cairo, 1354 A.H., p.174. Taqi ul din Muhammad bin Moinuddin (died in Deccan in 979 A.H./1571 A.D) has written in Arafat Ul Ashiqin that after the death of Timur (807 A.H./1404 A.D) he was killed by Shahrukh (850 A.D./1447 A.D) at Bawanat. See Wazhahnama-i-Gurgani, written by Dr. Sadiq Kiya, published by Tehran university Tehran, 1340 A.H. p.14 Among later sources Haji Khalifa writes under the chronogram: "Javedan Nama and Arsh Nama" (which by mistake has been written as arsnama) that his name was Jalaluddin and was killed in 802 A.H. (See: Kashful Zunun, in two Vols. Istanbul, 1360 A.H. vol.1, column 587 and Vol. II column 1132.


92
with his perfect affection and favour granted him such insight and contentment that all the assets and belongings had no worth and value in the eyes of his heart and they had become so much insignificant that their existence and non-existence was all the same to him."  

Hardly eighteen or nineteen years old. Fazlullah had aspired to this stage of his mental development. Like all the seekars of Truth, he took to jurneying and travelled long distances. In course of his wanderings he reached Isfahan on foot and fell a prey to Sciatica, which forced him to stay there for four months at the inn, called "Caravan Sarai Bazar-i-Kard Sazan" (the Caravan Sarai of the Bazar of Knife makers) but at last he recovered from this pain.

His four-months-sajourn at Isfahan afforded him a good opportunity to unfold his latent gains and accomplishments. He saw many dreams and himself interpreted them. He consequently earned name and fame throughout Isfahan as a very correct interpreter of dreams. This faculty of his drew to him people of every class; the theologians, the saints, ministers, judges and army personnel visited him for the interpretation of their dreams. When he interpreted their

1. An other reason to be called "Halal Khur" was that, he never took meal for him from any person. See: Sakhavi, Alzo'ul lame' p.174. Ritter, ibid p.22.

2. Ritter, ibid.


4. Ibn-i-Arabi has also written Futouhat-i-Makkiya edited by Usman Yahya, Cairo, 1392 A.H., about the dreams and their wonderful interpretations made by Fazlullah. See: Zarrin Koub, Ibid, p.56.
dreams, he acknowledged it as a Divine favour. Some thaumaturgic acts have also been attributed to him.¹

While continuing his journey, he visited the city of Mecca as the pilgrim of the holy shrine there. On his return from that holy city to Tabriz, he met Sultan Ovais Jalayeri, the ruler of that region and his minister, Zakarya and Sheikh Khwaja, the chief minister of his state. They were so much impressed by his ideas that they became his disciples.

He also gave an arched head-gear to Sultan Ovais,² indicating thereby his initiation into his spiritual discipleship. There he married in a family which originally belonged to Astarabed but at that time was residing there.

After that, he continued his journey and visited Khwarazm, Burujerd, Damghan, Bagh-i-Sufyan, Imarat-i-Sikandar, Ihn-i-Uruq island (Iraq), Hazargari (Mazandran province), Taqchi locality (of Islam) and Badkuba. At these places, a number of interpretations of dreams are attributed to him.

This is the first stage of the life of Fazl ullah, in which he used to say that it was divine grace that was bestowed upon him by God Almighty.

**Etymology of the word "Hurufia":**

Arabs, like Romans believed that letters have numerical value, having tremendous power. It is this belief which provides a base for the whole philosophy of Hurufia order. This concept has been in the mind since the day the script was in the process of formation. This concept ultimately assumed the form of a branch of science, and scholars took part in studying it seriously.

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The evidences of such a concept and idea can be traced in the holy scriptures like the *Old Testament* particularly in the chapters related to the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, and also in the *New Testament*.\(^1\)

The idea, having traversed from the holy scriptures, got itself introduced in the literary works of some men of letters. In this respect we can cite the poetical collection of Husain bin Mansur-i-Hallaj\(^2\) (sent to the gallows in 309 A.H/922 A.D) and the book entitled *Tawwasin*\(^3\) in which a study has been done about letters and their numerical value. Besides the above mentioned works, another book, *Akhbarul Hallaj* also deals with this subject. In *Futuhat ul Makkiya* of Ibn-i-Arabi a detailed account has been given about it and great stress has been laid upon the significance of words.

Fazlullah, too, was attracted to this subject. He studied carefully the Old and *New Testaments*, gave serious thought to the works of Ibn-i-Arabi, attained proficiency in Arabic and Persian literature, carefully scrutinised the method of interpretation of the esoteric and established relation between religious matters

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Gospel according to St. John. I.1.


and the etymology of Arabic and Persian letters, which are 28 and 32 respectively.¹

However unique it may seem, he based the interpretation of the verses and the chapters of Quran as this seireca. The esoteric meaning of this holy scripture and the correct interpretation of words, he observes, could only be comprehended if one had a deep knowledge of the science of words. He himself interpreted the meanings of Quran in this manner and gave new dimensions to them. It was this novel way of the interpretation of the Quran which suffixed the epithet Hurufi to his name and his followers were called Hurufis.²

**BELIEFS OF THE FOLLOWERS OF HURUFIYA ORDER**

The Hurufis believe that the cycle of the universe revolves on three axes. They are *Nabuwwat* (Prophecy) *Imamat* (leadership of Islam) and *Uluhiyyat* (divinity). The cycle of prophecy started from Adam and concluded on prophet Muhammad and culminated in him. The period of Imamat started with Ali, the

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1. *The poetical works of Naimi O Nasimi* edited by Prof. Rustam Ali Uf, Dunya Publication, Tehran, 1353 A.H. pp.30 and 31. The Essence which has been mentioned through thirty two letters, includes in itself the two worlds, whether it may be the vessel or the content in it. Oh: the master of grammar and you the innovater of the word, (should know that) the true meanings of the word are evident from the Essence. If the Word displays its grace upon you, the treasure of knowledge would be divulged to you. He speaks out to you, without sound and letters, such things that cannot be apprehended with the help of speech and words.

    Zati ki iharat ast az Sio Du harf
    Aine Du Jahanast che Mazruf che zarf
    Yani ki haqiqat-i-Huruf az Zatast
    Ay ai Munshi-ilme naho-i-ai waze harf
gar harf be tu jamal benamayad
    bar tu dar-i- ganj-i-Marfat he goshayad
    Be saut-o-hurouf ba tu ayad be horouf
    kan-i-nuq be saut-o-harf andar nayad.

fourth Caliph of Islam and came to an end by the birth of Imam Askari (the eleventh Imam or the leader of Muslims, according to Shiite faith), while the cycle or the period of uluhiyyat commenced with the appearance of Fazlullah, who proclaimed himself Mahdi (the restorer of Islam, according to all Muslim sects). He was the last in this chain of cycles and all the pious Muslims were bound to follow him.

**Politico Social aspect of Hurufids thinking:**

Hurufia was one of those movements which received inspiration from mystic thoughts and Shiism of which the first is purely Persian in its origin while the other was imported in this land with the introduction of Islam. These two different ideologies intermixed and developed into a philosophy which gave fillip to all the political activities among the Persians. This interpretation of one of the tenets of Islam by Fazl ullah Hurufi, the founder of this cult, was generally accepted by all Muslims particularly by Shiites. This prepared the ground for his political activities and paved the way for his proclamation as Mahdi the twelfth Imam and the restorer of Islamic faith. As he was fully conscious of the fact that according to the Shiite faith the institution of Imamat (Leadership of Muslim) originated from Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of prophet Muhammad and that it would be concluded with Mahdi, after his reappearance in this world.

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1. As one of his devotees says:

   *Hich kas Zin Pas Nakhahad Amadan*
   *Joz be farman burdan-o-Piru Shudan*

   After him no body would come. There is no way, except to obey his order and follow him.

Here, one should not be unmindful of the common belief of all Muslims that when tyranny, oppression, cruelty and sins would reach their peak, a reformer would appear, declare himself the twelfth Imam and would take up the task of reformation. Fazululah took advantage of this belief and declared himself the Mahdi, the twelfth Imam who had come to exterminate the corrupt Timuri society as had been predicted centuries before his appearance.1

It is also worth mentioning here that the concept of the reappearance of Mahdi or the final reformer is not new in Islamic world. Some time before him Hasan Nazari II, one of the leaders of the Muslims of Ismaili sect of Persia, proclaimed that he was Mahdi, the final reformer whose reappearance all the Muslims of Ismaili sect were awaiting. He also warned that the Day of Resurrection was quite near and that the Islamic law and order had ranished. He had risen in their midst, he stressed, to restore it and that his own way of life and conduct would uphold the Islamic law. Those who had faith in him, he exhorted, should follow in his foot-steps.2

Fazlullah who proclaimed himself Mahdi, or the final reformer, he aimed at eradicating root and branch all sorts of social evils and inequities prevailing in the society. His objective was to rid all human beings (particularly the Persian,

1. Fazlullah, wrote in a letter to one of his disciples that after the appearance of the former eleven noble souls, he was the twelfth. See: *Tashayyu-o-Tasawwof* by Kamil Mustafa Alshaybi, translated into Persian by Ali Reza Zakawati, Amir Kabir publication 1359 A.H (1980 A.D) p.224.

at first instance) of the yoke of the invaders and usurpers of their homeland. Here at this point a conflict ensued between the Hurufis and the Timurids.

With a view to proving the superiority of the Persians over the Arabs and excellence of the Persian language over Arabic, he added four alphabets to the 28 Arabic alphabets. Thus he made the Persian script so competent and comprehensive as to convey his message in the language of the oppressed ones. He replaced Arabic by Persian and wrote a book bearing the title Javedan Nama (the eternal book) in the Persian dialect of Astarabad. This feat of Fazlullah made a remarkable contribution to the awareness or self-identity among the Persians. This movement launched by Fazlullah was mainly directed against the Arab domination over Persia in order to establish the sovereignty of the Persians in their own land and rekindle Persian culture and civilization.¹ No wonder that Mahmud Pasikhani, a disciple of Fazlullah and the founder of Noqtavia movement, a branch of Hurufia order, surpassed his spiritual guide in his ambition by calling himself Ma'ud-i-Ajam, the promised reformer of Persia. The Hurufids ultimately succeeded in getting rid of the Arabian culture and the Arabic language and banished them from the political arena of Persia. Now they were face to face with Timur and his descendants. They met this challenge by arousing the sentiments of the Persians on the basis of sectarian differences, racial discrimination and linguistic oppression. In short, Fazlullah, wanted to reaffirm the identity of Persians on the basis of cultural and racial superiority.²

¹ Golpinarli, Hurufilikly, pp. 19-20.
² Kamil Mustafa, Ibid, p.224.
Fazlullah has also shown his inclination towards luxurious life of this materialistic world. Almost all his followers tread in his footsteps and interpreted everything religious in this light; attached symbolic meanings to a life of luxury so that they might attain to everlasting bliss and beatitude in the divine universe. This attitude gained them much popularity in high politico-social sphere. However they failed to fulfill their worldly aspirations; they showed their hostility to the contemporary rulers. They proclaimed that the promised paradise existed in this material world and that all the beautiful things around them contained all that they loved and liked. The gates of morality, they warned, had been shut down upon the people of this world and that there was everywhere social chaos. These outbursts of the Hurufis were enough to alert the contemporary rulers who began to regard them as a potential threat to their political authority which was likely to become a general contest. This sowed the seed of enmity between the Hurufis and the contemporary rulers.

The political viewpoint of the Hurufis permitted them to have cordial relation with the politically powerful persons of the time, so that they could attract them towards their mission and they could get themselves a berth in the administrative machinery.
Fazlullah did not claim that he was propagating some new faith or religion, but his interpretation of some verses of the *Quran* and the fundamental principles of Islam was a powerful challenge to the ulema;¹ inevitably, a group of Muslim theologians of Samarqand declared him apostate and pronounced death sentence. Though Miran Shah was greatly influenced by the teachings of Fazlullah, but reluctantly, on the strict order of his father beheaded him with his own hand near Tabriz. Afterwards, his body was fastened with rope and was showed around in the lanes and bylanes of that city. His head was sent to Timur, who ordered it to be thrown into fire.²

No doubt, the body of Fazlullah perished and several of his followers were assassinated but this step could not kill the spirit of his mission because it passed, through his kith and kin to the next generations, and ultimately assumed the form of the revolt of Haji Surk, the Hurufid in Isfahan, in the year 834³ A.H. (1527 A.D.) which culminated in the fatal attack on Shahrukh (son of Timur) in Herat by Ahmad, one of the disciples of Fazlullah. These two examples are sufficient to prove that Hurufids continued their activities and were bent upon realising their long cherished dream.

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1. The commentary on the Glorious Quran is permissible in the light of the Sayings of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the parallel verses from the holy scripture, views of the companions and the Imams, descendants of family. Playing with words to prove an idea or to establish some new creed, without taking in view the Islamic traditions, saying of the prophet, declarations of the companions, observations of holy Imams and ignoring parallel verses of the holy book is not permitted in any case, condition and under any circumstance.


Having been crushed in Iran during the year 800 A.H. (1397 A.D.), the Hurufis shifted to Anatolia and joined hands with the Sufis of Baktashiya order. Ali ula'la, one of the disciples of Fazlullah, continued his activities there and gained much popularity among the Muslims of that region.¹

How Hurufis and Baktashis, being inspired by Shiite thoughts could continue their socio-political activities in the Ottoman empire among the Muslims of Sunnite sect. collected a large number of that region as their disciples and got their support for their politico-religious activities is an interacting subject.

This subject can be dealt with from two different points of views, i.e., religious and cultural on the basis of source material, available as evidence. It is noteworthy here that Baktashi, under the guidance of Haji Baktash Vali (d. 738 A.H./1337 A.D.) came on the scene before Hurufis for their growth started at Anatolia. Though they had Shiite background, but their ideas were ambiguous and required to be explained. We also know that most of the mystic orders had their political objects, for which they were using mysticism as their tool. As they wanted to collect people round them from different sects and classes, therefore they were very liberal in their religious views, and it was difficult for the local people to apprehend about their own belief and creed. It was for this reason that Baktashis, since the day of their rise, were able to continue their social activities with other Sufistic orders, like Haydaris, Qalandaris and Abdalis. They not only caused to instil ideas among Muslims of Sunnite sect, but also

among the nomadic tribes, villagers, soldiers living on the borders of the countries and those people who were not aware of the ideas of Sunni sect. They did not keep themselves limited only to Muslims of Sunni sect, but also tried to bring Christians too under their influence. More important, they also won the favour of the guerrilla fighters of the Ottoman army and made a large number of them their disciple.

"Do as most mad men do, then most mad men will speak well of you," was the main policy of Baktashids, which they adopted in the Ottoman empire and got the support of the people of that country.

At the time when Hurufis were the victims of all sorts of afflictions in Persia the disciples of Fazlullah Naimi Astarabadi, were making their full effort in Ottoman empire to propagate their liberal views, which were very similar to the ideas of Baktashis. The exponents of Hurufid movement who were working for the cause of their mission were: Fakhr Uddin, Jalal Uddin Burujerdi, Fazl-i-Sultani, HUsain Khurasani, Mir Abdul Isfahani and Abul Hasan A'li Ula'la. Amogn them Sheikh Abol Hasan Isfahani, Known as Ali Ula'la. and Saiyid I'mad Uddin Nasimi were more enthusiastic than the others and played significant role for their mission after migrating to Anatolia.

A'li Ula'la, entitled Khalifat Ullah va Wasiullah (the Vecegerent of God, appointed by His will) was nineteen years old when he met Fazl Ullah Naimi Astarabadi and witnessed at the age of forty two years the murder of Fazl Ullah. He discovered his (Fazalullah's) three treatises namely, Javdan Nama (The eternal book). A'rish nama (the book related to the throne of God) and Mahabbat Nama (book of Love). In these treatises he was able to perceive the
mysterious instructions that he had prepared for his disciples. He had verified *Javedan Nama* in the year 801 A.H./1398 A.D. A’li ul a’la married one of his daughters and had great reverence, being his son in law.

After that he was appointed in the country of Rum (Asia Minor) for propagating the ideas of Hurufi movement.¹

I’mad Uddin Nasimi was a more enthusiastic successor of Fazlullah than A’li Ula’la. He was also more devout and self sacrificing person than any other Hurufi. Like A’li ul a’la, he also established family relationship with Fazlullah by marrying another daughter of his. After the murder of Fazlullah, he also migrated to Anatolia, like A’li ula’la. As he was very enthusiastic by nature, therefore, he took an active part in propagating the ideas of Hurufi mission in that region. He also expressed his ideas about Hurufi movement in verse.²

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1. As he has also pointed out in the epic, entitled *Kursi Nama* (Book of the Throne)

   *Man Firstadam Kitab-i-Kirdgar*
   *Suie Rum az Sham nikou yadgar*

   (keep it in mind - that I sent the scripture of God from Syria to Rum).

   *Pishtar az man Kasi dar marzobum*
   *Az kalam-i-haq nakard abad bum.*

   (Before me, nobody in this country propagated the name of God, the Truth)


2. *Fazl-i-haq Shud vagif-i-asrar-i ma*
   *fazli-i-haq shud Jumleye anvar-i ma*
   *fazl-i-haq shud rahnamay kar-i ma*
   *fazle-e-haq shud, fazl-i-haq memar-i ma.*

   The grace of God, Almighty, became the known of all my secrets and the grace of God Almighty is all my light.

   (Favour of God became my guide, His grace helped in building up my plans).

   See: *Imad Uddin Nasimi* by Hamid Araseli, Published under the supervision of Hamid Muhammad Zadah, Baku. 1973 A.D. p.71.
As it had become known that Hurufis were campaigning against Timur, they were kept under surveillance by Ottoman ruler. There, they were harassed so much that they decided to remove the label of Hurufid from their mission. After that they united with Baktashis and continued their movement under their covering. The relations between Hurufis and Baktashis became so intimate that Baktashis included two names of Hurufi leaders and declared three persons, as the pioneers of their mission. They were Ali (the cousin of prophet Muhammad - Haji Baktash Wali and Fazlullah Hurufi.

From cultural point of view, the region of Anatolia has always been under direct influence of Persian culture since ancient days. Persian culture became prevalent there when Alp Arsalan Saljuq attacked Byzantine empire with Persian forces and defeated Romans Diogenes in Malzgard battle in 463 A.H./1070 A.D.). There he established the rule of his dynasty which continued till 700 A.H./1300 A.D. In 707 A.H./1307 A.D. The Mughals of Ilkhani dynasty captured this region by removing Saljuq. Though both the dynasties were Turk, the administration was in the hands of their Persian ministers, who patronized their art, language and culture there. Persian had become so popular in that region that some poets, who were originally Turkish speaking, were proud of composing their poetical works in Persian. Among them Nizami of Ganja (535-599 A.H./1140-1202 A.D.) and Khaqani of Shirvan (500-594 A.H./1106-1197 A.D.) are worth mentioning.

Besides, when Mongols invaded Persia, many Persian families migrated there. This factor also played an important role for the prevalence of Persian language and culture. It was for this reason that when Jalaluddin
(606-672/1209-1273) migrated from Balkh (at present part of Afghanistan and Dari speaking area) to Qunya (Now part of Turkey and Turkish speaking region) found favourable climate for the continuation of his poetical compositions in Persian. In short, Persian became so popular in that region that from Saljuq period (431-682 A.H./1039-283 A.D.) upto the reign of Sultan Salim III (1272 A.H./1807 A.D.) all great and important works were written in this language.

This literary atmosphere, influenced by Persian culture, gave an opportunity to Baktashis and Hurufis, who were originally Persian for the development of Islamic thought under the banner of their own culture. It is also worth mentioning here, that Hurufis who claimed to be *Mau'oud-i-A'jam* (revivalist of Persian, language and culture) rendered such a great service to the propagation of Persian language and culture that people of Anatolia who were Turkish speaking felt proud that they also knew Persian. They used Persian idioms and proverbs in prose writing, and all the Persian diction and terminology in their poetry.

In short we can say that the Ghaznavis (366-582 A.H./907-1186 A.D.) and Saljuqis (431-682 A.H./1039-1283 A.D.), being Turk patronized Persian and made it an international language, in the same manner Hurufis and Baktashis popularised their language, i.e. Persian among Turks and left great influence of their language on Turkish literature. Besides they also propagated Shiite thoughts among the Muslims of Sunnitte sect, in spite of all political and sectarian differences, which were great hindrance in uniting the Muslims of Sunnitte and Shiite sects.
The followers of Fazlullah commanded respect and had earned a good name. They were at liberty to interpret religious matters in their own way. They legalised those practices which had been prohibited by Islam forever. They also attracted many Christians of Anatolia and Balkan towards them, particularly those soldiers who were in regular service of the Ottoman Sultans and were of Roman origin. They were greatly influenced by the teachings of those mystics who belonged to Baktashi order.¹

Here, it is irrelevant to discuss the merits and demerits of their interpretations or how they attracted some simple minded people towards them, but, what matters from the socio-historical viewpoint is the nature of their movement which aimed at sowing the seed of revolt against the prevailing social order and the ruling class. This factor precipitated their total downfall not only in Persia, but also in the Ottoman empire.²

It may also be mentioned here, that the movement changed its guise and re-appeared in its most extreme form known as "Nuqtavi", with Mahmoud Pasikhani as its founder, who was one of the disciples of Fazlullah. He was working underground in Persia, but was exposed during the Safavi period and was crushed by Shah Abbas I (996-1038 A.D/1587-1628 A.D.).

When one studies the history of Hurufis, one should bear in mind, that they played a very important role in the diffusion and furtherance of Islamic

¹ Hurufis, among Christians called Fazlullah, that he was Christ, while among Muslims he introduced him as Mahdi, the 12th Imam of Shiite Sect. In this way, they invited Christians of Anatolia and Balkan to adopt Islam, as their religion, with some Christian traditions. Not only that, they also introduced those rituals too, which were based on polytheism. For further detail, see: *Tashayyu wa Tasawwuf*, pp. 172, 207 and 210.

culture in Persia, Anatolia and the Balkans. They also left their impression on Persian literature and influenced some dialects of Persian in which they produced some treatises related to the Hurufia and Nuqtavi movements.¹

During the eighth and ninth centuries of Islamic era circumstances were quite favourable for the development of mystic thoughts. It was on account of this, the mystic orders like Khalvatis, Naqshbandis, Pir Jamalis and Nimat Ullahis flourished very well. The spiritual heads of these orders were of the opinion that Subordinates of Timur and his successors were responsible for all sorts oppressions, tyrannies and destructive acts. For this reason, they launched their campaigns against them. Being inspired by the revolutionary thoughts of the Muslims of Shiite sect, they gathered many disciples round them and started their political activiteis under the covering of mysticism.

The source spring of all these mystic movements was the movement of Sarbedaran. They believed that they should fight, for the cause of the rights of Muslims against the tyrant rulers.

They were of the opinion that fight against the tyrant rulers should be continued in any case, even at the cost of their heads which could be chopped off at any time. Though this movement could not succeed in obtaining its objects, yet its spirit transferred to Mara'shi movement which was started by Saiyid Qawwam Uddin Mara'shi at Mazandaran.

Amongh all the politico-religious movements which came into being to fight against Timuri dynasty, one was Nur Bakhshi movement, founded by

Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh (d. 869 A.D./1464 A.D.) of Khurasan, who claimed to be Mahdi, (the reformer of the world) and played quite significant role for the cause of the oppressed people.

The Baktashi movement was another one, started by Haji Baktash vali (d. 738 A.H./1337 A.D.) of Khurasan, after migrating from Persia to Anatolia. There he gathered his disciples in a very large number. Haji Baktash, under the covering of this movement did a lot of work for the uprising of depressed people. On one hand, he was associated with Hurufis to continue his political activities, under the banner of Baktashis and on the other, it was influenced by those extremists, mainly Qazilbashis, who believed in the supernatural powers of Ali, the cousin of the prophet. It was for this reason that Safavi rulers had great regard for the activities of this movement.

Fazlullah was himself a poet and composed his poems under the nom de plume Na'imi. Among his disciples Ali ul a'la and Nasimi were also poets. Nasimi's poems are felicitous and appealing to the mind. He has to his credit complete poetical collection in Persian as well as in Turkish. The movements merged in Shiite thought and mystic ideas bearing different names) (like, Sar be daran, Hurufis and Nur Bakhshian etc.) and even as it was crushed, it prepared the ground for the establishment of a powerful, independent and an important government, which appeared in the form of Safavi dynasty, which is still regarded very significant from the point of view of Persia's identity.

**Nuqtavi Movement During The Safavi Period**

In the description of the Hurufi movement of Saiyid Fazlullah Nai'mi of Astarabad above, a brief mention of Nuqtavi movement started by Mahmud
Pasikhani¹, one of the disciples of Fazlullah of Astarabad was also given. A man of piety, he was a good orator² and a depended upon lawful earnings. *(Halal Khure)* In the beginning, he was a good disciple and obedient student of Fazlullah. But, later when he became hostile to his spiritual guide, he was expelled by him and it was for this reason that he was nick named Mahmud Matrud (expelled). After that, he appeared on the scene in 800 A.H./1397 A.D. and started to propagate his teachings.

Apparently, Hurufi movement had died in Persia whereas if remained active in Asia Minor. But the missionary spirit of this movement continued to survive in the body of Nuqtavi movement which was in its full swing during Safavi period although suppressed by all Safavid rulers, particularly by Shah Abbas I. The ultimate result of it was that the followers of Mahmud Pasikhani were massacred and those who survival that havoc preferred to migrate to Hindustan, a safe place for living.

Regarding, this movement there arise many questions same of which are considered below: -

(i) Why the name Nuqtavi was given to this movement?
(ii) What was the ideology of the followers of this movement?
(ii) Why this Sufistic order, having originated as a politico-religious movement in Persia was opposed by the Safavids, though they were also the followers of a pro-Persian politico-religious movement?

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1. Pasikhan is a village in the West of the city of Gilan, at a distance of 7 kilometer on the way to Fuman town. As Mahmud belonged to this village, therefore, his followers were called either Pasikhani or Mahmudya.

(iv) Why did the followers of this order migrate to Hindustan and preferred to live in that country under the banner of the Mughal emperor, Akbar?

**Basis of the nomenclature 'Nuqtavi'**

This class of people was called Nuqtavi because their thinking was wholly based on the esoteric meanings of 'nuqta' or "dot". Just as Hurufis believed that the origin of the whole universe is based on Harf (letter), similarly they believed that the "dot" is the source spring of each and every thing. This theory was evolved by Mahmud Pasikhani for the reason that every thing that exists in this world is from dust, which is nothing but a collection of particles, called "dots" by him.

On this hypothesis the exponents of this belief interpreted

1. It is noteworthy here that in the terminology of Nuqtavis, the word "vahid" was used for single or a celibate. The opposite of it was called "mazdavaj" or the married whom they called "amin" (the trustee). The compiler of the book *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* (Schools of different religions) says, that this writer had heart from Darvaish Safa, Darvaish Baqa-i-Vahaed, Darvaish Ismail, Mirza Taqi, Sheikh Lutfullah and Shaikh Shahab who are married (the trustees) that the single person (the celibate) speaks about Nuqta (dot) and seeks after dust, because, according to him, all the other elements have originated from the dust. Sheik Muhammad Mohsin fani, edited by Rahim Rezazada Malik, Tahuri Publicaiton, Tehran, 1362 A.H./1983 A.D., p.274.

2. The interpretation of the verses of the glorious Quran was not done only by Hurufis and Nuqytys in their own interest, but earlier the Muslims of Ismalite sect did the same thing. Particularly the Carmathians interpreted several verses of Quran and sayings of prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) in their own way, during their political movement in 270 A.H./883 A.D. They did not care about the apparent meanings of the words, but went deep to explore the esoteric sense of them. They quoted the following saying of the prophet in support of their argument:

*This sacred book has been revealed in seven (consonants) i.e. A, B, C, D, K, L, and N letters, in which every letter is a verse itself which has exoteric and esoteric meanings. In the same manner, they also quoted in their support the thirteenth verse of a Sura (the chapter of the Quran), which reads "Within it will be Mercy throughout, and without it all alongside, will be (wrath and) Punishment."*

In this way they interpreted the verses of Quran, creating thereby suspicion in the heart of the believers regarding the apparent meanings and the accepted contents of the verses and the sayings of the prophet.
Some Of The Doctrines Of Nuqtavis:

Even as the Nuqtavis, like Hurufis had derived their principles from the teachings of Islam, they looked upon each and everything of it in their own perspective and therefore interpreted them according to their own belief. Their opponents have painted them alleging that they did not believe in God, prophethood of His Holiness Muhammad (peace be upon him) Imamat, Day of Resurrection, Hell and Heaven, as set forth by Islam. Thus they did not fit in the framework of Islamic faith, and fell in the category of Kafir (the infidel), and, on account of this all other Muslims called them Mulhid (athiest)\(^1\). They believed that the Supreme Being called till now God, Almighty, was the Perfect Man, whom they interpreted as "murakkab-i-Mubayyan" (the absolute Truth) and worshipped him. They believed that the prophets and Imams were perfect men and their quintessence was manifested in the personality of the person, namely "Muhammad." (the praised one). The Concept of Mahdi, in his being (the Saviour of the world and restorer of Islamic faith) and also in their person of his spiritual guide Fazlullah had developed among them with their thinking. They did not believe in the Day of Judgement and the other world. They were of the opinion that the Hell and Heaven exist in this world. All human beings get the rewards of their good and bad actions in this world.

\(^1\) Dr. Sadiq Kiya in his article, namely "Nuqtavian ya Pasikhanian (Nuqtavis or Pasikhanis) (pp.24-25) quotes from the book, "Nafais ul Arqam" written by Muhammad Ibn-i-Mahmud Dihdar, "the second group is of those who are the refuters of Indispensable Being", They are metempsychosist atheists and call themselves Nuqataviya..... and consider that they are the deity. They say as long as person does not recognise himself, he is servant, but when he attains self-realization he is deity. The formula of their faith is la ilaha illa al murakkab ul mubayyan". (There is no god, but murakkab ul mubayyan, the absolute truth). When they say morakkab ul mubahyan or absolute truth they mean a human being. One of their principles is that there exists none, but morakkab (absolute) and mahsus (perceptible). They disbelieve unity and the state of rational singularity. They condemn reasoning and the act of conceiving.
Nuqtavis believed that everything that exists in this world is embodied in a particular figure and its particles would always remain in some form or the other. This evolution begins from stones, proceeds to plant life, then to animals and finally appears in the form of a fine human being. This goes on in such a manner that one can perceive its form and nature in its previous life from the form, conduct, habit, properties and characteristic. The awareness of this belief was termed as "Ihsa" (reckoning) and the person who could grasp it was called "Muhsi" (reckoner). It was for this reason that Nuqtavis were considered metempsychosists.

Mahmud, like his spiritual guide claimed to be "Mahdi", and on the basis of his metempsychotic ideas construed him the most perfect existent being and highly praiseworthy.

Mahmud Pasikhani had laid out some principles for his followers. The author of the book, Dabistan-i-Mazahib (the different schools of religions), written in 11th century A.H. (17th century A.D), has mentioned some of them under the title, "Vahediyya Wa Umana" (the singular ones and the trustees). He says, "one of his regulations is that the unmarried is called vahid (singular), while the married one is known as amin (the trustee). The most admirable conduct in his eyes is that a person should spend his whole life in piety, mendicancy and celibacy. When he has no inclination for anything, except the meal that he takes only to keep alive, that person would rise high, and be single and attain the position of morakkab-i-Mubayyan, the deity of absolute truth. If a
married person is desirous of sexual intercourse, he should cohabit once in the whole life time. If he cannot control himself, he should copulate once a year, or after forty days or after a month or once a week.\(^1\)

Apart from the main principles mentioned above, some secondary regulations have also been ascribed to them:

"One of the secondary regulations, in their religion is that, when a person, after self-realization, attains the State of a deity, he is free to have sexual intercourse with mother, father, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters. All forbidden things are permitted for him and he is allowed to deflower any woman he likes. Unity from their point of view lies in cohabiting with each other. They consider it cruelty to keep four women at a time. They give a woman to four men at a time and attribute the child to anyone of those whom they like.\(^2\)

Mulla Abdul Qader Badauni, considering Nujataviya order as a metempsychotic sect, writes about it, "in their false supposition they call some one as Ilah (deity) and consider others as angels......However, in metempsychotic sect they are strictly firm.... They make far fetched interpretations of the various chapters of glorious Quran and the sayings of the prophet Muhammed (peace be

\(^1\) They say that, the body of prophet Muhammad became more perfect. From that appeared Mahmud. The limbs of human body, since the birth of Adam, Gods' chosen one were in the process of evolution and by the time when prophet Muhammad appeared they were perfect. When they became more perfect and more admirable there appeared Mahmud. It is for this reason, it has been preached in a couplet. "Run away from Muhammad and take protection in Mahmud, because, he is receding and the other is proceeding". See: Dabistan-i-Mazahib, discourse VIII, p.274.

\(^2\) Ibid, p.275.
upon him). They believe that their caliph (living in their times) is a perfect man and call him as the Holy Being. ¹

**Nuqtavia Movement from Political and Social Point of View**

During the period, when Mughals and Timuris dominated Persia, the people of this soil had been the victim of all sorts of tyrannies, which brought irreparable loss to Persian culture and society. They resulted in the emergence of many movements which challenged these evils and resolved to turn the tide. Among all these the Sarbedaran, Nur Bakhshian, Hurufian and Nuqtavian or Nuqtavis held prominent position. It was generally expected of them that they would confine themselves to a monastic life and busy themselves in saying their prayers and invocation of God in seclusion. But, on the contrary they appeared on the political scene and their strong protests attracted the attention of these appressive rulers.

These movements became so popular and prominent throughout the whole of the 7th and 8th centuries A.H. (15th 16th centuries A.D.) that they did not fail to make their impact on Persian literature. Sadi (691 A.H./1291 A.D.) and Hafiz (791 A.H./1388 A.D.) who are considered two eminent poets of Persia were also influenced by these movements, and being the eye witness of these events have admired these sufistic movements in their literary works.

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¹ *Nafs u!I Arqam*, quoted from the above mentioned article of Dr.Sadiq Kia. ibid. pp.24-25; *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh*, in three volumes, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1868 A.D., Vol.II, pp. 258 and 259
Sadi Says:

Qaba bar Qadd-i-Sultanan chunan ziba nemi uftad
Ke an Khalqan-i gardalud bar balaye Darvisan
gar az yak nima shud arad sepah-i-mashriq o maghrib
ze digar nima bas bashad tan-i-tanhaai-darvishan.¹

A cloak on the body of Sultan does not look so comely as a garb soiled with dust on the body of a darvish. If there comes half of the army of a king from the East and the West, to make a fight, a single darvish is sufficient to meet the challenge of all its soldiers.

Hafiz Says:

Az karan ta be karan lashkar-i-zulm ast wali
az azal ta be abad fursat-i-darvishan ast
ai tavangar mafurush in hama nakhvat ki tura
sar o zar dar kanaf-i-himmat-i-darvishan ast
Ganj-i-Qarun ki furu miravad az Qahr hanuz
Khandah bashi ki ham az ghairat-i-darvishan ast.²

There is standing the strong army of tyranny from one corner to the other (of this world), but the opportunity to gain victory is in the hands of darvishes. Oh: you the rich and powerful ones do not be so much haughty and proud. In fact, the real wealth and pride of power lies in courageous arms of darvishes.

2. Lesan ul Ghayb Hafiz Shriazi, edited by Pezhman Bakhtiyari, p.39,
Croesus being haughty and proud sank in the earth with all his riches but beware, this wealth still is preserved in the courageous hands of darvishes.

Muhammad Iqbal the great thinker of Indian sub-continent, has condemned those sufis who lead detached life from this world and being disheartened in their efforts feel that they are too humble to change their fate and destiny. In a letter to his friend Siraj Uddin Pal, he writes: "Such sufis who show themselves very humble, modest, and detached from this world, have, infact, realized that they are deficient to face the problems of the world and they have accepted their defeat in their struggle to exist in this world."1

The Nuqtavia movement of Mahmud Pasikhani was such a movement of Dervishes which to some extent, had been influenced by the ideas and beliefs of Hurufis. Mahmud Pasikhani appeared on the scene in 800 A.H./1397 A.D. and claimed to be Mahdi (a spiritual and temporal messiah expected by Muslims) and inculcated this idea in the minds of the people that he had come to establish equity and social justice by uprooting the oppressive powers, so that he could at first attempt, set free the Persians from foreign invaders, i.e., Timur and his successors.

Nuqtavia movement, in fact was one of those movements which aimed at saving Persian culture, one of the ancient and rich cultures of the world, from the impact of foreign invaders, whether they were Arabs or Turks. This spirit is very much evident from the teachings of Nuqtavis. Subsequently one of the Persian poets says:

Rasid naubat-i-rindan aqibat Mahmud

guzasht anke Arab tana bar Ajam mizad.

On libertines the time has come for the appearance of Mahmoud. Gone are the days when Arabs mocked at Persians.¹

Nuqtavis, made more atheistic interpretations than Hurufis, regarding religious matters in order to achieve their purpose. They formed some materialistic symbols for the spiritual world. They made, their followers believe that the Heaven and the Hell exist in this earthly world. The reason seems that, they wanted their disciples to launch a campaign against the tyrant rulers for establishing social equity and justice, with which they could reach heaven in this world. Otherwise, if they surrendered to the cruelties and patiently forbore all the hardships, by sitting idle in seclusion in the hope that the oppressors would be punished for their misdeeds in the other world - they had made Hell for themselves in this world. In other words forbearing the oppression of the oppressors was just like living in the Hell. To reach their aim and object, they had made the "Murakkab-i-Mubayyan" (the absolute exponent) the deity, whom they worshipped with devotion like God Almighty.

¹ The compiler of Dabistan-i-Mazahi writes :
"...... Finally since the day of the beginning of the Creation, when there occurred the first appearance of (prophet) Muhammad (the ultimate cause of creation) sixteen thousand years had already passed when the formation of human beings took place, after passing through the process of plant life and then the animal beings. Then, ultimately was the appearance of illustrious man, i.e. Adam. The eight thousand years of the said period was called Arab cycle - the period of happenings on the surface of the earth-while the other half was known as Persian cycle, the period of happenings below the surface of the earth. During the period of Arab cycle there came eight messengers in the span of the time of Persian cycle eight perfect exponents appeared. See discourse VIII, p. 275.
Hurufia movement came into being in 800 A.H./1397 A.D. and had been dynamic up to 831 A.H./1427 A.D., till the day when its founder Fazlullah of Astarabad, having been charged with hereby, was killed by the order of Timur, through his son Miran Shah. The span of these thirty years was considered a period of the propagation of heresy and atheism, in which Fazlullah and his followers were kept under strict watch.

After this event, Ahmad Lur Hurufi, one of the disciples of Fazlullah, tried to perpetuate this mission, but he could not succeed in finding appropriate time and opportunity to carry out his plan, because Shah Rukh, son of Timur, had strictly checked his activities. Therefore, after the murder of Mahmud Fazlullah his supporters spread throughout Persia and gradually started to preach their ideas, by working underground.¹

Rise of Nuqtavis During Safavid Period in Persia:

When the campaign of the descendants of Shukh Safiuddin led to the formation of the Safavid government founded by Shah Ismail Safavi, a peculiar type of sectarian prejudice prevailed in Persian society, which was propagated by the founder of this dynasty himself. In that atmosphere any person other than a shiite, and that too the follower of twelve Imams, had no right to speak about his creed, sect or religion. Otherwise, he was made a victim to all sorts of wrath and anger by the monarch, himself a strict follower of that particular sect.

When Shah Ismail I was defeated in the battle field at Chalduran by Ottoman Turks who were in their turn strict followers of the Sunni sect, his dignity as a divine being was shaken in the minds of Qazilbashi chiefs who were

¹ For detailed information, see: Khand Mir, Tarikh-i-Habib us Siyar, Vol.III, p.615.
used to praising him like a deity and were sincerely devoted to him. The result
was that his prejudice against other sects and creeds started to waver. This
penetrated so much in the minds of his successors that Shah Ismail II was blamed
to be pro-Sunnite.

At the same time in the early days after the accession of Shah Tehmasb I
to the throne\(^1\) of Persia, two Qazilbashi tribes, namely Rumlu and Shamlu fell in
dispute with each other, as the king had not come of age. On the other side, the
Eastern and Western borders\(^2\) of Persia were constantly threatened by Uzbeks
and Ottoman Turks.\(^3\) It should be pointed out here that: One of the reasons to
transfer the capital of Persia from Tabriz to Qazwin, in the year 963 A.H./1555
A.D. was this war.\(^4\)

In such a political situation inside Persia, political stirrings at Gilan and
Azarbayan provinces were felt. Among them two parties, namely Haidari and
Nimati were more prominent than others. This situation also prepared favourable
ground for the rise of other political groups against the ruling dynasty.\(^5\)

The motive working behind the rising of Nuqtavia movement was that,
like Hurufis they also wanted to revive ancient Persian culture. This has been
mentioned above that Safavis gained power with the help Qazilbashid Turks of

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2. ibid, pp. from 50 to 60.
3. ibid, Vol.I, P.78. Khandgar-i-Rum, marched towards the border of Persia with a huge
   army. The king of Persia also proceeded with forty thousand brave horse men
equipped with spears.
4. For detailed information, see: Iskandar Beg, *Alam Ara-i-abbasi*, pp.110 and 111, and
   also Rumlu, *Ahsan ut Tawarikh*, Vol.XII, pp.from 564 to 578.
Anatolia. Hence they were deeply influenced by Turkish language and culture and favoured and safeguarded all that was Turkish while Nuqtavis claimed that they were working for the revival of Persian culture. This was the main reason that Safavis and Nuqtavis came into direct conflict with each other.¹

The important centres of the activities of Nuqtavis, during the Safavi period, were the cities of Natanz, Kashan and Qazvin. A large number of the poets of Natanz and Kashan, particularly the inhabitants of the ward called Fin, followed the tenets that had been laid down by Mahmud Pasikhani. Shah Tahmasb Safavi viewed this situation with concern and attributed it to the weakness of his power and authority. Therefore, he decided to crush them and for that purpose he appointed Amir Khan Muselu, the ruler of Hamadan province.

Regarding this matter the compiler of Tarikh-i-Alfi writes under the events of the year 982 A.H./1574 A.D.:

"...In Iran some of the inhabitants of (the city) Anjudan and the Kashan district, were charged with being united with the man called Murad who claimed to be the Imam, and a number of the people of this region followed Mahmud Pasikhani, who had declared himself to be a prophet. The king of Iran appointed Amir Khan Muselu ruler of Hamadan and sent him to Anjedan, via Hamadan. Badi ul Zaman, father of the compiler of this text was appointed at

¹. Nuqtaviys, in their discourses, on metempsychosis used to say that Turks in their preceding cycle of life were Qazilbashi dogs. Their curved tails became their swords, which fully understood Turkish language. It was on account of that when some one said, CHEKH it would come out of the Sheath, because the meanings of the word "CHEKH" in Turkish are: "Come out" See: Dabistan-i-Mazahib, discourse VIII, p.276.
Kashan. Troops of both proceeded to attack... some of the people were arrested and were sent to the (royal) court. Murad, who was a smart handsome youth was imprisoned in the royal palace. A large number of his followers were murdered, the property recovered from the members of that class was deposited with (royal) treasury."

Shah Tahmasb too continuing his measures against Nuqtavia movement imprisoned another group of people, including the poet Hayati of Kashan, who was charged to be the follower of this order. He also blinded Abul Qasim Amri a poet and scholar from Isfahan, blaming him to be a member of this movement, in spite of that the was reputed to be an influential person at the royal court.

This harsh attitude of Shah Tahmasb to the followers of this order made their lives miserable and they were almost immobilized. This inhuman treatment of these people continued till his death following which there rose internal differences among his successors and this gave an opportunity to the


2. Amri, after he was blinded by the order of Shah Tahmasb, composed the following quatrain and sent it to the king: Shah Tahmasb,

Shaha! ze libas-i-nur uram kardi
Shaha! az khud bejaur duram Kardi.
Si sal ki mddah-i-tu budam shab-o-rauz
in jazaam bud ki kuram kardi.

3. Another poet of that period also expressed the ideology of Nuqtav movement in the following quatrain:

Bar safa-i-arzou khatt-i-nisyen kash
Ney wasl talab namahnat-i-hijran kash
Khahi ki kas angushht be harf nanihed
binshin-o-chu nuqta pai dar daman kash
followers of this order for the propagation of their ideology. But, again two years there after rose a dispute in 994 A.H./1585 A.D. before the accession of Abbas I to the throne of Persia between the supporters of Shah Muhammad (Sultan Muhammad Khuda Banda), the father of Shah Abbas and Valijan Khan Turkman, the ruler of Kashan. As this conflict had taken place in the vicinity of Natanz, therefore many followers of Nuqtavia order were killed, including Afazal, who played on two stringed instrument and Mir Bighani, one of the leaders of this sect.

Draw the line of cancellation on the page of your ambitions. Neither be desirous of meeting nor suffer the hardship of departing.

If you wish that nobody should put finger on your Harf (letter), Sit (in seclusion) and fold your legs under your shirt, like a Nuqta (dot)

The above quatrain refers to the Hurufil and Nuqtavia movements. This shows how the members of these movements were crushed and had been oppressed so much that they had turned from letter to dot. It also rejects the idea of winding up their activities and had gone underground.

Nuqtavis from the point of view of Shah Abbas I and Mughal Emperor Akbar

The campaign against the ideas of Hurufis and Nuqtavis had started since the time of Timur. But, during Safavid period these movements had assumed the shape of such knotty problems as were spoiling the whole Persian society and hence full attention was paid to annihilate these movements.

The main cause of the differences between Safavis and these movements was that the exponents of these movements interpreted the verses of glorious
Quran according to their own way of thinking and on account of that they were expelled from Persia but were given refuge in Hindustan by Mughal emperor, Akbar. Their migration to this region needs to be reviewed from religious and political point of view.

Here, we are not going to discuss how far Safavids were observing the rules and regulations of Islamic faith and culture but, the consequence of this heretic sect during Safavid period brings the question in mind how far Safavid were legitimate rulers so far as Islamic faith and belief were concerned.¹

¹ The religious practices, regarding Safavis have been discussed under cultural section of this treatise.
Safavis, who claimed to be Saiyid, descendant of Ali, deputed to strengthen Shiite sect (the follower of twelve Imams) and posed them to be the vicegerent of twelfth Imam, could not tolerate that any follower of Mahmud Pasikhan should declare him the twelfth Imam and the saviour of the world. It

1. Though, many historians have traced the genealogy of Safavids upto Imam Musa Kazim, the seventh descendent of Ali s/o Abou Talib, whose descendants are entitled "Saiyid" (the leader) in Iran, Afghanistan and Indian Sub-continent. But the modern research that has been done in this regard reveal that all such attributions are fictitious. Because, Sheikh Safi and all his descendants were addressed with the title of "Sheikh" (chieftain, a venerable person but not belonging to the holy family of the prophet) and it was for this reason that Shah Ismail the founder of Safavi dynasty was called Sheikh Oughholi the son of a Sheikh, (See: Alam Ara-i-Safavi, edited by: Yadullah Shukri Publication of Bunyad-i-Farhangi-i-Iran, Tehran, 1350 A.H./1971 A.D., p.49).

Hamdullah Mustofawi, the author of Nuzhat ul Qulub (the fragrance of the hearts), compiled his work in 740 A.H./1339 A.D. five years after the death of Sheikh Safi. He is not only unclear about the genealogy of Sheikh Safi, but regarding his creed, he writes that most of the people of Ardbil belong to the Shaf'i school and are disciples of Sheikh Safiuddin. This is also interesting and worth mentioning that the letter that Obaidullah Khan Uzbak wrote to Shah Tahmasb, I, in 936 A.H. (1539 A.D.) clearly mentioned that Sheikh Safi belonged to Sunni sect (See: Shah Tahmasb Safavi by Abdul Husain Nawai, Arghawan publication, Tehran, 1368 A.H./1989 A.D., p.33). Though, Shah Tahmasb I, claimed to be of Shiite sect and was devoted to twelve Imams, he does not deny that his ancestors belonged to Sunnite sect and gives reply in these words: "It should not be concealed that some of his ancestors, for a while followed the false creed (the sunnite sect) and polluted the pages of their hearts with the absurd beliefs", but this argument cannot be a reliable documentation. (See: Shah Tahmasb Safavi by Abdul Husain Nawai, Ibid, p.37).

2. In The letter that Shah Ismail wrote to Shaybak Khan Uzbak in the year 915 A.H. (1509 A.D.) he has pointed out that he was the descendent of Ali son of Abu Talib and quoted this line that, "who ever disputed with the descendants of Ali, he was ruined". He has also written four times "I seek the support of Ali". While paying his tribute to Ali, he also wrote this Persian verse:
If there is any Imam from the East to the West, he is Ali and (after him) any of his descendants, this is sufficient for us.
He also wrote a verse in Turkish and claimed to be the descendent of Ali (My mother was Fatima and my father was Ali, I am their heir). He used Khatai as his nom de plume in his poems, and says:

(Khatai is the slave of the descendants of Ali. I am disciple and the servant of Qanbar, the slave of Ali), See: Silsilat un Nasab by Sheikh Husain Pirzadah Zahedi, p.72.

3. In Iran a number of people lived at Andjan and Rastaq and assembled under the banner of Murid, who claimed to be Imam. At the same time those who followed Mahmud Pasikhan and believed him to be prophet were charged guilty. See: Tarikh-i-Afri, events of the year 982 A.H. Extract from Zindigani-i-Shah Abbas, Vol.III, p. 907.
was on account of this, that they became strong enemies of Nuqtavis, and to protect the true religion (the Shiite sect) from heresy. But, in fact, this enmity was a sort of political campaign against them.

As it has already been mentioned elsewhere in the early days of Shah Abbas I's reign he had realized that the main hindrance in the way of the preceding rulers of his dynasty was their inability to have absolute power in their hands at the time when Persia was passing through chaotic political conditions. The Mughal emperor Akbar had already ruled more than three decades over Hindustan and the situation of law and order in his realm was better than it was in Persia.

Shah Abbas I, removed from his way the influential Qazilbshi nobles in order to establish his absolute power.

This is quite evident here that Shah Abbas could resort to every means to remove his opponents from the scene. By his conduct, it also can be imagined how cruelly he would have crushed the members of Hurufi movement. This is also worth mentioning here, that Nuqtavis, like Hurufis could use all fair and unfair means for their political ends and approach by hook or crook the powerful persons of their time. They lured them by their ideas and meddled with the affairs of the state.

Just as Fazlullah Hurufi had put forward his sectarian ideas before Timur, had even enchanted his son Miran Shah, and both, in the beginning, did not have any bad opinion, in the same manner, Nuqtavis too offered their ideas to Shah Abbas I. At the early stage their relations were quite normal. But, soon, Shah Abbas realized that they were expanding their influence all over the country and that there was much possibility that they would pose a challenge to
his authority, as they were using the tenets of Islam as their instrument and were interpreting them in their own way with the intention of extending their political power.

When their plot was disclosed to Shah Abbas, he opposed them very strongly. Some of the clergy present at the court enjoying the position of "Sadr"¹ (the chief justice) and "Sheikh ul Islam (the highest religious authority in Islam) strongly supported the view of the Shah. They played an important role in condemning the beliefs of Nuqtavis and crushing their movement. They took the same action against them, as had already been taken by Timur, when the theologians of Samarqand had issued the decree to the effect that Hurufis be executed.²

¹ This position also existed during the reign of Timurid and Turkman dynasties. During Safavids period this institution was founded by Shah Ismail. In the beginning this office was given to such an established jurist to whom all religious matters were referred. In later periods it became an official post and a "Sadr" had also to look after some administrative jobs, particularly religious endowments, judicial matters and social affairs. For the position of Sadr, see Travel accounts of Tavernir, translated into Persian, by Abu Turab Nuri published by Kitab Khana-i-Sinai (Sinaii publishing house) Isfahan (Iran) p. 588, Safarnama-i-Sansoon, translated into Persian by Dr. Tafazzoli, Tehran 1364 A.H. (1985 A.D.) p.38, Siyahat Nama-i-Shardin (Voyages de chardin) Translated into Persian by Muhammad Abbasi, Vol. VIII, Amir Kabri publishers, Tehran, 1354 A.H. (1966 A.D) p.406 and Safar Nama-i-Kamofer (Engelbert Kampfer) translated into Persian by KayKaous Jahandari, Kharazmi publishers, Tehran, 1363 A.H. (1948 A.D.), p.142.

² Sheikh ul Islam, like Sadr, was an important religious position during Safavid period. This title was given in Ottoman empire to a jurist of the highest degree. Shah Abbas also introduced it at his court. Muhaqqiq Kurki was the first man on whom this title was bestowed. Formerly a Sadr was considered the highest person in clergy class, who dealt with all the religious matters. But, when Muhaqqiq Korki took the charge of his office, a Sadr was considered next to him. For detailed information, See: 1) Ahsan ut Tawarikh, edited by Norman Syden. published by Kitab Khana-i-Sadr (Sadr publishers) 1347 A.H. (1968 A.D.) p.454. (2) Mahafil ul Mumī'min, Ms.No. 6578, Kitab Khana-i-Astan-i-Quds, fol. 102 and forward. (3) Kampfer, Ibid, p.124. Tavernier, Ibid, p.588, Sanson, Ibid, p.42. Tazkarat ul Mulouk by Mirza Samia, edited by Muhammad Dabir Slayqi, Tehran, 1332 A.H./1953 A.D., p.3 and Tazkerah-i-Shah Tahmasb. by Shah Tahmasb Safavi, edited by Abdul Shakur, Berlin, Iranshahr, 1343 A.H./1964 A.D., p.16.
On this plea, Shah Abbas in 999 A.H./1590 A.D. the fourth year of his reign issued the order for the execution of Abul Qasim Amri, who had already been blinded by Shah Tehmasb, for supporting the Nuqtavias ideology. As he had revolted with the help of his disciples at Shiraz, Boyad Khan the ruler of Fars province arrested and imprisoned him. Taking into view the judgement passed by the clergy of Shiraz, declaring him infidel, he deserved execution. As they had also excited the people of the city to kill him, he was torn to pieces in the prison house with kitchen blade and pen knife.

In the same manner, by the order of Shah Abbas, Darvish Khusrau was choaked to death (by putting noose round his neck) in 1001 A.H./1592 A.D. at Qazvin, because since the time of Shah Tahmasb he was propagating Nuqtavia ideas. A number of his disciples, like Yusufi Tarkash doz (the quiver maker) were also executed. Mir Saiyid Kashi, known as Pir Ahmad, one of the leaders of that sect was cut into two pieces by Shah Abbas with his own sword at Nasr Abad, Kashan1 (town). Maulana Sulaiman Sauji was also killed, being charged with being a follower of Nuqtavi sect.

1. When Pir Ahmad was produced before the king, he was threatened to be killed if he did not report. But he replied, that he was not afraid of death. Because he believed that he would be incarnated very soon in a better form than the present. Earlier he several times came in this world and went back, headed. About three hundred twenty years before he appeared in the form of a handsome youth who was a very good scribe, people took his writings hand to hand as a sacred gift. By chance he saw one of his writings some time before and recognized immediately that it was written by him he concluded. At this the king drew the sword from the sheath and beheaded him. Second time he struck on his back and cut it into two. For detailed information, See: Naqavat ul Asar fi Zebr el Akhyar by Mahmud Hidayat Ullah of Natanz, edited by Dr.Ehsan Ishraqi, II edition, Tehran, 1373 A.H./1994 A.D. pp. 525 and 526.
In 1010 A.H./1601 A.D. Shah Abbas made a foot journey from Isfahan to Mashhad with many of his disciples, Darvish Kamal eqlidi and Dervish Turab also accompanied him. As the king had suspected that they were Nuqtavis, therefore, he killed all of them with the bullets of his gun at Qusha Caravan Serai.

The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* has written that the reason for killing the two above mentioned dervishes was that they believed that Shah Abbas was also a follower of Nuqtavi sect, as he had learned from them all the secret teaching of the creed formed by Mahmud Pasi Khani. As Shah Abbas did not want to reveal that he believed in Nuqtavi sect therefore, thought it wise to kill them.

Taking in view the harsh treatment that Shah Abbas had meted out to Nuqtavis, this charge seems to be baseless. Because, his characteristic conduct was to be kind to the followers of this sect, get to know their beliefs and ideas, and then annihilate them as he did earlier with Dervish Khusrau and his disciple Yusufi Tarkashdoz.

2. In those days when Shah Abbas had maintained very close relations with Khusrau Darvish and Yusufi Tarkashdoz in order to know about their secret designs, there appeared a comet. Mulla Jalal the royal astrologer and the other experts told the Shah that they believed the appearance of this comet indicated either some tremendous change in the country or the death of any one the great kings of the time. When the Shah summoned Yusufi Tarkashdoz, he also confirmed it and said that, "The appearance of this comet shows that a great change will take place in the pillars of the state, and one of the Darvishes of our sect would reach from spiritual kingship to the physical rulership. At this Abbas said, "who is in your sect, more deserving than you for kingship, so that I may make him to sit on the throne and the effect of this comet may prove your prediction." At this the king ordered his courtiers to give him royal dress, put crown on his head, fasten ornamented sword to his waist and make him sit on the throne with all the proper royal etiquettes. All the nobles and courtiers gave him full honour. In this way he ruled for three days, from Thursday to Sunday (7th to 10th Zilqadah 1001-27th to 30th August 1592 A.D.) On the last day he was hanged and shot dead. After that Shah Abbas, again sat on the throne on the advice of the royal astrologers. For further detail about Khusrau Dervish and Yusufi Tarkashdoz, See: *Naqavat ul Asar*, pp.515-524.
Shah Abbas, even killed in the year 1020 A.H./1611 A.D. Mulla Ayaz Munajjim (the astrologer) who was well versed in poetry, astronomy, astrology and geometry. He was charged that he was also skilled in numerology and necromancy. In this way he removed all those persons from his way, who were even doubted to be the followers of Nuqtavi sect. But among them Mullah Baqir Khurda succeeded in saving his life. He was the student of Mir Mui'z Uddin and had learnt from him the Nasta’liq style of Persian calligraphy and got such mastery on this style that he was renowned as Mir Moi’z II. When Shah Abbas asked him why he became guilty of mixing himself with the people of this sect? He replied that among the members of this ill fated group was a handsome youth who infatuated him by his fascinating gestures. Ultimately his passions over powered his patience and he could not resist to control himself.

Besides, as he did not know about their irrational conduct, as apparently they did not say any thing contrary to Islamic faith therefore he plunged in this dangerous situation (being fascinated by that charming youth). The king accepted his excuse and gave him in the charge of Farhad Khan Rukn ul Sultan (the pillar of the empire) the chief calligrapher of the imperial court. Finally, in the year 1006 A.H./1597 A.D., he made the journey to the Deccan (South India) and joined the service of Ibrahim Adil Shah (988-1035 A.H./1580-1625 A.D) the ruler of Bijapur and was honoured with the rank of Librarian.


2. He was son of Saiyid Ahmad Kashi Noqtavi, Mulla Baqir Khurda was his fan.

3. The men of letters who migrated from Persia to the Indian Sub continent, will be dealt with in the chapter six.
During the reign of Shah Abbas the environment in Persia was quite suffocating for Nuqtavis, sufis and the Muslims of Sunnite sect. But on the contrary, at the same period, Hindustan under the sovereignty of Akbar was a peaceful country where atmosphere was completely favourable for literary and religious activities. As compared to Safavid and Ottoman rulers this Mughal emperor was much above the racial, religious and sectarian prejudices. He condemned the wars fought between Muslims of Sunnite and shiite sects, disapproved of homicide, disliked plundering and hated the campaigns made by Safavi and Ottoman Kings, in the guise of holy wars against Georgian and Balkanian christians. He liked Muslims and non-Muslims like and treated all of them compassionately. In fact, he did not discriminate his Muslim subject against his Hindu subjects. He established matrimonial relation with Rajput rulers and appointed many Hendu army officers on very high posts. Consequently, when he came to know that Shah Abbas was brutally killing the nobles of his court, chiefs of Qazilbashid tribe and a number Nuqtavis, he wrote to him a letter, at the request of Abul Fazl Allami, the son of Sheikh Mubarak of Nagor who was one of the renowned nobles of his court.

In the letter which Akbar wrote to Shah Abbas he advised him to avoid torturing and killing the people on the pretext of religious and sectarian differences and implicitly condemned him on the massacre of Nuqtavis in this way:
"...full attention should be paid to look after the secrets and the affairs of these people. This authority, that has passed from hand to hand and this power granted transitorily, be wielded to please God, Almighty and seek His help in this regard. The (different) classes of people, who are the deposits of the treasure houses of the religions, be treated favourably and their hearts be joined with friendship. Knowing (the fact) that the people of all religions and sects share the general divine blessing and therefore efforts should be made to enter the everlasting garden of universal tolerance and always study should be made with the object to increase the authority; because God, Almighty nourishes all His created beings of different creeds, varied colours and conditions by opening the gates of His bounty upon them. Hence, it is the responsibility of the Sultans of exalted dignity being the shadow of Divinity, that they should not cede this conduct, for the simple reason that God, the creator of the universe has made this class of high origin to maintain discipline among the different classes of the people and guard the interest of all the common human beings of the world."
About the followers of different religions he particularly wrote what:

"When human beings in the matters of the world which are passing and transitory, do not make mistake intentionally, how can they be indulgent to carelessness in the affairs of religion, which is permanent and everlasting. Hence, all groups of the people are not beyond two classes. Either they are on right path - in that case they are following the right way and therefore, there is no alternative, except to follow them - or they are suffering from the disease of ignorance, therefore, deserve favour and compassion, but not reproach and punishment."¹

Akbar by his conduct showed that he was above religious prejudice and fanaticism, but, Abul Fazl, his minister secretary was charged to be the follower of Nuqtavi thoughts. The way in which he shielded the cause of the followers of this sect, helped to penetrate their ideas in the royal court. A number of the followers of this sect were received at Mughal court. This evidently shows that many of the courtiers had been influenced by the philosophy of this sect. Relevant to this matter Iskandar Beg Munshi Turkman writes about Abul Fazl that:

Sheikh Abul Fazl was one the men of high learning and good talent in the country of Hund (Hindustan). He was in the service of Jalal Uddin Akbar, the king of exalted dignity. Being close to him he got high respect. He was the follower of this sect (Nuqtavi) and led the king astray from the right path of the Islamic law by his absurd discourses and liberalism. The mandate that he had written and sent to Saiyid Mir Ahmad Kashi, was found in his treatises and it reflects his ideas.¹

Mullah Abdul Qadir Badauni is of the opinion that the tradition of prostrating before the king was the result of metempsychotic or Nuqtavi thoughts that had penetrated in the court. In this regard he writes under the title of "Zamin bus" (kissing the ground) that,

"...they make farfetched interpretations of the explicit texts of the Holy Quran and the statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They consider that the caliph of the time is perfect man. They interpreted him as the exact Holy Being but, not His shadow - and talked superstitiously about him. They recommended prostration before him and termed it as Zamin Bus. To observe full regard for the king was obligatory for them. They made others believe that the countenance of the king is the ultimate goal for the fulfillment of all ambitions and desires.

¹. Alam Ara-i-Abbasi, accounts of the seventh year of the reign of Shah Abbas I, p. 212.
This kind of interpretations became so popular at the court of Akbar\(^1\) that even keeping the fire alight, which is one of the traditions of Zoroastrians was considered the symbol of Divine manifestations in the form of illumination. About this Badauni writes:\(^2\)

The fire worshippers who had come from the newly built city of Gujrat province, considered the creed of Zoroaster as the true religion and paying reverence to fire is an important worship for them. They attracted the attention (of the king) towards them and made (him) acquainted with the ways and conduct of the (kings of) Kiyanid dynasty. At this his imperial Majesty ordered that the fire should be kept alight day night under the supervision of Sheikh Abul Fazl, according to the custom of the kings of Persia. Because, the fire is one of the manifestations of God and the symbol of Divine illumination.

This concept which has been named Mazhariyat (manifestation) is one of the beliefs of the Muslims of Ismaili sect, who greatly influenced the followers of Nuqtavi sect.

In the letter that Akbar wrote to Shah Abbas he pointed out that "the kings are the shadows of God" evidently shows that he also considered him as the manifestation of Divine light.

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1. Though prostration before the king was part of court etiquette during Sasanid period (224-652 A.D.) in Persia, Mughal ruler Akbar, like Safavid kings revived many Persian traditions of Sasanid period, including prostration. But, this tradition is quite contrary to Islamic faith, therefore, was termed as "kissing the ground", to appease those nobles and the rulers who had firm belief in Islamic faith and interpreted it in this way.

Maulana Fitrati, the poet who was at the court of Akbar, writes in a verse that the emperor, in the manner of Hindus sometimes paid reverence to the sun; as he says:

\[ Qismat Nigar ki dar khur-i-har jud-o-har atast. \]

\[ Aina ba Sikandar-o-ba Akbar aftab. \]

(This is the (chance of) luck, that every one gets the same reward for which he deserves. (This is the reason that), Alexander was given (merely) a mirror, while the sun came in the court of Akbar). \(^1\)

This is a well known historical fact that Akbar was very broad minded in his view and all sorts of religious fanaticism. It was the result of his liberal ideas that he was able to establish a new creed, called *Din-i-Ilahi* (a divine religion). This liberalism in his ideas and thoughts provided an opportunity to the followers of Nuqtavi faith that a number of them migrated to his court, because, they knew that there they would be received warmly and get full protection under royal patronage. Some of the poets and writers believing in Nuqtavi tenets, migrated from Persia to seek refuge at his court were:

Mir Ali Akbar Tashbihi, Mir Haidar Zehni Kashani, Hayati Kashani, Hakim Ibadullah Kashani, Muhammad Baqir Khurda-i-Kashani, Mir Sharif Amuli, Abdul Qani Yazdi and Javid-i-Qazvini, etc. \(^3\)

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3. Accounts of the poets and prose writers would be dealt with under the migration of the poets and other men of letters, in chapter six.
Nurbakhshi Movement

The Sufis living during the ninth century of Islamic era, having been inspired by the dynamic ideology of the Muslims of Shiite sect, started a movement called the Nurbakshia order. This movement was directed against the oppressive acts of Shah rukh Mirza, son and successor of Timur.¹

The sufis of this order were greatly influenced by the mystic philosophy of Muhi Oddin ibn ul Arabi (d.638 A.H/1240 A.D.), known as Tariqat-i-Akbaria (Akbari order). Unlike the Hurufis and the Nuqtavis, they believed, like all the Muslims, in Resurrection. They also held that belief in Shiite ideology alone was one of the prerequisites of mysticism. In order to demonstrate their faith in Shiaism they were dressed in black, a sign of mourning for the martyrdom of Husain.²

The Founder of Nur Bakhshi Order

This mystic order was founded by Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh (795-869 A.H./1392-1464 A.D.) of Qayin, a town in Khurasan province.³ He was the son of Muhammad Ibn-i-Abdullah Qutaifi Lahsavi and the seventeenth descendent, of Imam Musa Kazim, the seventh Imam of the Muslims of Shiite sect. After paying visit and homage to Imam Reza, the eighth Imam of shiite Muslims, he settled down at Qayn and married there. Saiyid Muhammad was

³ Qutaif is a port in Bahrain, where the father of Nurbakhsh was born.
born at that town in 795 A.H./1392 A.D.¹ At the age of seven he memorized all the thirty chapters of the Glorious Quran, studied traditional sciences at Hella under the guidance of Ahmad Ibn-i-Fahad of Hella and in a very short period mastered the various branches of practical and traditional sciences. Among his literary works are some treatises, namely Makatib Nur bakhsh, Risala-i-Nurya, Selsel t-uz-Zahab and Alfigh ul Ahvat.² Besides, he has also left behind a poetical collection, consisting of qasidas (elegies), ghazals (odes) and Rubaiyyat (quatrains) etc.³

On completing his education, Saiyid Muhammad felt much attraction for monastic life. He met Khwaja Ishaq Khatralani, who was a student and disciple of Saiyid Ali of Hamadan, (b.714 A.H./1314 A.D) the most renowned saint of the eighth century of Islamic era (14th Century of Christian era), who, being tired of the oppressions of Timur, migrated from Hamadan to Kashmir with seven hundred Saiyids (the descendants of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who were his followers.⁴

¹. Lahsa is situated in the West of the Persian Gulf and in the East of the Arabian peninsula. The grand-father of Nur Bakhsh was born there.


II. Dunbala-i-Justujou dar Tasawwouf-i-Iran pp. 176-178.

⁴. For further information see, the article "Az Hamadan ta Kashmir (from Hamadan to Kashmir) by Ali Asghar Hikmat, the monthly journal "Armaghan", year 1330 A.H. (1951 A.D.), issue VIII, pp.337-343.
Khwaja Ishaq, having observed his (Saiyid Muhammad) enthusiasm and promise as young man, took upon himself to train and tutor him in the sufistic way of living. He put on him the cloak of Saiyid Ali Hamadani and asked him to take his own seat and guide the people living in the monastery. He also gave the management of the monastery to his charge. Saiyid Muhammad was usually called Anwar (the lights), but when he became the disciple of Khwaja Ishaq he was entitled by him Nur Bakhsh (Bestower of Divine Light), as he was instructed by an unseen power in his dream.¹

Nur Bakhshi Movement: Socio-political point of view

The tyrannical rule of Amir Timur Kurkan brought about rapid social, political and particularly cultural deterioration in Persian society which prepared the ground for the organisation of Socio-political movements in the guise of religious reforms. One of them was Nur Bakhshi movement, which derived

¹ The Razat ul Janan-o-Jannat ul Jenan (the gardens of Paradise) records the event that when Saiyid Muhammad joined the discipleship of Khwaja Ishaq, there was a man Khaliq who was very much devoted to Saiyid Muhammad. He saw in a dream that Divine light had descended in his private chamber, from where it penetrated into the private chambers of others. He spoke out this dream to Ishaq, who gave the title of Nur Bakhsh to Saiyid Muhammad. See: Razat ul Jenan by Hafiz Husain Karbalai, edited by Ja'far Sultan Alqarayi published by Bungah-i-Tarjuma-o Nashr-i-kitab, Tehran, 1344 A.H. (1965 A.D.), Vol.II, p.249.

Furthermore, Saiyid Muhammad himself writes regarding this title in his treatise, Selselat ul zahab (chain of gold) "oh my dear, when the True Lord bestows the guidance of the people of the world (upon some person) - after his annihilation in Him to the state of reaching eternity - He from His perfect domain grants to every person according to his capability, from some divine illumination and calls him either Nurdan (Holder of the illumination) or Nur bin (the Seer of the illumination) or Nourbakhsh (bestower of illumination).

See: Resala-i-Selselat ul Zahab, Manuscript collection No.3497/20, Central Library of the University of Tehran, p.10.
inspiration, like the Hurufis and the Baktashis, from the revolutionary ideas of the Shiite Muslims to resist what they perceived was the oppressive conduct of Timurid rulers.

The chief organizer of this political movement was Khwaja Ishaq Khatalani. As a justification for his cause, brought to the scene Nour Baksh and presented him as Mahdi. He swore his allegiance to Saiyid Muhammad and also asked his disciples to pledge their loyalty to him. In this way he encouraged Saiyid Muhammad to revolt against Shahrukh, son of Timur.¹

The Mosles, as article of faith believe that the Mahdi will appear as a reformer. He will be born in the holy family of prophet Muhammad, he will work for the Salvation of all human being but, on the contrary. Saiyid Muhammad poses himself as Mahdi to attract the people to make his movement successful, thus he violated the Islamic principles. One of the objects of his movement like other politico-religious movements (e.g. the Hurufi and the Nuqtavi movements) was to fight against tyrannical rulers to eradicate all social evils, and this was possible, at that time only when one poses oneself as Mahdi. This, too was the reaction of the measures which were taken by Amir Timur, who plundered the countries in the name of holy war and declared himself the

¹ Among the disciples of Khwaja Ishaq one was Saiyid Abdollah, a native of Borzesh Abad town. He did not promise his loyalty to Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh. In this way, in the mystics of Kubraveya order there came another branch into being which was Zahabia, which consisted of the followers of Abdullah of Borzesh Abad. But in spite of that, the Sufis of Kubraveya order, who followed Nur Bakhsh were called Nurya, Nour Bakhshiya as well as Zahabiyaa See: Bosian ul Seyhaat, by Zain ul Abidin Shirvani, Kitab Khana-i-Sinai (Sinai publishing house), 1st edition, Tehran, 1315 A.H., p.322. and Zarrin koub, Ibid., pp. 182 and 183.
restorer of the Islamic faith and the reformer of that religion. In spite of resorting to his oppressive misdeeds he was confident of his authority.¹

In the beginning, Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh did not consent to shoulder this heavy responsibility. Because he realized that he would not be able to stand against Shah Roukh, who was dominating Persia, Turkistan, Hindustan and Syria. But, the persistent requests of Khwaja Ishaq and his disciples forced him to accept the offer.²

About the uprising of Nur Baksh against Shah Rukh, Qazi Nour Ullah of Shustar writes:

"... as Khwaja (Ishaq belonged to shiite sect, he did not like the domination of the rulers of Sunni sect, particularly of Shahrukh."³

After getting acquainted with Nur Bakhsh, the sympathy with religion and devotion to the family of the prophet Muhammad (peace be

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1. This refers to the verse of Glorious Quran, that says:
   O ye who believe
   Obey God, and Obey the Apostle,
   And those charged
   with authority among you.
   See: Sura Nisa, verse 59.


3. He came to Hindustan in the year 992 A.H./1585 A.D. during the reign of the Mughal ruler Akbar, for preaching Shiite theology. He was appointed chief justice of Lahore and remained on this position throughout his reign.
upon him) compelled him to take measures like the preceding leader who had revolted against the Abbasi. Ultimately, he persuaded Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh, declared him Mahdi and called him Imam."

Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh went to one of the forts of Khatalan, in the year 826 A.H./1422 A.D., with some of his disciples so that he might make preparations to fight against Shah Rukh. There he invited the people to join him in his campaign. As a result of this confrontation Khwaja Ishaq was killed along with his brother and he was exiled to Fars province after being arrested at Herat.

At that time, Sultan Ibrahim, son of Shahrukh, was the ruler of Fars province, who did not imprison him for certain diplomatic reasons and set him free. His release from the prison prepared the ground for his renewed political activities and declared him self the restorar of the Caliphate. From there he went to Kurdistan province and to the regions of Bakhtiyari tribes settlements, where he enrolled his disciples in a very large number. There, not only common men, but even influential local rulers too, accepted his supremacy and made him their king, his coins were struck and issued and Khutba was read in his name. When these events were going on, Shahrukh was in Azarbyjan province. He ordered his arrest and that he be brought to the royal camp. Shahrukh had designs for his murder, but he succeeded in escaping from there, only to be arrested again. This time he was confined in an underground cell from where he was sent to Heyat as captive.

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At this Shahrukh compelled him to go on to the pulpit on Friday and from there declare, before the afternoon prayer, that he was forgoing his claim to caliphate. Finally, in the month he his claim to caliphate. Finally, in the month of Jamadi ul Awwal 840 A.H./Nov. 1436 A.D. fetters were removed from his feet on the condition that he would not give lectures on traditional sciences, lest people gather around him in large numbers and avoid the use of black turban.\(^1\) But, in spite of all these restrictions he continued his political activities and made things reach an extent that Shahrukh again ordered that he be taken to Tabriz and from there be exiled to the Ottoman Empire. This time too be succeeded in escaping and went towards Shirvan and Gilan provinces. There also he collected disciples in large numbers.

Finally, after the death of Shahrukh (850 A.H./1446 A.D.) he went to Rey and continued, as usual, his politico-religious activities with more energy and enthusiasm. At last, he died in 869 A.H./1464 A.D. at Sulaqan, a town situated

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1. It is the tradition of the Persians that the Saiyids, always use black turban.
near present Tehran and was buried there in the garden that he had planted himself.¹

After the death of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh, his son Shah Qasim Faiz Bakhsh was declared his successor. But, in his time this movement lost its vigour. Even his claim to be Mahdi, the reformer of the world, ws buried in oblivion and finally the situation reached an extent that his descendents did not like even to hear of this subject. Later, this matter became so serious that Shams Uddin Muhammad Lahiji, the disciple of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh and the compiler of *Sharh-i-Gulshan-i-raz* (the commentary on Gulshan-i-raz or the garden of mystic secrets, a poem on mystic thoughts) refused to accept the authority of this claim. After the death of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh, he, therefore went to Shiraz from Ray and there he established his own mystic order for the guidance of the people. There, he attracted disciples in a very large

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1. The chronogram of his death was versified in the following lines:

   *Aftah-i auj-i Danish Nur-i Chashm-i ahl-i-din*
   *Nur Bakhsh-i-Jism-o-Jan an Qahrman-i-Ma-o-Tin*
   *Sal-i-Om rash bud hafta dose-o-Wafat*
   *Hashtsad shasto noh-o-Mahash rabiul Awwalain*
   *Chardah zan mah rafteh Panjshanbah Chashtagah*
   *Dargozshi za alam-e-Hamam-ul-Alamin*

(The sun of the zenith of learning, the eyesight of the followers of religion.

The illumination given to the body and soul, the champion on the earth, made of water and clay. He was seventy three years old at the time of his death. The year was eight hundred sixty nine, and the month Rabi ul Awwal, when he migrated from this mortal world to the world of champions. He expired on Tuesday, the 14th of the month at midday.

For further information, regarding his hardships at the hands of Shah Rukh and the good pieces of advice that he left for him to his disciples See: *Asand o Mukatebat-i-Tariikh-i-Iran* (Historical documents and letter of Iran, compiled by Abdul Husain Nawali, third edition, 1370 A.H./1991 A.D. limi and Farhangi publications, pp.150-154.

145
number and collected funds from them to build Khanqah-i-Nurya (Nurya monastery) and in this way became the founder of the Nur Bakhshid order at Shiraz.¹

No doubt, Nur Bakhshi movement, after the death of the founder of this order lost the aggressive spirit, but, its teachings were carried to Hindustan, upto Kashmir by Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, one of the disciples of Shah Qasim Faiz Bakhsh.² In the beginning these ideas were refuted by Muslim theologians and Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh’s book, Fiqh-i-Ahwat was considered a misleading work, but, later his mystic thoughts were accepted over a great part of that region (i.e. Laddakh, Avadh, Faizabad, and Dehradun).³ and the city of Dehli was also under its influence.

One of the reasons behind the loss of the aggressive spirit of the Nur Bakhshi revolutionary movement was that, after the death of its founder (Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh) Shah Qasem and the other children of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh, i.e.....Saiyid Ja’far and Saiyid Baha’uddin were highly revered by the Timuri rulers of the later period.⁴ This was the main reason that the mystics of the Nour Bakhshi order did not want to continue any movement


against them. Besides that, when the Safavids came to power, the Shiite thoughts made such a great impact upon the Nur Bakhshi teachings, that there appeared a concordance between the two.\textsuperscript{1} It was on account of this, that the reverence for all the descendants of Saiyid Muhammad Nur Bakhsh was also maintained by the Safavis, except one, namely Khwaja Arjasb, son of Khwaja Sheikh A'li Tehrani, known as Ummid-i-Razi, whom Shah Tahmasb treated very harshly. His account will be given in the chapter dealing with the migration of the poets and other men of learning to Hindustan.\textsuperscript{2}

**Baktashi Movement:**

The Baktashi Movement was one of the important mystic movements which thrived during the eighth century A.H. influenced by the Shiite ideology. It started its missionary work and preached its spiritual teachings.

The founder of this order was one Saiyid Mohammed Haji Baktash vali, born at Nishbour, then the capital of Khurasan province. His father was Saiyid Ibrahim and mother's name was Khatom who was the daughter of Sheikh Ahmad, one of the learned men of that city.

The Baktashi movement developed and branched out particularly during the 9th century A.H. (16th Century A.D.) at Anatolia and hence did not have much concern with the Timurid rulers, but here the two fold aspects of this movement are required to be discussed.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Risala-i-Firqa-i-Nurbakhshiya, }pp. 72-76.
\item In some parts of India, particularly in the hilly regions (like Dehradoun and Laddakh) these ideas penetrated and still Muslims of that region act upon the teachings of \textit{Fiqh-i-Ahwat.}
\end{enumerate}
The first pertains to its relations with the Hurufis, who fled to Anatolia after being rooted out from Persia by Timur and Shahrukh Mirza his successor. At Anatolia they revived their politico-religious and cultural life under the banner of the Baktashi discipline.¹

The second aspect is related to their religious belief. As they were extremist in following the Shiite tenets they found in the Qazilbashes, the strong supporter of Shah Ismail Safavi, their counterpart who also had the same ideas, consequently both of them developed cordial relations which won them the reverence of the Safavis who gave in to their ideology.²

This should be noted here, that the sectarian prejudice of the Safavid rulers was one of the important factors for the migration of many Persian Scholars, poets, and men of letters from Persia to Hindustan.

Apparently, Haji Baktash Vali had spent the early days of his life in Persia. But, very little is known about his childhood and the days of his youth. In the Turkish sources, he has been mentioned as one of the students and strict follower of Ahmad Yasvi, the son of Shukh Ibrahim, born at Sayram, (a town in Western Turkistan) during the second half of eleventh century A.D. He completed his education at his home town, which was at that time under the rule of Qarakhani dynasty and was considered as one of the great centres of Islamic studies. Shukh Yusuf of Hamadan 9d.1140 A.D.) was one of those teachers

1. *Alrisalato ul Ahmadia fi Tarikh-et Tariqat el Baktashia* (a treatise on the history for Baktashid order by Ahmad Serribaba, published at Sharq Press, Egypt 1358 A.H./1939 A.D.

2. Ritter H. *Aghazi-Firqa-l-Hurufia* (the rise of Hurufia sect) p.76.
who inspired him most. After completing his education he went to Yesi town and there he established the Yasvi order.

Ahmad Yasvi, being Scholar of Islamic studies and Persian literature inspired mystic thoughts among his disciples and preached Islamic ideas in simple words among those Turk villagers and nomadic people who had newly embraced the Islamic faith. While preaching Islamic tenets, he also revived among them the tribal traditions, which were very common in that region since long. In this way he made them very staunch Muslims and also amalgamated their tribal traditions, with their creed.¹

Yasviism though originated in Transoxiana, yet it spread its roots in the directions of Kharizm, Bulgaria, Khurasan, as well as in other parts of Persia. As mentioned above Haji Baktash Vali was born at Nishabur, and completed his studies there and was given there in the charge of Luqman Paranda (one of the successors of Ahmad Yasvi) to teach him the disciplines of Baktashi order. After completing his training, he set out on journey, to preach this order. It has been revealed by modern research that it was Haji Baktash Vali who propagated the teachings of his order in Asia Minor.²

Haji Baktash Vali, after migrating to Asia Minor, made his first sojourn at Sivas (a city in Asia Minor), and then went to Mecca for performing the holy pilgrimage. The title "Haji" (the pilgrim) was prefixed to his name (Baktash)


2. For further detail, see : *Muntakhabati az Divan-i-Hikmat Ahmad Yasvi* [a selection of the poems of Ahmad Yasvi, pen named Hikmat (the wisdom)] by Kamal Arsalan, Ankara, 1983, p.53.
after the performance of this pilgrimage. After that he went to the city of Amasya and entered the circle of the disciples of Baba Ishaq, known as Baba Rasul Ullah, the leader of Babais, who had launched his campaign against the Sunni nobles of the Saljuq dynasty, but was suppressed and its supporters were driven away in different directions. Some of them joined other movements of this type; one of them had been started by Shukh Badruddin Samavna (b.760 A.H./1359 A.D.). The others rejoined the circle established by the disciples of Haji Baktash Vali. It was since then that Haji Baktash Vali gradually became the focus of attention and the people who came to pay their respect to him addressed him as Pir (preceptor) and Murshid (instructor) being the founder of Baktashi order. 

The Baktashi order started its activities in the Ottoman empire during the 9th century A.H./14th century A.D. It was functioning there successfully parallel to other orders, like Haidaris, Qalandaris and Abdali which were very popular there at that time. During the ninth and tenth centuries A.H./15th and 16th centuries A.D., the Baktashid order was particularly popular among the Janissaries. The concepts of other esoteric orders were also acceptable if they

1. As Haji Baktash Vali writes, ..... "Ahmad Yasvi Said this mortal world is not place of enjoyment for me, I am making preparations for the next world. I have appointed you to go to Rum." Next day, after receiving this order, Haji Baktash Vali Sought the permission of Ahmad Yasvi and set out on his journey early in the morning. See: Vilayat Nama'a treatise, consisting of poems in praise of God by Haji Baktash Vali, edited by Abdul Baqi Golpinavli, Istanbul, 1985, pp. 5-9.


3. The Janissaries were selected in the regular Ottoman army from amongst the Christians, who later gained so much power that they could enthrone or depose the Ottoman Sultan.
were not basically contrary to the ideas of the above mentioned order. Though during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839 A.D.) there was a general massacre of them in the year 1826 and the recruitment of Janissaries was also done away with but during the reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz (1861-1876 A.D.) it was again revived which functioned with renewed Vigour, in the Ottoman empire.¹

This order during the 8th century A.H./14th century A.D. was generally accepted in Western Anatolia by the soldiers, Janissaries and those persons who were called "Mujahidan-i-Rum (fighters of Rum), who carried it to Balkan peninsula when they went there with victorious Ottoman army. From there it penetrated into Albania through Tuna Coast, where several monasteries were created later. The migration of this order, in this way helped a lot; the inhabitants of Balkan peninsula were persuaded to embrace Islam and accept any such order having the teachings similar to those of the Baktashi.²

In the 9th century A.H./15th century A.D. Baktashi order had very strong footing and became a regular order, before its charge was taken by Balim Sultan (922 A.H./1516 A.D.) the second founder of it, who rightly deserved to be called one of its founders. He made certain modifications in the basic rules of this order and reoriented those organizations which were functioning inside the


2. Fakhruddin A’jami was originally a Persian. He was the student of Mir Saiyid Sharif Jurjani. He was appointed Mufti (expounder of Sunnite jurisprudence) of Constantinople. He had issued order that the Hurufis should be burnt alive like the followers of Manes.
monasteries. He also organized those monks who were living in groups among the religious people of the villages and town located around the monasteries. These monks did not marry, lived in monasteries and as a demonstration of their celibacy used to wear iron rings in their ears. Apparently it seems that such practices would have been borrowed from Christian monks, but a deep study reveals that the dervishes of the Qalandari order, who were very similar to the Baktashis in their teachings, also observed such practices.\footnote{This has been mentioned earlier, that the Hurufis, at Anatolia, from the beginning tried to associate with influential persons so that they might win their sympathy and goodwill for their mission, and use them as prize for their cause.}

During the 9th century A.H./15th century A.D. they were scattered throughout the entire Anatolia. During the reign of Sultan Murad II, the Ottoman ruler (1421-1451 A.D.) and in the early days of the reign of Sultan Muhammad Fatih (1451-1481 A.D.) they had grown so much domineering that even the courts of these Sultans were tottering under their weight. But, when Mahmud pasha Vazir and Fakhruddin A'jami, kept them under strict vigilance, they thought it wise for their survival to amalgamate with the Baktashis. Thus they continued their preachings in cognito. At the time when an attempt was made on the life of Bayazid II (481-1521 A.D.) the dervishes called Torlak were thought to have been implicated. As a result the Hurufis, were also kept under strict surveillance. It was also one of the reasons why they mingled with the Baktashis, like the Hurufis and continued their campaign. This is also worth mentioning here, that the Baktashi order, since the early days of its formation had taken very liberal views and had introduced many heretical ideas and thus
was not much different in spirit from the other similar ordrs. But, on the basis of such observations, it would not be justified to characterise them as such from the historical point of view.¹

The cordial relations among several orders at Anatolia left deep impact on each other. It is on account of this that the mottos of different orders were very similar to the motto of the Baktashi order. Subsequently, the different forms of extremist esoteric shiities, called "ghulat" (the extremists) by Islamic jurists, produced their own mystic interpretations regarding that class of Qalandari order who had borrowed their ideas from the Malamatiyah² (reproachers) order of Khurasan (the more primitive form of which was the concept of Unity of The³ Being). They had appeared at Anatolia during the 7th century A.H./13th century A.D. under the influence of the mystic philosophy of Muhiuddin Arabi). Traces of Shamanism, prevalent among the turk nomads and the beliefs of Hurufis were clearly evident among these Baktashis who lived in the ninth century A.H./14th century A.D. They were neither uniform nor stable, therefore, they always remained such a jumble that they could not be embodied in a particular form.

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1. For further information regarding the beliefs of the Hurufis and their activities at Anatolia, see : Shiites and Baktashis during the 10th century A.H. (16th Century A.D.), by Ahmad Rafiq Alton. These records are preserved at the Turkish archives. Translated by Tufiq Sobhani, Ma’rif, journal. Ist issue, Vol.XII, Farvadin-Tir month (March-April) 1372 A.H > (1993) pp. 104-110.

2. The followers of this order behaved in a manner which elicited the reproach and hate of the people. In this way they reformed themselves by removing those shortcomings which were pointed out by others. This was one of the means to come closer to God, Almighty.

3. Unity of Being in mystic conception is complete annihilation of devotee in God. This view was first offered by Husain Mansur Hallaj, who used to say "I am the Truth"
The main reason of the success of the Baktashi order, like many other esoteric orders, was that it was divided in many grades. Every initiate was given instructions according to the level of his understanding. This ambiguity and obscurity was such that this order with this system was not only popular at the great centres of Sunnite Muslims and various sunnite orders but was equally popular among those villagers, nomads frontier guards and those Muslims who were out of the pale of the sunnite influence. The teachings of this order were so vague that none of its principles were intelligible and thus could not be propagated successfully. It also lacked adaptation to different environments and did not fulfil the requirement of those disciples who were the seekers of such an order which could satiate their thirst. On the contrary its teachings were obscure and could be interpreted in various ways. If we take into consideration the religious conditions of the Muslims of Anatolia and the tribal people of Rum (Byzantine), keeping in view the ideas prevalent among the esoteric shiite Muslims, during the 7th and the 8th centuries A.H. (13th to 15th centuries A.D) we will find that every spiritual precepter had gathered round him a number of disciples and was so much cautions in his sermons as nothing could be made out of them. This they had done purposefully with the intention that the followers of various other sects might not get at any thing during the choatic conditions of those days. This was the main reason that the Baktashi order, since the day of its coming into being had gained popularity among the simple minded Byzantine Muslims and Christians.

The other reason of its popularity as a religious belief, was that its concepts suited the time and gradually adopted had the characteristics of a time
server. The result of the close mutual links among several orders was that, the Baktashis, like Christianity, evolved the concept of Holy Trinity, (God, Muhammad and Ali), giving priority to Ali, the Caliph, over Muhammad, the prophet. Subsequently the belief of the divinity of Ali had brought them closer to the sect of Deifiers of Ali. Being influenced by this concept of the Baktashis, some Baktasho-Hurufis also cultivated the belief of divinity of Fazlullah Hurufi. According to this concept therefore, Ali (the caliph), Haji Baktash (the founder of the Baktashi order) and Fazlullah (the restorer of Hurufi order) were placed at the highest position in the Baktashi order.¹

In all these orders the personality of Ali, the caliph, has always been the centre of gravity for all the politico-religious movements and Shiism, too, was considered a sharp weapon in all these political movements, but in spite of all that every order, in consideration of the political situation, changed its policy according to the time and circumstances of the place. For example, the Baktashi order in the region of Rum Eilee, Asia Minor, was considered a religious group rather than a political party, it was therefore always supported in the territory of Ottoman empire and the chiefs of the order were always paid great esteem. In the same manner, the Hurufis at the time of launching their campaigns against Timur were considered great enthusiasts and torch bearers of revolution, but, in the region of Anatolia, as they were under strict surveillance and their political activities were watched they decided to capitalise the social position of the Baktashis and continued their political activities under their banner. The element that hardened the attitude of the Ottoman rulers, and made them take a serious

¹ For further information regarding this subject, see, Velayat Nama, Haji Baktash Vali, pp.5-9.
and strict note was shiism, which had gained much popularity in the region of Anatolia. As the Ottomans were always against the Persian, so, they had also suppressed all their revolutionary movements and it was for this reason that every revolutionary shiite movement met blood shed and oppression.

Shiism was such a sectarian weapon as was always used by the Persian rulers against the Ottoman Turks to defeat them in the political field. While the Ottomans were always on the look out to shatter and uproot shiism and banish it from their territory, they also tried to get their hold over the Eastern provinces of their empire which were under the control of the Persians. But, as Baktashism under the protection of the Ottomans had become a regular military force, no body was concerned with the descendants of Haji Baktash. It was for this reason that Alhaj Faiz Ullah, one of the descendants of Haji Baktash Vali and a highly esteemed person of his time, lived in this monastery at Istanbul with full honour. But, the Ottoman rulers (who were the followers of the Sunniite sect of Islam) and particularly the clergy class of the court, looked upon Shiism as a potential politico sectarian danger which always threatened them. As the shiites of the Eastern provinces were under the politico sectarian influence of

1. For further information, See: Asnad-i-Ahmad Rafiq (Documents of Ahmad Rafiq), Maref (Journal) Vol.I. year 1372 A.H. (1993 A.D.), pp. 2 to 74. The original papers are preserved at Viziri achives (Istanbul), and Naqsh-i-Turkan-i-Anatoli dar tashkâl-o-Tausia-i-Daulat-i-Safavi (Role of Anatolian Turks in the formation and expansion of Safavid empire), translated into persian by Muhammad Taqi Emami, 1371 A.H. (1992 A.D.), Majmua-i-Pazhohesh-i-Tarikhi (a collection of historical research).

2. Particularly the punishments meted out to those shiites who had their relations with Persia, killing of those persons who financially helped Shah Ismail Safavi in the shape of religious charity funds, confiscation of the shiite literature and even seizing those Persian carpets on which the name of Ali, the Caliph, and Husain, the grand son of the prophet, (peace be upon him) were woven, besides, other measures were also taken against the shiites.

Persia, so, they showed much dynamism in receiving the Persian intruders in Ottoman territories they considered this act of theirs as an act which would be doing them good (spiritual) reward. This necessitated their strict surveillance by the Ottomans.

The conversion of Shah Ismail Safavi to Shiism and his revolt against the Muslims of the Sunni sect resulted ultimately from the suppression of the Shiites by the Ottomans. For this act the Ottomans were also equally responsible, because they always neglected the Shiites.

Sultan Muhammad II (D.886 A.H./1481 A.D.) entitled Fatih\(^1\) (the victorious) annexed the region of Anatolia to Ottoman empire. As the people there were deprived of all the comforts of life, led a hard life in high mountains and sought their mental relief by performing religious practices, so, they surrendered themselves to the power seeking but lawful authority of Shah Ismail, one of the descendants of Sheikh Safiuddin of Ardbil as the ruler of Persia. Consequently, Shah Ismail also reacted against the measures taken by the Ottoman Turks and carried out his sectarian policy. At the time when Sultan Bayazid II (year of accession 886 A.H./1481 A.D.), the son of Sultan Muhammad Fatih was ruling over Ottoman empire there were many deputies of Shah Ismail who were living at Anatolia. The provinces of Hamid and Takha were mostly occupied by them and they wielded much influence there on the one

\(^1\) As Sultan Muhammad had captured Istanbul (then called Constantinople) and sounded the death knell of the Byzantine empire on 20th of the month of Jamid ul Awwal 857 A.H. (29th May 1453 A.D.) so he was entitled “Fatih”.

157
hand and\(^1\) the province of Azarbajjan was the pocket of those sufis who were the disciples of Shah Ismail on the other. The sectarian revolt that had started in the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman empire dealt out such a menacing threat to it that Bayazid II was forced to suppress it. Shah Ismail, too stationed his army at Tabriz, the capital of Azarbajjan and did not let the Ottomans attack that region. Most of the sufis, residing in Hamid and Tokka provinces were exiled to the coastal area of Rum-i-ill. Instructions were sent to the provincial governors to the effect that any person called Sufi should not be permitted to enter Anatolia. In spite of all these restrictions people of Hamid and Takka provinces were fully prepared to start sectarian revolution. They started hostilities at the time when they realized that the Ottoman Turks were confronted with political crises in their territory.

This happened at the time when price Salim revolted against his father Bayazid II and when the Ottoman empire was faced with such a critical situation as posed a serious danger to its very survival. Shah Ismail took advantage of this situation and continued his political activities in the Eastern region of his country. Consequently, a strong support from different Shiite tribes of Anatolia played a very significant role for the success of Shah Ismail to come in power. But, when the Safavid established their authority over the country and declared Shiism as the official sect of their realm, Unfortunately, they had not adequate number of shiite jurists and sufficient juristic material They therefore adopted

\(^1\) The present region of Anatolia, was called Takka in ancient times, after the name of one of the prince of Hamid dynasty. Local people also call it Takallu. The revolutionaries of this region were generally shiites and were more extremists than the Qazilbashis of Persia.
beliefs of extremist shiite Muslims who were influenced by the ideas of the Anatolian Turks. They some way or the other, were also inspired by the Baktashi thoughts, which did irreparable harm to the cultural life of the country. But, Haji Baktash Vali, from social and historical point of view, left a remarkable impact, on the religious and cultural identity of the people of Asia Minor. His role has been so significant that some scholars are of the opinion that his movement the biggest and most forceful, acted as a factor for the propagation of Islam in that region and Balkan peninsula. Some Turkish writers also believe that he was one of the giant pillars in the field of cultural life and played an important role in making Anatolia a Turkish speaking region. they consider him the gallant hero of his age. At present many Baktashis live in Turkey Albania and Egypt. The place called Almuqattam is an important centre of Baktashis at Cairo.¹

¹ For speaking Baktashid order in Egypt, See: Ahmad Serribaha, Alresalat ul Ahmadya pp. 25-48.