

JURISPRUDENCE

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE HURUF MOVEMENT

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14499250>

Abstract

Hurufism, as a significant philosophical and high-level ideological belief system, emerged as a political-legal ideology. Before long, it expanded beyond its birthplace in Azerbaijan, spreading into the ideological currents of the Near and Middle East, and Western Europe, influencing social, economic, political life, and the formation of legal worldviews.

The article focuses on the role and place of global ideas related to the defense of the inherent, undeniable rights and freedoms of humanity, regarded as the noblest of creatures, as the foundation of the ideological and belief philosophy that emerged during the Hurufi period.

Keywords: Hurufism, ascetic, sheikh, prayer, ideology, scholar, mystic, human, poet, cultural development, secularism.

Neither Fazlullah Naimi nor other Hurufi scholars or writers have written anything against the Quran. A significant point is that the deep, multifaceted meanings of Hurufi ideas are consistent with the Quranic verses and hadiths. All Sufi scholars agree that knowing the divine Creator inevitably passes through knowing humanity. This scientific explanation elevates the status of humanity to that of God. (6, p.48)

According to Batiniyya and Hurufi interpretations, the Prophet himself referred to the inner and outer meanings of the Quran. The Quran also clearly commands the interpretation and explanation of its verses. However, their full interpretation is known only to God (or to God and those deeply rooted in knowledge). Those who are deeply rooted in knowledge declare, "We believe in them; all of them are from our Lord." But only those with understanding grasp this. (3, p.453)

Some scholars have attempted to depict the Hurufi movement as an esoteric philosophical-legal school, emphasizing the necessity of understanding the inner meanings of Quranic verses. However, Fazlullah Naimi regarded Sharia as a mirror of truth, thus advocating for the comprehension of the inner meanings of Quranic verses (1, p.125).

On the other hand, the Hurufis believed that even after attaining true faith, they were obligated to perform religious rituals. This sets them apart from other esoteric movements. A prominent Hurufi scholar considered adherents of Sharia to be people of outward practice, stating, "Those who do not pray are incapable of comprehending the Prophet's secret." (7, p.128). Consequently, accusations labeling the Hurufis as heretics, apostates, or irreligious individuals are unfounded.

Abu Mansur writes: "Hurufis behave like Sunnis in Sunni assemblies and like Shias in Shia gatherings." Similarly, A. Gulpenarli states that Hurufis outwardly identify as Sunnis among Sunnis and as Shias among Shias, utilizing characteristics of esoteric Shiism. While they acknowledge eleven Imams and deny the existence of the twelfth Imam (Imam Mahdi), aligning somewhat with Sunni views, their ablution practices match those of Sunnis rather than Shias, who perform ablution by wiping their feet (1, p.132). Moreover, during prayers, Hurufis insist on folding their arms (like Sunnis), contrasting with Shia practices of keeping arms free (1, p.133).

Thus, the limited alignment with Shiite doctrines precludes labeling the Hurufis as purely Shia. Their distinctive ideas, spiritual philosophy, and unique principles highlight their position beyond Sunni or Shia classifications, signifying an independent intellectual and mystical movement.

Hurufism exerted a profound influence on other sects and political orders through its leaders, poets, philosophers, and intellectuals. Esteemed figures like Balim Sultan, known as *Pir-i Sani* among the Bektashis, and others such as Osman Baba, Yamini, and Baghdadli Ruhi, played key roles in propagating Hurufi thought. This ideology also permeated the works of prominent poets in the Mevlevi tradition, such as Muhammad Dede and Hussain Fakhruddin Dede.

One of the central themes of Hurufism, the "Istiva Line" (the Middle Path), is evident in the symbols used by Mevlevi leaders, such as the vertical line on their hats and cloaks, possibly inspired by the Hurufi concept of the Istiva Line (2, p.375).

Prominent scholar T. Khumarlu, in his work "*Imadeddin Nasimi and the Hurufi Movement*," asserts that in Anatolia and the Balkans, groups within the Bayrami, Malamati, Qalandari, and Khalwati orders, as well as some Qizilbash factions, were significantly influenced by Hurufism (4, p.59). Similarly, Ahmed Yashar suggests that Qalandari Sufi orders were deeply impacted by Hurufi pantheistic philosophy, evident in the teachings of figures like Qayghiz Abdala and Ottoman Baba (5, p.148).

During the 15th century, Hurufism gained traction in the Ottoman Empire and even influenced the palace. However, its adherents faced severe persecution, as illustrated by the execution of Hurufi scholars under Sultan Mehmed II. Despite such challenges, Hurufism persisted, becoming a core doctrine within the Bektashi order during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The Bektashis revered figures like Imam Ali, Haji Bektash, and Fazlullah Naimi, and their doctrines, such as *Nuqtat-ul-Bayan*, were rich with Hurufi teachings. Similar to Hurufis, they wore white cloaks and hats (9, p.202).

Another movement, the Nuqtavis, emerged as a derivative of Hurufism, founded by Muhammad Pesikhani, a disciple of Fazlullah Naimi. This demonstrates the enduring influence of Hurufism.

Renowned scholar Tawakkuli, in his book "*The Hurufi Movement*," highlights the ideological goal of Hurufism: to liberate humanity from superstition, foster creativity, and achieve enlightenment. Based on a pantheistic philosophy, Hurufism sought to abolish inequality, dismantle ideological weapons of oppression, and elevate human beings as the ultimate manifestation of divine truth (4, p.122).

Because humanity forms the core of Hurufi thought, according to this ideology, everything and the

essence of existence finds meaning and significance in the existence of humanity.

Based on pantheist philosophy, the main goal and social-political and legal objective of Hurufi teachings is to achieve the abolition of fanaticism and inequality in terms of rights, to break the weapon of oppression used by cruel individuals who exploit religion under the guise of ignorance (ideological weapon), to ensure real enlightenment of people, to promote the development of science, and ultimately to free the human being—who is considered the unique secret of existence—from separation and guide them towards the eternal right path.

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