

INTERPRETATION OF HIS IDEAS IN THE WORK OF AHMAD YASSAVIY

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Abstract. *In this article, the Sufi concepts in the works of Ahmad Yassavi and their literary significance, the portrayal of the image of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the embodiment of perfect ethics in "Proverbs," the qualities of a complete human being, and the analysis of the ideal hero were examined. Furthermore, poetic reflections on the necessity for Ahmad Yassavi to serve as an example and a lesson for his devotion to Muhammad (peace be upon him) in every work and his adherence to the Sufi path were explored in a poetic and literary analysis. During the analysis of Ahmad Yassavi's works, the sources of "Proverbs" were primarily traced back to the Quran and Hadiths, demonstrated through examples.*

Keywords: *wisdom, Sufism, Sharia, Tariqat, Quran, Hadith, devotion, Sufi, Sufism.*

Introduction: In Sufi literature, the wisdom of Ahmad Yassavi, who was a distinctive Sufi artist, gains special significance due to its profound spiritual aspects. His teachings and wisdom hold a unique place in the realm of Sufism. If we consider "Devon-i Hikmat," a work by Khwaja Ahmad Yassavi, it stands as one of the earliest comprehensive books on the Sufi path related to the Turkic peoples; however, it is not limited in its scope. Sufi literature, with its distinctive concepts and Arabic terminology, had a deeply rooted national style and language.

Indeed, Ahmad Yassavi pioneered Sufi literature in the Turkish language. Renowned Sufi scholar N. Komilov emphasized, "He [Ahmad Yassavi] skillfully intertwined the noble truths of Islam and the principles of Sufism, harmoniously blending Sharia and Tariqat. With profound passion, he eloquently portrayed faith and sincerity. Inspired by the legendary figure of Arslonbob, he, like the majestic lion, introduced the teachings of Turkish saints, particularly Hoca Yusuf Hamadani, into the sphere of Sufism. Through his guidance, he elevated his people to higher knowledge and wisdom." [7;333]

Many eminent Sufi masters have gained fame in the world of Sufism, leaving behind a legacy that successive generations have admired. However, over centuries, few have profoundly influenced the Sufi life of the Turks and exerted substantial influence in literary, historical, Sufi, and cultural spheres. Ahmad Yassavi not only pioneered new perspectives but also dutifully fulfilled the esteemed role as the first literary figure of Turkish Sufi tradition. In this regard, the esteemed Sufi scholar Ibrahim Haqqi's words about Yassavi hold a profound truth: "Ahmad Yassavi elevated his native language to the status of the language of the Sufi path, becoming the pioneer. Therefore, every word and expression in his poetry is as sacred, luminous, and divine as the truths of Islam." [16;19] The Book of Wisdom: Ahmad Yassavi's "Devon-i Hikmat," containing his wisdom, holds immeasurable importance in the world of Sufism. However, it is crucial to emphasize that Ahmad Yassavi's contributions are not limited to the realm of wisdom. In his spiritual legacy, there are supplications, poems, and debates that reflect his spiritual fervor and poetic excellence.

Main Section: As we have emphasized, Ahmad Yassavi elevated his wisdom in the Turkish language, ultimately bringing this language to a prestigious level. Moreover, as mentioned

earlier, he raised it to the level of the language of the Sufi path. The Sufi poet himself acknowledges this achievement in the following lines:

The scholars do not commend our Turkish speech,
If you hear it from the wise, it appears uncouth,
If the meaning of Quran and Hadith is in Turkish,
Those who grasp its meaning will adorn their attire. [2;15]

Ahmad Yassavi embarked on a path, that is, expressing Islamic-Sufi, ethical-intellectual concepts, and aspirations in the Turkish language. This was a new phenomenon for the scholars of knowledge because such ideas were previously expressed in Arabic and Persian. Therefore, the wisdom that was initially conveyed through Sufi aspirations might have faced criticism from some "scholars" within society. As another reason for this incident, the Turkish Sufi scholar F. Köprülü explains: "...Yassaviy composed poetry to elevate the knowledge among Turks who cannot read Sufi works in Arabic and Persian and aimed to teach his disciples Sufi truths." [16;29-bet.]

Alisher Navoi, speaking about the great Turkic saint, says: "Ahmad Yassavi is the sheikh of the Turkistan land, renowned, respected, honorable, and a well-known man of virtue. He is a guide for disciples and companions, devoid of aspirations, and has reached the ultimate in his sincerity and dedication." In reality, Yassaviy gained fame not only among the Turkic peoples but also worldwide. His poetic aspirations, Sufi meanings, theoretical views on positions within the Sufi order, have left an indelible mark on scholars and readers worldwide. Ahmad Yassavi is a saint, and his poetic aspirations and charming style have inspired generations. Alongside narratives confirming his saintly status, there are several verses in his wisdom acknowledging his achievements. In the information that has reached us, it is mentioned that he received education from the venerable Sheikh Arslonbob. Together with this, he delivered the respect and homage remaining from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a precious legacy. This aspect has found its reflection in numerous historical literary works. Yassaviy himself emphasizes this in the following wisdom:

At the age of seventy, I greeted my dear Arslon grandfather,
He blessed me with greetings; a gracious gift from the Truthful Chosen One.
I completed a thousand and one recitations at that very moment,
I offered my soul as a sacrifice, and became a moth to the candle.
He bestowed his blessings, casting a gaze upon my head,
In one opportunity, he set my soul on a swift journey.
He bid farewell to this world,
I entered the school, boiling, and absorbed, I became like molten metal. [2;26]

These verses indicate Ahmad Yassaviy's progression from his youth to his spiritual maturity. Furthermore, in the realm of Sufism, renowned figures like Yusuf Hamadani, who are prominent, help Yassaviy attain the status of a Sufi master. The knowledge acquired from mentors, the passion for Sufism, and the divine love are reflected in Yassaviy's philosophical wisdom.

In Ahmad Yassaviy's wisdom, historical events, social life, resistance against oppression and tyranny, along with motifs of fate, asceticism, piety, remembrance of God (zikr), and spiritual longing, resonate. The great Sufi weaves a beautiful aspiration in every line, perpetually inviting humanity towards goodness. Interestingly, in Yassaviy's wisdom, the struggle against the ego (nafs) is depicted not merely as asceticism – abstaining entirely from worldly pleasures – but rather

as a submission to the divine, appreciating God's lawful provisions and blessings. The following wisdom emphasizes this perspective:

"He created you, created us, for obedience,
O vessel, for drinking and eating, for delight.

From these verses, it can be understood that attaining God, acquiring spiritual stations, is not simply about renouncing the world and abstaining from its pleasures; it is about submission, finding contentment in God's permissible creations and blessings. Eating lawful food is also a fundamental act of obedience, according to the idea expressed in these lines.

Ahmad Yassaviy's wisdom is not limited to the Turkish-speaking populace or a specific audience; it is not confined by the dictates of a particular Sufi order or disciples. Instead, it delves deep into the universal human aspirations and the pains in people's hearts, the complex relationships between ruling elites and subjects, and resonates with all of humanity. Particularly, paying attention to these lines:

"There is no justice in the eyes of the people in the world,
There is no prayer in the mosques, no honesty in the ministers,
There is no justice in the prayers of the ascetics,
Falsehood and mischief have befallen the people, my friends". [17;211]

Ahmad Yassavi was a benevolent ruler, a helper to orphans, a listener to the people's pain, and a Sufi who devoted himself to prayer and meditation. He is revered in historical sources as a great spiritual leader who engaged in discussions with monarchs and even held meetings with rulers of his time. He was so influential that even the rulers who once stood against him eventually acknowledged his authority. This historical context is vividly depicted in the biographical novel "Yassavi's Last Journey", attributed to the pen of Sa'dulla Siyoyev, where these significant historical events are masterfully portrayed.

Another important aspect that distinguishes Ahmad Yassavi from other Sufi representatives is his emphasis on the concepts of love and selflessness, which he embedded with profound meanings. In the history of Sufism, there was no artist who expressed the notion of love in a sophisticated manner, harmonizing it with passion, devotion, and unity with God. Ahmad Yassavi vividly depicted the facets related to love in Sufism.

He bestowed the pain of love upon the lovers,
In the ecstasy of longing, I swayed to and fro, my dear.
He gave the cup of love's wine to the intoxicated,
I became enraptured and danced in the sky, my dear. [1;18]

These verses emphasize that love, however painful, is a sacred ache, accentuating that it serves as a gift for the lovers. The Sufi path highlights the ecstasy of love for Allah, wherein the lover, no matter how swayed, remains entranced by the passion of that love. This love, in the influence of its wine, enraptures the lover, guiding them to the fervor of divine knowledge, making them ecstatic, and causing them to dance in the celestial spheres. Certainly, this intoxication is symbolic, representing the lover's complete annihilation and experiencing the state of unity. In this context, the dance in the celestial spheres signifies the essence of the concept of ecstatic dance. This type of dance, known as "raqs-i-samo'," is present in various Sufi orders such as Yassaviyya, Kubrawiyya, Ishqiyya, and Mavlaviyya. Dervishes and Sufis engage in rhythmic dance and remembrance of God (zikr) in a state of spiritual ecstasy, moving to the music. Particularly, the Sufi scholar N. Komilov describes this as follows: "Chanting aloud and feeling the zikr had a wide

spread in Central Asia. In this practice, a group of sufis initially forms a circle; a designated person (qavvol) recites specific phrases in a known rhythm, accompanied by certain musical instruments; gradually, people start moving from their places and begin unique movements. During the zikr, Sufis and dervishes repeatedly chant phrases such as 'Allah hayy' (Allah is ever-living), 'La ilaha illalloh' (There is no deity but Allah), 'Allahu akbar' (Allah is the greatest), 'Alhamdulillah' (Praise be to Allah), and other words. Through the repetition of these phrases for an extended period, those engaged in zikr, through music and dance (becoming intoxicated from the 'wine of love'), lose their self-identity. They forget everything except Allah; nothing else comes to their minds." [7;20-28] Sufis and lovers of Allah, intoxicated with the wine of divine love, experiencing unity through zikr and ecstatic dance, find their profound expression in the aforementioned verses.

Indeed, the teachings of Sufism are often conveyed through terminologies and metaphors. Especially, the significance of Sufi masters' names is indicated through allegorical representations of their visions. This phenomenon can also be observed in the wisdom of Ahmad Yassavi. In his poetry, the names of several prophets are mentioned. Among them, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) holds a distinct and revered position:

Inspired by the mercy of the True One,
I have tasted the wine of this divine unity.
Now we have become part of Muhammad's community,
Our hands are filled with the cup of knowledge, my friends. [29]

The spiritual teachings of Sufism are well-known within the framework of the Islamic faith. In this context, most Sufis harmonize the requirements of Sharia (Islamic law) and Tariqat (the spiritual path), expressing their interconnection. Similarly, the works of Ahmad Yassavi reflect this characteristic. Among Sufis, inspiration, meaning the love of the truth and the aspiration to attain closeness to it, is of paramount importance. Therefore, the attainment of inspiration is a spiritual state that emerges through the grace and mercy of Allah. Yassavi also emphasizes this point. When we speak of tasting the wine of unity, it implies the level of Tawhid (the oneness of God) in Sufism. This knowledge of unity or knowledge of Tawhid is referred to as Ilm al-Wahdat or Ilm al-Tawhid. Unity – Tawhid is the realization of oneness with Allah. If we consider the content of the verse, firstly, this inspiration marks the initial step in Sufism, but it is also emphasized that this too is by the grace of Allah. "In this verse, 'tasting the wine of unity,' it emphasizes that Allah, through His mercy, fills the cup of unity, meaning the lover's heart is filled with divine love and inspiration. In the following lines, it contemplates the substitution of the knowledge of the hand with the state of the heart. In Sufism, the knowledge of the hand and the knowledge of the heart hold distinct positions and complement each other; they are interconnected. The knowledge of the hand refers to the external sciences, implying learning through sensory organs. On the other hand, the state of the heart is a complex knowledge, representing the refinement of the Sufi, where the knowledge of the hand evolves into a state felt in the heart. In the realm of Sufi imagination and visualization, the Sufi begins to witness the divine majesty of Allah. Precisely, the state of the heart is one of the divine manifestations leading to the realization of 'unity of being' (vahdat-ul wujud). Conversely, the hand signifies the descent of divine mercy. If we focus on another verse":

Give three measures of wheat to the one who grinds the grain,
Whoever works diligently, let them see the dawn.
Even if Israfil's trumpet is blown, do not be dismayed,

Know, my friends, we are the followers of Muhammad. [2;30]

Indeed, in this stanza, the names of our prophets are mentioned, but undoubtedly, a higher spiritual and literary purpose is implied. "Uchmoh" is an archaic form of the word "jannat," meaning paradise in Old Turkic. In the verse, the one engaged in work until dawn is promised a place in paradise. The themes of worship and asceticism form the core of Yassaviy's teachings; they cannot be limited to a literal interpretation. Instead, Ahmad Yassaviy's work lays the foundation for the development of literature on worship etiquette.

In this stanza, the Sufi poet mentions the name of the archangel Israfil as a symbolic representation. Yassaviy's wisdom not only encompasses various meanings but also a diversity of symbols. This adds a unique depth to the content. In sacred texts, information about four main archangels and their specific duties is provided. Precisely, Israfil's designated task is blowing the trumpet when the Day of Judgment comes. The logical continuation of this verse is in the line that follows, where it distinctly emphasizes that we are the followers of Muhammad, peace be upon him. This is because, when the angel Israfil blows the trumpet for the first time, all living beings on Earth will abandon this world. When blown for the second time, it is said that all the dead will be resurrected. When all humans are gathered in the Hereafter, the followers of Muhammad, peace be upon him, will be called first. This verse signifies this very reality.

Conclusion: In the "Devoni Hikmat," almost all the verses mention the name of the Prophet. The book portrays the Prophet Muhammad as the epitome of purity, wisdom, and an exemplary figure. It consistently emphasizes the necessity of following his teachings in every aspect of life. In the above verses, it recognizes the era when Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, lived as the best period, a time of goodness and prosperity for all humanity. Several sources also refer to the period when the Prophet lived as the "Age of Bliss," not just without any dispute but also acknowledging that his existence brought ultimate benefit to both the world and the hereafter. These verses highlight the Prophet Muhammad's enduring impact, praising his eternal ethics and providing us with a complete and beautiful way of life for our spiritual and worldly benefit. The first stage of the spiritual path, Tariqat, is Shariat. The initial path is referred to as the way of Shariat. In Sufism, Shariat is thoroughly studied and then one progresses to higher spiritual levels. This foundational path is exemplified by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who showed us the way. In the profound pages of Ahmad Yassavi's "Hikmatlar," we witness a deep love for Allah and Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. This creation serves not only the Sufi but also contributes to the enduring and universal kindness in the hearts of all humanity.

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