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“HIKMETS” – THE CORNERSTONE OF TURKIC LITERATURE

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Annotation: Sufism is a doctrine aimed at understanding the inner meaning of Islam, encouraging a person to get closer to Allah, purify the heart, and achieve spiritual perfection. An Arif strives to gain the favor of Allah by renouncing the worldly, showing love for Allah, engaging in dhikr and worship, cultivating the nafs, and doing good deeds. Khoja Ahmad Yasawi also reflected Sufi ideas in his “Hikmet’s”, calling on the people to knowledge, moral purity, and faith. His teachings had a great influence on the spiritual life of the Turkic peoples and served as a source of inspiration for many poets, scientists, and thinkers.

Key words: Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, Sufism, “Hikmet’s”, divine essence, heart, Arif, hermitage, dhikr (Remembrance), ibadat, cultivation of the nafs, spiritual perfection, love, divine love, rizo (contentment), Sharia, Tariqa, ma’rifat (knowledge), hakikat (truth), komillik (perfection).

Аннотация. Суфизм учение, направленное на постижение внутреннего смысла ислама, побуждающее человека к сближению с Аллахом, очищению сердца и достижению духовного совершенства. Ариф стремится обрести благосклонность Аллаха, отказываясь от мирского, проявляя любовь к Аллаху, занимаясь зикром и ибадатом, воспитывая нафс и совершая добрые дела. Ходжа Ахмад Ясави также отразил суфийские идеи в своих “Хикметах”, призывая народ к знаниям, нравственной чистоте и вере. Его учение оказало большое влияние на духовную жизнь тюркских народов и послужило источником вдохновения для многих поэтов, ученых и мыслителей.

Ключевые слова: Ходжа Ахмад Ясави, суфизм, “Хикметы”, божественная сущность, сердце, ариф, отшельничество, зикр, ибадат, воспитание нафса, духовное совершенство, любовь, божественная любовь, ризо (довольство), шариат, тарикат, маърифат (познание), хакикат (истина), комиллик (совершенство).

Khaja Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166), a towering figure in the Islamic world and one of the most accomplished representatives of Sufism, has been revered across centuries with honorable titles such as “The Great Sheikh of Turkestan”, “The Leader of Turkish Sufis”, “The Sultan of Mystics” and “The Perfected of Saints”. This luminary propagated the tenets of Islam and Sufi teachings to the denizens of the steppes through his “Hikmet’s” (Wisdoms). His profound influence extended far beyond his time, shaping the spiritual landscape of Central Asia and

inspiring generations with his message of divine love and ethical refinement. He masterfully blended profound theological insights with accessible language, ensuring that his teachings resonated deeply within the hearts of the common people, bridging the gap between esoteric knowledge and everyday life. Yasawi's legacy continues to inspire seekers of truth and spiritual enlightenment to this day.

In Khaja Ahmad Yasawi's "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms), core themes such as the interpretation of Quranic meanings, commentary on Hadiths, tenets of Islam, foundations of the Sufi path (Tariqa), the subject of divine love ('Ishq), moral exhortations, noble ethics, reprehensible traits, the nature of the world, self-discipline (Nafs), and personal reflections (Hasbi Hal) occupy a prominent place. The luminary masterfully intertwined Islamic verities with Sufi principles, perceiving Sharia (Islamic Law) and Tariqa as interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions of spiritual life. His work serves as a profound exploration of the human condition, guiding readers towards a deeper understanding of faith, morality, and the pursuit of divine proximity. Yasawi's teachings emphasize the importance of both outward observance and inward transformation, highlighting the path to spiritual fulfillment through a harmonious blend of religious practice and mystical experience.

Khaja Ahmad Yasawi, who dedicated his entire life to extolling the virtues of faith and devotion, guiding people toward profound enlightenment and spiritual knowledge, possessed a spiritual and moral universe of such immense elevation that Alisher Navoi described him as having "exalted and renowned stations, with continuous and countless miracles" [1.149.]. Fakhruddin Ali Safi assessed him as "the possessor of manifest signs and sublime miracles, and of elevated ranks and stations" [2.15.]. These illustrious accolades underscore the profound impact and enduring legacy of Yasawi, whose teachings continue to resonate as a beacon of guidance for those seeking spiritual growth and a deeper connection with the divine. His life and works remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration for individuals striving to embody the highest ideals of faith, compassion, and wisdom.

The "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms) served as a unifying force, bringing together poets who composed across a vast expanse stretching from Mongolia in the East to the Volga region in the Northwest, and as far south as Egypt. It functioned as a veritable "university" for all Turkic peoples, regardless of their diverse languages, fostering a shared literary language and cultural heritage that transcended geographical boundaries. This collection of wisdom not only disseminated spiritual and ethical teachings but also cultivated a sense of collective identity and intellectual exchange, leaving an indelible mark on the literary and cultural landscape of the Turkic world. The "Hikmet's" thus stands as a testament to the power of literature to bridge divides and forge a common ground for diverse communities.

Khaja Ahmad Yasawi was the first to elevate his native language to the status of the language of the Sufi path (Tariqa). Every word and every expression in his "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms) is imbued with divine truth. Perhaps it is for this reason that Khaja Ahmad Yasawi was revered as the "Qibla of Prayer for the People of Turkestan" [3.420], a testament to his central role as a spiritual guide and intercessor. His profound impact on the linguistic and spiritual landscape of the region solidified his position as a figure of immense reverence and enduring influence. Yasawi's choice to express his teachings in the vernacular not only made them accessible to a wider audience but also validated the cultural and linguistic identity of his people, fostering a sense of pride and ownership in their spiritual heritage.

Khaja Ahmad Yasawi was a pioneer in Sufism, offering a comprehensive and profound interpretation of the meaning, essence, beauty, and mysteries of divine love ('Ishq). The Yasawiyya order distinguished itself from other Sufi orders in terms of its etiquette and principles, which were succinctly articulated in "Mir'at ul-Qulub" (The Mirror of Hearts) [4.139.]

by Sufi Muhammad Donish, who lived in the 13th century. This unique emphasis on both the inward experience of divine love and the outward manifestation of refined conduct contributed to the Yasawiyya's enduring appeal and its distinctive place within the broader Sufi tradition. The order's rigorous ethical framework and its focus on cultivating a deep and personal relationship with the divine have continued to inspire spiritual seekers across generations.

Adhering to the principle that "serving human hearts is more beneficial than worship" [5.68.], Khaja Ahmad Yasawi equated the human heart to the Kaaba, stating:

"To gladden one heart is a greater pilgrimage,
One heart is superior to a thousand Kaabas" [6.419.].

This profound sentiment underscores Yasawi's unwavering commitment to compassion and his belief in the inherent sanctity of the human spirit. He emphasized that acts of kindness and empathy hold greater spiritual value than mere ritualistic observances. By elevating the human heart to the level of the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, Yasawi highlighted the importance of fostering love, understanding, and connection within the human community. His teachings serve as a powerful reminder that true spiritual fulfillment lies not only in devotion to God but also in selfless service to humanity.

In Khaja Ahmad Yasawi's "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms), the figures of the Pir (spiritual guide), Sheikh, Murshid (mentor), Eran (wise man), and Wali (saint) are all symbolic representations of a single ideal: the perfect human being (Insan-i Kamil). The thinker, through the language of faith, extols the dignity of humanity, emphasizing that a person, whether Muslim or non-believer, young or old, should not cause harm to anyone. He taught:

"It is the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) that even if someone is a non-believer, do not cause them harm,

God is displeased with those who are hard-hearted and inflict pain" [7.9.].

This emphasis on universal compassion and respect for all individuals, regardless of their faith or status, highlights Yasawi's profound commitment to ethical principles and his belief in the inherent worth of every human being. His teachings promote a vision of society based on mutual understanding, tolerance, and the pursuit of inner perfection, where individuals strive to embody the highest ideals of compassion and wisdom in their interactions with others. Yasawi's message remains a powerful call for unity and harmony in a world often divided by differences.

The "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms), embodying the ideals of truth and reality, instill a sense of serenity in the human heart. Khaja Ahmad Yasawi, addressing the reader, urges: "Allah is in your heart, retreat to Allah; first, it is necessary to understand the inner self, to cultivate the heart, and this begins with purifying the self" [8.140.]. Ahmad Yasawi, fighting against base vices such as ignorance, avarice, and the desires of the self, called upon people to liberate their hearts from the "clutches of the self" and to turn to the path of Allah:

"One who enters the path of the self will be disgraced,
Straying from the path, they will become lost and misguided,
Whether they lie down or rise up, they will be in company with Satan,
Kick the self, kick it, O evil-doer!" [9.206.].

This powerful message underscores Yasawi's unwavering commitment to spiritual purification and his belief in the transformative power of self-discipline. He emphasized the importance of recognizing and overcoming the negative tendencies within oneself in order to cultivate a deeper connection with the divine. Yasawi's teachings serve as a timeless guide for those seeking to navigate the complexities of the human condition and to embark on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment.

The Sheikhs, who believed that "the struggle against the self is a person's struggle for their own freedom" [10.108.], achieved their goals through honest labor. It was obligatory for

Sufis to adhere to principles such as patience, contentment, kindness, compassion towards neighbors, and abstaining from excessive laughter. These ethical guidelines formed the bedrock of the Sufi way of life, emphasizing the importance of inner discipline, social responsibility, and the cultivation of a balanced and harmonious existence. By embracing these virtues, Sufis sought to purify their hearts, strengthen their connection with the divine, and contribute positively to the well-being of their communities [11.250.]. Their commitment to ethical conduct served as a powerful example of the transformative power of faith and the importance of living a life of purpose and integrity.

The followers of Khaja Ahmad Yasawi made ethical principles such as "do not be sad, and do not make others sad" the essence of their lives, seeking fault within themselves in every situation and holding themselves accountable. This commitment to self-reflection and empathy formed the cornerstone of their spiritual practice, guiding them to cultivate compassion, understanding, and a deep sense of responsibility for their actions. By prioritizing the well-being of others and striving to avoid causing harm or distress, they embodied the highest ideals of ethical conduct and contributed to the creation of a more harmonious and compassionate society. Their example serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of self-awareness and the importance of living a life guided by principles of kindness and empathy.

Khaja Ahmad Yasawi called upon humanity to understand the mysteries of the world and to pursue knowledge and enlightenment. The "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms), which glorified human virtues such as sincerity, honesty and purity, righteousness, humility, erudition, generosity, faith, compassion, and diligence, are not merely a collection of dry admonitions, nor are they a detached exposition of Sufism and Sharia. Rather, they represent a great spiritual force that inspires hatred of evil and wickedness, and calls for goodness and virtue. The thinker condemned ignorance and lack of knowledge, urging people to stay away from them and not to associate with them, emphasizing that ignorance is a vice. Yasawi's teachings serve as a powerful call to action, urging individuals to embrace the pursuit of knowledge, cultivate ethical virtues, and actively combat the forces of ignorance and evil in the world. His message remains a timeless source of inspiration for those seeking to live a life of purpose, integrity, and spiritual fulfillment.

A question arises: In a globalized society, are the spiritual values (conscience, integrity, honesty) glorified in the "Hikmet's" becoming devalued? How does this affect the moral education of young people? What does the spiritual heritage of Khaja Ahmad Yasawi offer to the youth? Can young people achieve spiritual maturity by studying it?

Indeed, the devaluation of spiritual values in modern society is dealing a severe blow to the moral compass of young people. Concepts such as conscience, integrity, and honesty are losing their significance, and young people are becoming increasingly indifferent to ethical norms. They are accepting vices such as lying, theft, and deception as commonplace, and are sinking into a quagmire of egoism and self-interest. In such an environment, violence and aggression are flourishing. This erosion of moral foundations poses a significant threat to the well-being of individuals and the stability of society as a whole, underscoring the urgent need for renewed efforts to promote ethical education and cultivate a strong sense of moral responsibility among young people. The consequences of neglecting these vital aspects of human development can be far-reaching and devastating, leading to a breakdown of social cohesion and a decline in the overall quality of life.

Distancing from spiritual values creates a moral vacuum in the hearts of young people, predisposing them to depression. Having lost the meaning of their lives, they are drawn to "marginal" and "cosmopolitan" ideologies. As a result, they face dangerous consequences such as alienation from their homeland and loss of national identity, ceasing to love their nation, people, culture, values, and motherland. This poses a serious threat to the future of society. This

disconnection from their roots and heritage can lead to a sense of rootlessness and a susceptibility to ideologies that undermine social cohesion and national pride. The erosion of these fundamental values can have a cascading effect, weakening the fabric of society and compromising its ability to address the challenges of the future. Therefore, it is imperative to cultivate a strong sense of national identity and cultural pride among young people, while also fostering a commitment to universal values such as compassion, justice, and respect for diversity.

In our opinion, the spiritual heritage of Khaja Ahmad Yasawi is an ideal life program for young people. In this regard, it is appropriate to pay attention to several key points. These principles offer a timeless framework for ethical conduct, spiritual growth, and social responsibility, providing young people with a compass to navigate the complexities of modern life and to contribute positively to the well-being of their communities. By embracing the wisdom and values embodied in Yasawi's teachings, young people can cultivate a strong sense of purpose, integrity, and compassion, empowering them to become agents of positive change in the world. The enduring relevance of Yasawi's message underscores its profound significance for contemporary society, offering a path towards a more just, equitable, and harmonious future.

First and foremost, Khaja Ahmad Yasawi's "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms) provide spiritual nourishment to young people. The core tenets of Islam, the essence of Sufism, the spiritual perfection of the individual, and the ethical challenges of society are articulated in the "Hikmet's" in a simple, accessible language. Through the "Hikmet's", young people can enrich their spiritual world. This exposure to timeless wisdom and ethical principles can provide them with a strong foundation for navigating the complexities of modern life and for cultivating a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. The "Hikmet's" offer a path towards personal growth, ethical conduct, and a meaningful connection with the divine, empowering young people to become responsible and compassionate members of society.

Secondly, Khaja Ahmad Yasawi has served as an ethical ideal for humanity throughout the ages, and this role continues. By reading the "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms), the younger generation learns about their history, culture, religion, and philosophy, understands their identity, and treats national values with respect. In our opinion, the "Hikmet's" calls young people to be resilient, patient, and to cultivate a creative worldview and thoughtfulness that enables them to solve any problem through reflection. Most importantly, by reading the "Hikmet's", young people understand the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, why they have come into this world, and what is expected of them. This profound self-discovery can empower them to live lives of purpose, integrity, and compassion, contributing positively to the well-being of their communities and the advancement of society as a whole. The "Hikmet's" offer a timeless framework for ethical conduct and spiritual growth, guiding young people towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

In summary, the following evidence supports the assertion that Khaja Ahmad Yasawi's "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms) are the cornerstone of Turkic literature: This conclusion is based on a comprehensive analysis of the "Hikmet's" and their enduring impact on the cultural, spiritual, and intellectual landscape of the Turkic world. The evidence presented highlights the profound significance of Yasawi's teachings and their continued relevance for contemporary society, particularly in the context of globalization and the challenges facing young people today. The "Hikmet's" serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of ethical conduct, spiritual growth, and cultural preservation, offering a timeless framework for building a more just, equitable, and harmonious world.

Firstly, the "Hikmet's" (Wisdoms) are an integral part of the spiritual heritage of the Turkic peoples, influencing their spiritual world, ethical values, and worldview for centuries. The "Hikmet's" address core Islamic ideas, the essence of Sufism, the spiritual perfection of the

individual, and the ethical problems of society. The “Hikmet’s” have constructive significance in ensuring the spiritual unity of the Turkic peoples, preserving their identity, and developing national values. Evidence of this is found in research on Khaja Ahmad Yasawi in Uzbekistan and foreign countries. These studies underscore the enduring relevance of Yasawi’s teachings and their profound impact on the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Turkic world, highlighting the importance of preserving and promoting this valuable spiritual heritage for future generations [12.].

Secondly, the “Hikmet’s” (Wisdoms) have had a great influence on the formation and development of Turkic literature, creating a solid foundation for the subsequent development of Turkic peoples’ literature through the emergence of new genres, the simplification and popularization of the literary language, the expansion of the scope of themes, and the novel interpretation of literary characters. The “Hikmet’s” served as a source of inspiration for Yasawiyya followers such as Suleiman Bakirgani (d. 1186), Haji Bektash Veli (d. 1271) and Yunus Emre (d. 1320). This enduring influence underscores the profound significance of Yasawi's work in shaping the literary landscape of the Turkic world and in inspiring generations of writers to explore new themes, styles, and perspectives. The “Hikmet’s” thus stand as a testament to the power of literature to reflect and shape the cultural identity of a people.

Thirdly, the spiritual and ethical admonitions expressed in the “Hikmet’s” (Wisdoms) serve as an important guide in educating young people to become well-rounded individuals, in achieving their spiritual perfection, and in creating a healthy environment in society. Incorporating Khaja Ahmad Yasawi’s “Hikmet’s” into subjects such as “Foundations of Spirituality”, “Sense of Patriotism” and “Ethics” in educational institutions will yield both positive and practical results. This integration of Yasawi’s teachings into the curriculum can provide young people with a strong foundation for ethical conduct, spiritual growth, and responsible citizenship, empowering them to contribute positively to the well-being of their communities and the advancement of society as a whole. The “Hikmet’s” thus serve as a valuable resource for educators seeking to instill in their students a deep sense of purpose, integrity, and compassion.

Fourthly, studying the “Hikmet’s” (Wisdoms) places a responsibility on modern youth to preserve and pass on the cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples to future generations. By studying the “Hikmet’s”, the truths about the past, present, and future of the Turkic peoples are revealed. This understanding of their history and cultural heritage can instill in young people a sense of pride and responsibility, motivating them to actively participate in preserving and promoting the values and traditions that have shaped their identity. The “Hikmet’s” thus serve as a bridge connecting the past with the present and future, empowering young people to become custodians of their cultural heritage and to contribute to the ongoing evolution of their societies.

Studying Khaja Ahmad Yasawi is, first and foremost, about understanding Sharia (Islamic law), Tariqa (the Sufi path), Ma’rifat (gnosis), and Haqiqat (truth). Through understanding Khaja Ahmad Yasawi, one becomes aware of the secrets of the human mind, heart, and soul, and of the station of perfection. Academician V.V. Bartold rightfully acknowledged that “Khaja Ahmad Yasawi is a Sufi who won the love of the people by engaging in religious education and Sufism, and this respect continues to this day among the Turkic peoples” [13.404.]. At the heart of the interest in Yasawi’s spiritual heritage lies an interest in the relationship between God and humanity, and an understanding of the servant’s love for the Creator. This pursuit of knowledge and understanding can lead to a deeper appreciation of the spiritual dimensions of life and a greater sense of connection with the divine.

The “Hikmet’s” (Wisdoms) are a valuable literary monument of the Turkic peoples, and their literary heritage belongs to humanity. The world knows the “Hikmet’s” and the spiritual

heritage of Khaja Ahmad Yasawi is a bottomless ocean, with endless pearls of wisdom. Khaja Ahmad Yasawi is a magnificent, unique, and unparalleled figure. In his wisdom, the freedom of the spirit resounds loudly and leads humanity to the bliss of purity. The “Hikmet’s” are a sun that illuminates the heart and soul of humanity. By reading and understanding the “Hikmet’s” the human spiritual world is strengthened by the spirit of divine springs. This enduring legacy of wisdom and compassion continues to inspire and guide individuals on their journey towards spiritual growth and a deeper connection with the divine.

We are certain that familiarity with this invaluable treasure will not cease. It is no coincidence that UNESCO declared 2016 as the “Year of Yasawi” The universal human values promoted by Khaja Ahmad Yasawi in the “Hikmet’s” – such as humanism, enlightenment, justice, honesty, compassion, and tolerance – will live eternally among the most cherished ideas achieved by humankind. These values know no boundaries of time and space, and the public who read the “Hikmet’s” will discover a new world of meaning for themselves. This enduring legacy of wisdom and compassion continues to inspire and guide individuals on their journey towards spiritual growth and a deeper connection with the divine, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries to resonate with people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

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