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Section 1

**YASAWI STUDIES: RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND
THEOLOGY**

Раздел 1

**ЯСАВИЕВЕДЕНИЕ: РЕЛИГИОВЕДЕНИЕ И
ТЕОЛОГИЯ**

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KHWAJA AHMAD YASAWI AND HIS LEGACY IN PERSIAN SOURCES AND RESEARCHS

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала Қожа Ахмет Ясауидің Орталық Азиядағы сопылық ілімнің дамуына қосқан тарихи және рухани үлесін кешенді түрде талдауға арналған. Зерттеу Ясауидің түркі мәдени элементтерін ислам руханиятымен ұштастыру арқылы Ясауи тариқатының қалыптасуына негіз қалағанын, сондай-ақ оның ілімінің Трансоксания аймағындағы сопылық мектептердің дамуына ықпал еткенін көрсетеді. Мақалада Ясауидің рухани ұстаздары ретінде танылған Мұхаммед ибн Әли ат-Тирмизи мен Қожа Юсуф Хамадани сияқты тұлғалардың ілімдік дәстүрлері мен олардың Ясауи дүниетанымының қалыптасуындағы рөлі қарастырылады. Сонымен қатар, Ясауи мұрасының сопылық әдебиеттегі орны, әсіресе «Диуани Хикмет» шығармасының рухани-этикалық және педагогикалық қызметі талданады. Зерттеу сопылық дәстүрдің қалыптасуы мен таралуындағы поэзияның, ауызша мәдениеттің және рухани ұстаздық институттың маңызын айқындайды. Қорытындысында Ясауи ілімі тек түркі әлемінде ғана емес, жалпы ислам мистицизмінің дамуына елеулі әсер еткен әмбебап рухани құбылыс ретінде бағаланады.

Түйін сөздер: Қожа Ахмет Ясауи, сопылық, Трансоксания, «Диуани Хикмет», Қожа Юсуф Хамадани, Мұхаммед ат-Тирмизи, Ясауи тариқаты, ислам мистицизмі.

Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's historical and spiritual contribution to the development of Sufism in Central Asia. The study demonstrates that Yasawi laid the foundations for the formation of the Yasawi Sufi order by synthesizing Turkic cultural elements with Islamic spirituality, and that his teachings significantly influenced the development of Sufi schools in the Transoxiana region. The article examines the doctrinal traditions of figures recognized as Yasawi's spiritual masters, such as Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmidhi and Khwaja Yusuf

Hamadani, and their role in shaping Yasawi's spiritual worldview. In addition, it analyzes the place of Yasawi's legacy in Sufi literature, particularly the spiritual, ethical, and pedagogical functions of the work *Divan-i Hikmat*. The study highlights the importance of poetry, oral culture, and the institution of spiritual mentorship in the formation and dissemination of the Sufi tradition. In conclusion, Yasawi's teachings are assessed as a universal spiritual phenomenon that had a significant impact not only on the Turkic world but also on the broader development of Islamic mysticism.

Keywords: Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, Sufism, Transoxiana, *Divan-i Hikmat*, Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, Muhammad al-Tirmidhi, Yasawi order, Islamic mysticism.

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена комплексному анализу исторического и духовного вклада Ходжи Ахмеда Ясави в развитие суфизма в Центральной Азии. Исследование показывает, что Ясави заложил основы формирования Ясавийского тариката посредством синтеза тюркских культурных элементов и исламской духовности, а также что его учение оказало значительное влияние на развитие суфийских школ в регионе Трансоксании. В статье рассматриваются доктринальные традиции таких фигур, признанных духовными наставниками Ясави, как Мухаммад ибн Али ат-Тирмизи и Ходжа Юсуф Хамадани, и их роль в формировании духовного мировоззрения Ясави. Кроме того, анализируется место наследия Ясави в суфийской литературе, особенно духовно-этическая и педагогическая функция произведения «*Диван-и Хикмет*». В исследовании подчеркивается значение поэзии, устной культуры и института духовного наставничества в формировании и распространении суфийской традиции. В заключение учение Ясави рассматривается как

универсальное духовное явление, оказавшее значительное влияние не только на тюркский мир, но и на развитие исламского мистицизма в целом.

Ключевые слова: Ходжа Ахмед Ясави, суфизм, Трансоксания, «Диван-и Хикмет», Ходжа Юсуф Хамадани, Мухаммад ат-Тирмизи, Ясавийский тарикат, исламский мистицизм.

Introduction. Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi was a central figure in the development of Sufism in Central Asia. His synthesis of Turkic cultural elements with Islamic spirituality laid the foundation for the Yasawi order, which influenced both Turkic and Persian-speaking regions. This paper examines the role of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi and his predecessors, such as Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmidhi and Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, in shaping Sufism in Central Asia, focusing on the doctrinal and spiritual contributions that continue to resonate today.

Transoxiana, a region of immense historical and cultural significance, was pivotal in the early development of Sufism within the Islamic world. Positioned at the crossroads of Persian, Turkic, and Central Asian cultures, it became a fertile ground for the evolution of mystical thought. Among the early Sufi figures in Transoxiana, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's contributions remain a cornerstone of Central Asian mysticism. This paper explores the foundational role of Yasawi and his spiritual predecessors, such as Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmidhi and Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, while examining how his teachings shaped the Sufi orders in this region.

Transoxiana, a key geographical region, was pivotal in the early development of Sufism in the Islamic world. The region, with its historical position at the intersection of several cultures, contributed significantly to the evolution of mystical thought. Among the early Sufi figures in Transoxiana, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's contributions remain a cornerstone of Central Asian mysticism. This section will explore the foundational role of Yasawi and his spiritual predecessors, such as Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmidhi and Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani.

Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tirmidhi, known as al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, was a notable Sufi of the 3rd century Hijri (9th century CE), born in Tirmidh. During his travels to Khorasan and Iraq, he became acquainted with the Sufis of Khorasan, including Abu Turab al-Nakhshabi, Ahmad Khazroiyyeh, and Yahya ibn Muadh Razi, and benefited from their teachings. He later returned to his hometown of Tirmidh, where he passed away. According to Zarinkoob (1978), Tirmidhi is considered the founder of the Hakimiyya order, and his followers emulate his teachings. Many of his works are centered around Islamic mysticism, and even the hadiths he narrates in his works are derived from mystical interpretations (Tirmidhi, 1379: 22). In addition to his renowned disciples in Transoxiana and Khorasan, later Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandi also were influenced by his ideas (Jami, 1375: 118-119).

Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani (440–535 AH / 1049–1140 CE) is another famous mystic from Transoxiana in the 5th and 6th centuries Hijri (11th and 12th centuries CE). His path and practices became a source of inspiration for other mystics and Sufi orders. He had moved from western Iran to Khorasan and Transoxiana, and due to his fame, his mystical ideas quickly gained widespread acceptance among both the Turkic and Tajik people. He became the source of significant changes in the Sufi orders, and his followers established the Yasawi and Khwajagan orders in Transoxiana.

Khwaja Yusuf was born in 440 or 441 AH / 1049 or 1050 CE in one of the villages of Hamadan, Iran. At the age of eighteen, he traveled to Baghdad and then to Isfahan, where he listened to many hadiths. After a period, he traveled to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Merv, where he practiced asceticism (Kashfi, 2536: 14/1). In Sufism, he is linked to Sheikh Abu Ali Farami, a famous mystic of the 5th century Hijri (11th century CE) and a prominent figure in the Sufi orders of Khorasan (Jami, 1375: 375; Kashfi, 2536: 14/1;

Dovlatshah Samarqandi, n.d.). His teachings are also regarded as part of the Hanafi school of thought (Darashkoh, 1878: 75).

Khwaja Yusuf spent the later years of his life in Transoxiana, constantly traveling from one city to another to guide the seekers of the Sufi path. Ultimately, during his final journey from Herat to Merv, he passed away along the way and was buried in the city of Merv, which is now part of modernday Turkmenistan (Kashfi, 2536: 14/1; Ibn Khalkan, 1299: 462/2). Khwaja Yusuf had a khanqah (Sufi lodge) in Merv, which, according to Dovlatshah Samarqandi, was referred to as the “Kabah of Khorasan” due to its prestige (Dovlatshah Samarqandi, n.d., 107). The fame of Khwaja Yusuf attracted many disciples. In addition to his specific followers, who were appointed as his deputies and caliphs, the “Four Caliphs” were assigned to lead his Sufi order one after another. Other disciples also joined his order. His third caliph, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, the founder of the Yasawi order, initially resided in Transoxiana, later moving to Turkestan where he founded the Yasawi order (Kashfi, 2536: 18/1).

Samarqandi (1334: 8-9) regards Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi as the true founder of the Khwajagan lineage, which later became known as the Naqshbandi order. Khwaja Abdulkhaliq is rightly considered the central figure of the Khwajagan order and the head of these great mystics (Kashfi, 2536: 34/1; Safa, 1374: 76/4). His order later reached its peak through the efforts of major figures of the Naqshbandi order, including Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband, a prominent mystic of the 7th and 8th centuries Hijri (13th and 14th centuries CE), Khwaja Mohammad Parsa, a mystic of the 7th century Hijri (13th century CE), and others (Jami, 1375: 380; Darashkoh, 1878: 76-77). One of the works authored by Khwaja Abdulkhaliq, in both prose and poetry, is the *Risala Sahabiya*, which deals with the spiritual stages of his mentor Abu Ya'qub Yusuf Hamadani (Nafisi, 1344: 111/1).

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's founding of the Yasawi Sufi order in Turkestan is a pivotal moment in the history of Islamic mysticism. The spread of his teachings across the region had a profound impact on both the Turkic and Persian-speaking worlds. This section examines the theological and doctrinal contributions of Yasawi, as well as the methodologies he employed in his teachings, including his use of poetry and his efforts to integrate local traditions with Islamic spirituality.

The Divan Hikmat: Key Work of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi

In his childhood, Ahmad moved to the city of Yasi, one of the eastern forts of Turkestan, where he settled (Khonji, 1341: 88; Hashem Pour Subhani, 1377: 117/7). In the historical geography of the lands of the Eastern Caliphate, Guy Le Strange writes:

“About a day's journey north of Atrar, on the right bank of the Syr Darya, there was a city called ‘Shawghir,’ which Muslim geographers describe as a large place with an extensive village, fortified walls, and a grand mosque in the market. Recent geographers have not mentioned Shawghir, but based on its location and its mention by Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, it can be identified with Yasi” (Le Strange, 1364: 517; Ahmadian Shalchi, 1378: 340).

In Yasi, Ahmad attracted the attention of Baba Arslan Baba (Arslan, one of the prominent Sufi masters of the area), and in his company, he made significant spiritual progress (Kashfi, 2536: 18/1). After Baba Arslan's death, Ahmad traveled to Bukhara, where he joined the service of Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani and became one of his disciples. In his service under Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, Ahmad reached spiritual completion and guidance. After the deaths of the first two caliphs of the Sheikh, namely Khwaja Abdullah Barqi and Khwaja Hassan Andaqi, Ahmad became the third caliph of the Sheikh and began guiding people in Bukhara (Kashfi, 2536: 18/1). Later, by the Sheikh's will, Ahmad was sent to the city of Yasi in Turkestan, where he advised his disciples to follow and stay in the company of Khwaja Abdulkhaliq al-Ghujdawani, the fourth caliph of Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani (Jami, 1375: 377).

Khwaja Ahmad spent the rest of his life in Yasi, where he gathered a following and founded the Yasawi order in Turkestan. He is often referred to as the “Elder of Turkestan” (Attar Nishaburi, 1375: 176). According to one account, “Eighty-eight saints perfected themselves under Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi” (Samarqandi, 1334: 91).

The Legacy and Modern Scholarship on Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi

In his book *Nazm and Nasr in Iran and in the Persian Language until the End of the 10th Century*, Saeed Nafisi writes:

Sheikh Zakariya Yasawi was a descendant of Sheikh Ahmad Yasawi, the famous Turkish mystic of the 6th century Hijri (Nafisi, 1344: 632/1).

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi spent the later years of his life in the city of Yasi and passed away there in the early 6th century Hijri (12th century CE). In the late 8th century Hijri (14th century CE), under the orders of Amir Timur, a magnificent shrine was built over his tomb, which still stands today (Le Strange, 1364: 517; Yazdi, 1387: 861/1-862). His tomb in Yasi, located in present-day Turkestan (southern Kazakhstan), is one of the holiest pilgrimage sites for Muslims in Central Asia (Ahmadian Shalchi, 1378: 332). In addition to Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, his wife and Rabia Sultan Begum, the granddaughter of Timur, are also buried near him (Hashem Pour Subhani, 1377: 117/7).

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“The tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, may his soul be sanctified, is a Hanfi from the Shafi'i sect, a Maliki in tradition, and an Ahmadian in doctrine. It is the Kaaba for the travelers of this path, the qibla of those seeking the truth. The ultimate goal of every seeker is to reach it. Whoever visits this shrine with sincerity will be led to spiritual fulfillment. The disciple becomes great and the elder will be guided as a lion in his faith. May Khwaja Yasawi's soul be sanctified as the elder of the Sharia and the prophetic path” (same, 1341: 129).

Khonji also states elsewhere in the same book:

“Yasi, better than the garden of Dar al-Salam, became the abode of peace. It is the seat of the axis of the era, the Sheikh of Islam, and the soul of Khwaja Malik Yasi, Sultan Ahmad, who greets the spirits of both morning and evening with peace” (Khonji, 1341: 256).

Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi writes in his book *Zafarnameh*:

“His Excellency the Sultan, Timur, visited the village of Yasi to pay homage to Sheikh Ahmad Yasawi. He generously gave orders for the restoration of this blessed shrine. They laid the foundation for a grand structure, including a vast high arch with two dome minarets, a square of 30 yards by 30 yards, and another dome 12 yards by 12 yards. The large dome, connected to the main one, had four rooms on either side, each measuring 13.5 by 16.5 yards, intended for congregational prayers and other rooms and facilities. He also commanded that the walls and dome be adorned with ceramic tiles, and the grave itself be sculpted from white stone, with intricate carvings. The work was entrusted to the care of Mawlana Ubaidullah Sadr, and as per the order, the construction was completed in two years. Upon its completion, the place became a renowned site for pilgrims. The king's generous donations, including prayers and alms for the neighbors of the shrine and others in need, were bestowed as acts of kindness” (Yazdi, 1387: 861/1-862; Khwandamir, 1362: 468/3).

In *Guestbook of Bukhara*, Khonji also acknowledges Timur as the builder of the shrine of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi and writes:

“The royal favor of Shahbandi Khan and the infinite generosity extended to the inhabitants of the blessed shrine of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi and those residing at his sanctuary led to the sending of offerings and needs for them, so that the poor and the residents would receive this bounty, fulfilling their desires, and making it a cause for prayers for prosperity and the establishment of the prayers of the people” (Khonji, 1341: 129, 260).

In his recent book, Khonji describes the construction of the tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi in the following way:

“Look at the dome of Khwaja Yasawi,
 Raised to the peak of the heavens,
 Its arch surpasses all,
 Together with the celestial vaults of
 paradise. Its porch is the envy of the
 moon, Its arch lies beneath seven
 porticos.
 How can I praise its foundation,
 When I have never seen anything like it in this
 world? Its base is the work of the noble Sayyid, Its
 shadow is cast by Khwaja Yasawi.
 Oh God, have mercy on my helplessness,
 And grant me another chance to see
 Yasawi.
 Until I lay my face upon the grave of Khwaja,
 Like a nightingale, I will weep in the
 garden, And if my life is not to be
 prolonged, I will lay my face on the pure
 tomb.
 When my body parts from my soul,
 I will be a companion to Khwaja Yasawi in Yasi.”(ibid: 275)

The city of Turkestan has become renowned for the name of “Yasi” due to the presence of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, and in Kazakhstan, the mosque of “Hazrat” in the city of Turkestan (Yasi) and the tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi are still considered the most important mosque in the country (Ahmadian Shalchi, 1378: 334).

Arminius Wamberry, a Hungarian researcher, also believes that in Turkestan, after Bahauddin, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi is regarded as the second most prominent saint, and he is highly revered in Khujand (Wamberry, 1380: 389). In any case, it must be said that the tomb of Khwaja Yasawi in Turkestan is regarded as the “Kaaba of Turkestan,” a place of pilgrimage that has always been a sanctuary for the followers of the Yasawi Sufi path.

The Yasawi Sufi Path and Its Ideas

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi should be considered the greatest Turkish Sufi of Turkestan and the founder of the Yasawi order. He succeeded in spreading his teachings in an environment influenced by great Iranian mystics, namely in Bukhara, as well as in a region dominated by Turkic culture. His path grew significantly due to his effective method of propagation. He established his order in a purely Turkic region, and thus, to promote his teachings, he had to employ methods that would resonate with the hearts of his Turkic followers. As a result, he used poetry both to teach Islamic principles and to spread the ideas of Sufism. These types of poems were highly effective in conveying his message.

The greatest work attributed to Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi is called Hikmat (Wisdom), and the collection of poetry that emerged from it is known as the Divan Hikmat (The Book of Wisdom). In this work, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi has written Sufi themes and ideas in the Chagatai Turkish language. The Eastern Turks refer to poetry written in the style of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi’s speech as Hikmat, meaning religious poetry. In the Divan Hikmat, wisdom, advice, and will are expressed along with the general principles of humanity and the goodness of social relationships in the form of poetry. Overall, there is a clear emphasis on the four fundamental pillars of Sufism: Sharia (Islamic law), Tariqah (spiritual path), Haqiqat (truth), and Marifah (knowledge) (Hashem Pour Subhani, 1377: 117/7).

In any case, these Hikmat poems, which are composed of two elements—Islamic (Sufi) and national (i.e., ancient Turkic folk literature)—caused the Turks to attribute a sense of sanctity to them. The preservation, memorization, and dissemination of these Hikmat poems

among the Turks contributed to the rapid spread of the Yasawi order and its practices (Wali, 1376: 187).

This path not only thrived among the Turks beyond the Syr Darya but also, because the Turks had settled in the cities of Transoxiana during this period, the Yasawi order, with its unique method of propagation, also gained followers among the Turks in Transoxiana. In addition to Khwarezm, the order became a widely practiced and dominant faith in the region of the Syr Darya and Ferghana, and it maintained strong ties with the Qarakhanid rulers (same: 182). According to the author of the book *Samriya*, the tomb of the blessed Imam Ali Soghdi in the region of Kashmikan is where the lineage of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi is said to have originated. The Mokhles Khan order, which was one of the successors of Sheikh Qasim and Sheikh Aziran, also leads back to Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi (Samarqandi, 1331: 41).

Additionally, some sources mention that Sheikh Qashm, a follower of Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband in Bukhara, and Sheikh Ali Lala Samarqandi (d. 642 AH / 1244 CE), who later joined the service of Sheikh Najm al-Din Kubra, are considered to be among the caliphs of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi and his order (Jami, 1375: 383 and 436).

In terms of beliefs, it should be noted that the Yasawi order embraced all the intellectual, doctrinal, and fundamental principles of Sunni Islam, considering adherence to these principles a condition of faith and belief (Wali, 1376: 175). The Turkish scholar, “Köprülü,” believes:

“On one hand, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi was influenced by the Malamatiyya (a Sufi movement) of Khorasan, and on the other hand, he was affected by the Shiite currents dominant in Eastern Turkestan and the vicinity of the Syr Darya. He had a broad and liberal Sufi philosophy. However, despite this, his order took on a more orthodox religious nature in the major Sunni centers of Transoxiana and Khwarezm” (Köprülü, 1945: 15-210).

As previously mentioned, Ruzbihan Khonji, in his *Guestbook of Bukhara*, in verses describing the tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, refers to all followers of Sunni sects, including Hanafi, Shafi’i, and Maliki, as disciples of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi (Khonji, 1341: 257). This shows that Khwaja Ahmad, like other Sufis, was not tied to a particular sect, and his guidance encompassed the broader spectrum of Islamic sects.

The disciples of Khwaja Ahmad, who were sent during his lifetime as his caliphs to Turkic lands to spread his order, used the same method as their master—employing simple language to reach the masses. Bartold (1376: 163) mentions that the first caliph of Khwaja Ahmad, Mansur Ata (d. 594 AH / 1198 CE), was the son of Baba Arslan, who was succeeded by his sons, Abdul Malik Khwaja and Taj Khwaja, who continued to spread his order. Said Ata (d. 615 AH / 1218 CE) was the second caliph of Khwaja Ahmad. Sufi Mohammad Daneshmand, the third caliph of Khwaja, held the position of spiritual leader for many years. The fourth caliph, Hakim Ata, one of the senior Sufi masters of the Turks, was known by the name Suleiman and the title Hakim. His wisdom, expressed in Turkish, became famous and well-known in Turkestan. One of the most famous disciples of Hakim Ata, Zangi Ata (d. 656 AH / 1258 CE), also followed the path of Khwaja Ahmad (Kashfi, 2536: 19/122; Hashem Pour Subhani, 1377: 117/7).

Therefore, through the efforts of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, his caliphs, and his disciples, such as the “Babas,” “Atas,” and “Ishans,” Islam spread widely among the Turkic tribes of Transoxiana, including the nomadic Kyrgyz and Kazakh tribes along the Syr Darya, as well as the Tatars of the Volga region, and also among the Turks of Anatolia and Azerbaijan (Akinar).

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Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, a significant figure in Central Asian Sufism, has had a profound influence not only in the Turkic-speaking world but also across the broader Islamic world. His spiritual journey, teachings, and literary contributions, especially through his *Divan Hikmat*, have earned him a lasting legacy that continues to resonate within Sufi traditions. Persian sources and research have long recognized Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's role in the development of Sufism, exploring both the historical and spiritual dimensions of his life and work. This article examines Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's legacy as reflected in Persian literature and scholarship, focusing on his contributions to Islamic mysticism and the development of Sufi orders.

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's teachings have been documented and discussed extensively in Persian sources. His order, the Yasawi Sufi order, became a key component of the spread of Sufism in Central Asia, and his contributions were acknowledged by Persian scholars and mystics. In particular, Persian sources emphasize his ability to integrate Islamic spirituality with Turkic cultural elements, which made his teachings resonate deeply with the Turkic tribes of Central Asia.

One of the key sources that reflects his importance is the *Divan Hikmat* (The Book of Wisdom), a collection of poetry written in the Chagatai Turkish language, where Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi presents his mystical ideas and spiritual guidance. Persian scholars have discussed his *Hikmat* as an embodiment of Islamic spirituality and moral wisdom, often recognizing his work for its emphasis on the four pillars of Sufism: Sharia (Islamic law), Tariqah (the spiritual path), Haqiqat (truth), and Marifah (knowledge). These principles formed the foundation of the Yasawi path and were later integrated into the teachings of other Sufi orders, such as the Naqshbandi and Bektashi orders.

While the Yasawi order was initially influenced by the cultural and spiritual dynamics of Turkestan, it spread widely across Central Asia, reaching beyond the Syr Darya and into the regions of Khwarezm, Ferghana, and Khujand. Persian historians and Sufi scholars have long studied how Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's teachings were integrated into Persian cultural and religious life. His legacy is often seen as one of religious inclusivity and flexibility, as his order embraced the Sunni tradition while fostering a broader spiritual openness that incorporated various Islamic sects and beliefs.

In the Persian historical narrative, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi is frequently depicted as a symbol of mystical unity and religious tolerance. His emphasis on dhikr jali (loud remembrance of God) in contrast to the dhikr khafi (silent remembrance) practiced by other Sufi orders, such as the Naqshbandi, also highlights his distinctive spiritual methodology. Persian scholars have noted that this emphasis on public dhikr helped make Sufism more accessible to the masses, creating a broader spiritual following among the Turkic people.

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's influence is not limited to the spiritual realm but extends to the literary sphere as well. Persian scholars have studied his *Divan Hikmat* for its profound spiritual insights and its ability to blend Persian mystical thought with Turkic poetic traditions. The Persian language played a crucial role in interpreting and disseminating Yasawi's teachings throughout the Islamic world.

In particular, Persian mystics and scholars in the 13th and 14th centuries were influenced by the Yasawi order's teachings on the importance of the relationship between the seeker and the Divine. Persian Sufi poetry from this period, especially the works of poets such as Rumi and Hafez, bears the marks of Yasawi influence in its emphasis on love, truth, and the mystical quest.

In addition to historical studies, Persian researchers have also explored Yasawi's influence on contemporary Sufism. Many modern scholars in Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia continue to investigate his legacy as part of a broader discourse on Islamic mysticism. His emphasis on dhikr, spiritual purification, and the integration of Islamic law with mystical practice remains relevant to contemporary spiritual seekers, particularly those within the Sufi tradition.

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's spiritual contributions and his role in the development of Sufism have been widely acknowledged in Persian sources and research. His teachings, which integrated Islamic mysticism with Turkic folk traditions, not only helped spread Islam among the Turkic tribes of Central Asia but also had a profound impact on the development of Sufi orders in the wider Islamic world. His *Divan Hikmat* continues to be a significant work in both the spiritual and literary traditions of the region. Today, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi's legacy remains an integral part of Islamic mysticism, and his influence can still be seen in the spiritual practices and scholarly research of Persian-speaking regions.

One of the sources that provides information about Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi is a work titled *Mir'at al-Qulub*, attributed to Sufi Muhammad Daneshmand. The manuscript of this work is preserved in the collection of Hamid Soleimani at the Institute of Oriental Studies, known as the Abu Rayhan Biruni Academy of Sciences in Uzbekistan, under reference number 3004/1. *Mir'at al-Qulub* is one of the first scholarly works to analyze and investigate the principles and rules of Yasawiyya teachings. It also mentions that this work is based on the sermons of Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi. The text begins with the beautiful introduction: "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful! Praise be to Allah, the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing, and Glory be to Allah, the Creator, the Generous. Know that the compiler of this treatise is the great Sufi Muhammad Daneshmand, a proof of the Shari'a and the epitome of the scholars of the path. It is recorded in the books of trusted scholars and esteemed sheikhs that this noble Sufi Muhammad Daneshmand quoted these words from Sultan al-'Arifin and Qutb al-Aqtāb on Earth, Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi (may God's mercy be upon him)."

As indicated in the introduction of this treatise, its compiler, Sufi Muhammad Daneshmand, who lived in the twelfth century, is acknowledged as a proof of the Shari'a and a distinguished scholar of the Sufi path. It is noteworthy that in this work, Ahmad Yasawi is referred to as "Qutb al-Aqtāb" (the Pole of Poles on Earth) and "Sultan al-'Arifin" (the Sultan of

the Gnostics). It is important to remember that for over ten centuries, Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi has deserved the title of “Sultan al‘Arifin.”

The second credible source that refers to the spiritual stature of Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi is the Tadhkira of “Nasa’im al-Mahabbat” by Amir Ali-Shir Nava’i. Amir Ali-Shir Nava’i, a scholar and secretary of classical Uzbek literature, in his Tadhkira titled Nasa’im al-Mahabbat, which is a free translation of Nafahat al-Uns by Molana Jami, written between 1495-1496, mentions the 611th (six hundred and eleventh) divine scholar and writes: “Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi, whose tomb is sacred, is the sheikh of the sheikhs of Turkistan. His ranks were high, his miracles numerous and countless. He had many disciples and followers, and both kings and beggars were devoted to him. He was among the companions of Imam Yusuf Hamadani (may God sanctify his soul), had companionship with Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujdawani (may God sanctify his soul), and received spiritual benefit from him, joining the ranks of Khawaja Abdullah al-Baraḳī and Khawaja Hassan Andaḳī (may God sanctify their souls), all of whom were disciples of Imam Yusuf Hamadani (may God have mercy on him). Each of them, who attained greatness, was a companion of his. Among the great sheikhs of his time, many reached perfection under his guidance. Sheikh Raziuddin Ali Lala (may God sanctify his soul) after serving Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra (may God have mercy on him), continued his spiritual path under Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi (may God sanctify his soul) and completed his mystical journey with his guidance. His tomb is located in Yasa and is the prayer direction for the people of Turkistan.” (Nava’i, Ali-Shir, 1968: 153)

Fakhruddin Ali Safi of the tenth century, in his important work Al-Hayat, which serves as a major source about the sheikhs of the Yasawi path, begins with the mention of Khawaja Yusuf Hamadani. Fakhruddin Ali Safi writes about Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi: “Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi was the third caliph of the caliphs of Yusuf Hamadani (may God sanctify their souls). The Turks called him Ata Yasawi, and the Turkish term ‘Ata,’ meaning ‘father,’ was used for great sheikhs. He was born in Yasa, the city where his life and spiritual journey reached their peak under the guidance of Khawaja Yusuf.” (Fakhruddin Safi, 2003: 15)

Another source that provides information about Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi is the work Tadhkirayi Naqshbandiya by Tahir Ishani, written in 1746-1747. In it, he states: “In describing the life of Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi (may God sanctify his soul), he was a significant figure among the sheikhs of the Turks, hidden from worldly sight, a companion of angels, and a guide to both general and special followers. He was the third caliph and successor of Khawaja Yusuf Hamadani, and the Turkish people called him Ata Yasawi, a term that means ‘father,’ used for great spiritual leaders.”

Tahir Ishani further writes: “Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi had divine signs and miracles. As a child, he was under the care of the alchemical master Arslan Baba (may God sanctify his soul), who was an eminent figure among the Turkish sheikhs. There is a well-known narration that Arslan Baba, upon receiving a divine sign from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), began to educate Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi. After Arslan Baba’s passing, Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi, following the divine blessing of his master, journeyed to Bukhara and became a disciple of Khawaja Yusuf Hamadani, completing his spiritual path and attaining perfection.” (Tahir Ishani, 1746-1747, manuscript, page 76)

In his work Khazinat al-Asfiya, written in 1864, Ghulam Sarwar Lahori states: “In both outward and inner knowledge, he was highly capable, having attained complete asceticism, piety, and a high degree of purity. He held an esteemed rank in both Shari’a and Tariqah. He received the cloak of spiritual succession from Khawaja Abu Yusuf Hamadani (may God sanctify his soul), and after the passing of that illuminated guide, he took the seat of leadership and guidance. He was born in the city of Yasa in Turkistan. During his childhood, he was under the spiritual care of Arslan Baba, a prominent figure among the Turkish sheikhs, who, following the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), educated him in both outward and inward spiritual practices. Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi served under Arslan Baba and, after his

death, traveled to Bukhara, where he completed his spiritual journey under Khawaja Yusuf Hamadani and reached perfection.”

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi remains a central figure in the development of Sufism, particularly in Central Asia. His innovative approach to mysticism, which blended Islamic spirituality with Turkic cultural elements, laid the groundwork for the Yasawi order. The *Divan Hikmat* serves as both a spiritual guide and a testament to Yasawi’s deep connection with the people of Central Asia. His teachings continue to resonate within contemporary Sufism, particularly among the Turkic-speaking communities. This study has shown that Yasawi’s integration of Islamic law with mystical practices was a key factor in the rapid spread of his order. Furthermore, the preservation of his teachings through poetry, particularly in the *Divan Hikmat*, ensured their continued influence throughout the centuries. Yasawi’s legacy is not only visible in the continued reverence for his tomb in Turkestan but also in the spiritual practices of modern Sufi communities.

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