

## Pir of Turkestan Hodja Ahmet Yesevi<sup>1</sup>

Necati Karadağ<sup>2</sup>

Çeviren:

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The people's imagination has been constantly commemorated the great personalities who had a deep impact on their own culture and civilization since the unknown periods of history. Therefore, it becomes impossible to learn their true life fully after a generation.

Ahmet Yesevi is a valuable person who has such a character, and whose asceticism, taqwa and ideas have a strong influence on the Turkish Society, to which he belongs.

Yesevi has been a secret with legends and stories about his life. It is still a knot where he was born and where he saw. However, we learn from the work named "Cevahirü'l Ebrar min Emvaci'l Bihar" written by a Yesevi dervish that he was born in the town of Sayram, 170 km northeast of Aksu, in the West Turkestan region of today's China. Perhaps, based on his name, some sources have recorded that he was born in Yesi (Ali Şir Nevai Nesayimü'l Mahabbe min Şenayimil Fütüvve). His birth in Sayram is mentioned only in the above-mentioned work. All of the other works call him from Yesi. But the information in this work, written by his disciple, can logically be considered more superior than the others. His date of birth is not known for sure

<sup>1</sup> Karadağ, N. (1987). "Türkistan Piri Hoca Ahmed Yesevi". *Türk Yurdu*, 8, 9:23-25.

Makale sahibinde izin alınmıştır. Çeviride başlıklar korunmuştur. Çeviri metnin içerisindeki –eğer varsa- tüm italik yazımlar metnin orijinaline aittir. Metnin daha iyi anlaşılması için makalenin kendisinde olmayan ve çevirmen tarafından açıklanması gerekli görülen bölümler dipnotta ç.n vurgusuyla paylaşılmıştır. Buna ek olarak ayrı bir kaynakça oluşturulmamış, yazarın kaynakçası derginin yazım kurallarına uyarlanmaksızın metnin sonuna eklenmiştir.

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### Atıf

#### Citation

Karadağ, Necati (2022).  
Pir Of Turkestan Hodja  
Ahmet Yesevi. (Çev.  
Yasemin Karadeniz)  
*Babür*, 1: 185-189

### Başvuru

#### Submitted

22.04.2022

### Kabul

#### Accepted

02.06.2022

### Yayın Tarihi

#### Publication Date

12.06.2022

His father is a person named Sheikh Ibrahim, one of the famous personalities of Sayram. His mother is Lady Ayşe. His older sister, Gevher Şehnaz, took over the custody of little Ahmed, who lost his mother firstly and then his father when he was seven years old.

He settled in Yesi with his older sister for an unknown reason at a young age. After studying in the famous Bukhara madrasahs of that period, he joined Sheikh Yusuf Hamadani and became one of his caliphs over time. After studying in the famous Bukhara Madrasahs of that period, he joined Sheikh Yusuf Hamadani and became one of his caliphs over time.

Ahmed Kabaklı writes the following sentences about H. Ahmed Yesevi, whom Feriddin-i Attar describes as “Pir-i Turkistan”. Ahmed Yasawi, who is rumored to have lived for a hundred and twenty years, is still called Hazrat-i Turkistan, which means the spiritual elder of Turkistan today.

He wrote poems called “Hikmet”, written in syllabic meter, describing the subtleties of Sufism, dervish and master. It is rumored that when he reached the age of 63, the Prophet Muhammad died at this age, and he did not want to live any longer. He completed the rest of his life in a narrow cell that he removed underground. Now the real ordeal for him begins after this age.

It is a mystery how many years he lived. Based on the legends, it is said that he lived 120 years. On this subject, in the work named Cevahirü'l Ebrar min Emvaci Bihâr; H. Ahmed Yesevi spent his whole life in that narrow ‘Çilehane’ until he was 120 years old, according to another rumor, 133, and according to another rumor that is 125 years old in Yesi. Just like the Ashâb-i Kubür, it is said with diet, worship, guidance and struggle.

About his death, Nihat Sami Banarlı says: Ahmet Yesevi died in this city in 1166 with the freedom of a holy old man. Since his son Ibrahim died when he was young, the Yesevi Family was survived by his daughter named Gevher Şehnaz.

Hodja Ahmed Yesevi, who had a very important place in Turkish contemplative life, passed away in Yesi in 1166, as many works mention.

We follow the view after his death from Nihad Sami Banarlı. His miracles did not end after his death. So much so that the great Serdar Aksak Timur, who lived two centuries after Yesevi, saw someone in his dream for one night. He received victory orders and promises of victory from his, and when it turned out to be true, he had a magnificent tomb built in Ahmet Yesevi’s grave. The following verse is written on this tomb: “He has the key to the unseen. No one knows but him.

“Professor M.Fuat Köprülü has vague ideas about Turkistan Piri’s literary personality. Considering that he has one of the most comprehensive studies on Yesevi in our country, it becomes obligatory to consider his ideas. In this regard, “He tried to scare them with terrible hell scenes by telling simple legends according to the level of the society to which he addressed, and by declaring religious and some moral principles as advice and Hikmet. In this respect, Divan-ı Hikmet is not a deep and poetic work of mysticism, but rather a simple work consisting of religious and moral advice, legends and stories, and a heap of instructional poems belonging to the order, method and etiquette; Ahmet Yesevi is also a dry moralist who is full of sophistry ideas but lacks his true poetic talent and lyricism.

On the other hand, Ahmet Kabaklı says that Ahmet Yesevi does not claim to be a poet. He only chose the style of verse wisdom in order to better reflect his thoughts and feelings

to the public.

If we listen to Nihat Sami Banarlı after these views, it may be possible to reach a synthesis. In this regard, Banarlı is a spreader of religion and mysticism, who helped the establishment and development of the Islamic faith among the Turks of Central Asia with his beloved sect of Ahmet Yesevi. Yesevi, through Sufism, did easier what the Muslim Arab armies, even the first Turks to accept Islam, tried to do through war. Ahmet Yesevi did not leave the difference between sharia and sect in Islam and introduced the sharia of Islam at least to the extent of the sect members and placed religion and mysticism in plain and simple conversations. He often acted not as an Islamic Sufi but as a teacher of Islam, and in his poems he talked about verses and hadiths, the principles of Islam and sins with the same simple conversations.

He was neither a poet nor a man of letters. For this reason, it is necessary to act from this point of view when thinking about his literary personality. However, writing poetry is not a simple task, and rhyming in moderation. Even if we cannot say that Yesevi is a great poet, we should not be pessimistic like Köprülü, especially if we consider what the poets who claimed to be poets did in the twentieth century.

There is a close relationship between what he lives and his thoughts. It is not possible to come across zigzags in his anecdotal or historical life. There is no strong lyrical expression in his poems. Despite this, Sır-derya Taşkent even managed to affect the whole of Turkestan. Therefore, the Yesevi dervishes who lived after him also have poems written in this way. His poems are of an instructive nature and are conversations far from the love of high art. In these poems, there is an ethereal atmosphere and a strong power of appeal and power for religious indoctrination.

After all, we can say that since Ahmet Yesevi is not a poet, it is absurd to look for poetic features in his work. However, the power of speech, the power of suggestion, and the skill of putting emotions into words are far superior to many people who are described as poets today. The care in choosing rhyme, the mastery of redif, the ability to reflect the language characteristics of the era are very rare. It is not possible to compare him with a Fuzuli or a Yunus Emre in terms of lyricism. However, no one has reached the position he attained in his natural state, be it with his poetry, with his sword or with his knowledge. He was a simple, clean hearted, optimistic sufi person. He also had remarkable ideas and thoughts on those issues.

It is the Divan-ı Hikmet where Ahmet Yesevi's Sufi poems are collected. The word Hikmet, according to Imam-i Ghazali, means to combine the best of beings with the best of knowledge, to know. Allah is the best of beings. In this case, Hikmet means knowing Allah. The greatest importance of the poems in Divan-ı Hikmet in Turkish language and literature is that they are largely national in terms of external pronunciation.

They are written in a very simple and nice Turkish. Although there are some sung in aruz prosody, mostly 4+3=7 and 4+4+4=12 syllable meters are used in these poems. In terms of form, the poems are the epic form arranged with the characteristic quatrains of Classical Turkish poetry. In rhymes, they are half rhymes of our folk poetry and they are often redified.

In the inner world of the poems, there is no exuberance seen in other Sufi poems.

The Turkish language in Yesevi's poems is the literary Kasgar Hakaniyye dialect, which was the dominant dialect of Central Asia in the 12th century.

Yesevi's poems aroused great love and interest in a short time, and even reciting poetry like Yesevi has become a sacred tradition among Central Asian sufis. For this reason, it is certain that poems sung by others were also included among his 'Hikmets' gathered together after his death. It is very doubtful that especially the poems sung in aruz belong to Yesevi. The work was first published in Kazan in 1878-1879 under the name Hikem-i Hazret-i Sultan'ı Arifin Hodja Ahmed Yesevi as a 125-page treatise consisting of 67 Hikmet and an argument. The copy, which was published in Tashkent in 1314 as a lithograph, consists of 154 pages, including the prose muqadiyye called "Fakrname", the Hikmets close to the 3rd Kazan edition (It was published in 1311 in Kazan University printing house under the name of "Divan-ı Hikmet-i Sultanü'ı Arifin Hoca Ahmed Bin Mahmut bin İftihar-ı Yesevi") and the discussion at the end. It is different from the other copies in that it includes the Hikmet of one of the Yesevi dervishes later in the same way.

If we start from the idea that Divan-ı Hikmet, which we have been trying to explain from above, does not belong only to Ahmet Yesevi, but that it is a common handbook of his Yesevi sect, it becomes clear that we can not agree with Köprülü at many points. Yes, maybe there is no strong poetry in the Divan, but if we pay attention to the fact that he knows sounds with his spiritual and emotional appeal, this is another point that confirms our opinion. Moreover, when we look at many legends, epics, miracles and portents belonging to Ahmet Yesevi, we see that he was not a bare moralist at all. He was deeply attached to the Prophet, to that great human being who was sent as a mercy to the worlds. He has made it his greatest aim to fulfill his orders perfectly. How can we reach such a conclusion when that great person has a hadith that says, do not scare, give good news, do not disgust, make happy?

As a result, we say that it is the first work of Divan-ı Hikmet Yesevi, that is, the common book of the Yesevi sect, which has spread to Anatolia and Turkistan and has preserved its vitality until today.

Yesevi's influences have been great in various Turkish countries. Among these, we can count the Volga area, Central Asia, Anatolia, and Harizm regions. We can understand how influential he was because Evliya Çelebi, who lived centuries after him, considers himself his descendant.

From the ideas he put forward, a philosophy of love was born. This created a completely new and national art form that was not found in Persians and Arabs. Now let's follow this subject from Köprülü; two main elements stand out in the Hikmet of H. Ahmet Yesevi; Islam, that is, the religious-sophisticated element, and the national, that is, the element taken from the old folk literature of the Turks. While the former is stronger in subject, the latter is particularly evident in form and rhythm. The Turks of Sir-Derya, who had just entered the circle of Islam, valued this work, which was not foreign to them, with its nature. Since the subject was of great interest to them, this work soon gained an almost sacred character among the public. For those who entered that sect, reading such poems, even memorizing the Divan-ı Wisdom, and writing poems in that style for those who had the power were considered as the unchangeable principles of the sect.

It is seen that one of the main factors that makes H. Ahmet Yesevi endure and ensures that the strength of his influences is constant, is his involvement with the people and his interest in the fields related to them. Maybe he was not a strong poet as Fuat Köprülü said, but his strength was in this direction.

When a new literature started to be formed among the Northern Turks under the influence of European civilization in the last few years, that is, until the first years of the 20th century, it is enough to deal with that literature to see the clear and definite influence of Ahmet Yesevi and Ahmet Yesevi's followers.

We can see the influence of Ahmet Yesevi on the Turkmen tribes living on a wide area between Ceyhun and the Caspian Sea.

Another effect of him and his work is that the Yeseviness, which spread among the Turkish people and gave birth to three great sects such as Haydariyye, Bektashi and Naqshbandi, which had an important place in their spiritual life.

As we have said before, he was able to accomplish the things that many rulers could not do with his sword, with the pieces of advice of a mystical nature. This enabled him to be kneaded in the Turkish imagination, to be lived until eternity and to give birth to new life works.

This nation, which broke away from the historical scenes filled with war and peace from an active life, was compelled to calm down and move to a settled civilization when they entered the field of Islam, and that movement, which was ingrained in its blood, turned into a realm of contemplation. It is obvious that the sufi lineages such as Ahmet Yesevi, Yunus Emre, Mevlana and Bektashi Veli have a great share.

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