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THE FEMALE IDEAL IN MEDIEVAL SUFI LITERATURE (ON THE BASIS OF YASAWI HIKMETS)

Attitudes towards women define the moral side of all literature. In medieval Sufi literature, female protagonists always had female characters as its main characters. In our society, it is a common opinion that medieval works depict women as voiceless and repressed by religious prejudice and beliefs. Images of Muslim women have entered Sufi literature in line with religious beliefs and spiritual aspirations. They were the bearers of certain characteristic qualities of a socially significant woman, served as role models, and were not religiously repressive. On the contrary, their active life stance played an important role in the establishment of new social relations and new morals and manners. Apparently, literature was striving to solve the issues arising in the society in favor of establishing new morals. Sufi poets played an important role in this process. Their poetry portrays a woman as a morally stable and spiritually pure Muslim. The purpose of this paper is to examine the image of woman through Yasawi hikmets and to identify the feminine ideal in medieval Sufi literature. In order to achieve this research objective, a comprehensive analysis of Yasawi's hikmets will be conducted and thus we will try to determine that the female ideal images were more vital, more earthly and rational in Sufi literature. Sufi traditions have so far been studied at different levels by philologists, musicologists and folklorists. However, among the available studies, the paucity of special papers on women image determines the relevance of scientific work. The hermeneutical, historical comparative analysis; literary-cognitive methods were used to address the research problem. According to the results of the study, it can be concluded that the ideal image of a woman in Sufi literature

is a combination of the Islamic religion principles characteristic and the Turkic people female images characteristic, praised in Yasawi Hikmets.

Keywords: Woman, Turkic literature, Diwani Hikmet, Sufi literature, Islam, Yasawi teaching, zkyr, female nature.

Introduction

In the middle Ages, Sufism was the key philosophical doctrine of the Islamic world. Poetic imagery in Arabic, Persian and Turkic poetry contains Sufi concepts not always visible to the superficial eye. Sufism is an esoteric current in Islam preaching asceticism and heightened spirituality, one of the mainstays of classical Muslim philosophy. Followers of Sufism are called Sufis.

Sufi poetry is not just inspired personal creativity, but a deliberately constructed genre with more or less elaborate rules of rhyme and size and complex ciphers to symbolic interpretation that involved intimate knowledge of the subject.

Sufi poetry was composed in many languages. At first, in the ninth century, Arabic was used as a vehicle for expressing mystical experience in verse, then, from the eleventh century onwards, it was the turn of Persian. The Sufis began to compose verses in other native languages, such as Turkic and early Hindi, in the thirteenth century.

Members of the Arab nobility entertained themselves by hunting, and afterwards often relaxed in a small circle where they drank wine. Such a pastime gave rise to secular Arabic poetry that extolled the joys of wine drinking and at the same time glorified the monastic environment. The poets spoke of the cross and the monastery, the pleasure of wine drinking and their love for the beautiful cupbearer (saki).

In The Middle Ages, representatives of Turkic literature mainly benefited from the female ideals offered by the general Muslim culture, and at the same time, they tried to create original images of women. Today's researchers are interested in this creative direction. It provides an insight into medieval Turkic life and fundamentals of the established moral and ethical attitudes and notions. Can the original Turkic literary works be considered a result of reflection of sensual love in the artistic form, or are they mystical exaltations based on the religious cult of female ideal?

The image of women in Yasawi's work is represented by their closeness to God. Yasawi tried to explain the theme of love and women's problems through religion. He particularly praised the place of women and mothers in his hikmets. He compared them to incomparable creatures, angels and explained that love between a child and a mother is a special feeling created by a higher power. This feeling was based on the concept that love should be limited to love for God. He refuted the notion of the Arab-Persian poets that drinking wine meant intoxication

by mystical love, and explained that true love is the worship of God, and the ideal of the woman as the supreme hero is created through chastity and religious worship. Yasawi praised the role of women in the Turkic world. Through his wisdom, he shows that women of that time had equal rights with men and they were not only involved in domestic matters, but also in solving social problems. That is, the fact that women could participate in the practice of zikr, considered to be special, is one sign of their heroism. In the works of A. Yasawi and other Sufi poets women appeared as dominant heroines, created thanks to the religious cult of the female ideal and beauty.

Materials and methods

Hermeneutic philological analysis of a literary text – interpretation from the perspective of the interpreter of the true understanding of the meaning of the information reported in the text, interpretation of the specificity, purpose of the preferred structure and elements of the content organization, internal and external form of the artwork (text) in the context of its genre nature, with an orientation on literary development, literary process, cultural and linguistic identity of the author. This method is necessary in order to identify the Hikmets related to questions about women in terms of content and to properly explain the author's point of view.

As the classification of genre and text types, the approaches in literature also classified into many kinds of methodologies, which has different characterization for each. All of the approaches in literature reflect a particular institutional, cultural and historical background. Historically speaking, the systematic analysis of texts developed in the magic or religious realm, and in legal discourse. In the past time in cultural history magic, a religion indirectly furthers the preservation and interpretation of «texts» in the widest sense of the term. It really has the close relation with the oracles and dreams which is becoming the starting point of textual analysis and becoming the basic structures in the study of the holy texts in all religions [1]. The historical-comparative method of research studies historical events by directly comparing a particular event with other historical events, creating a theory or referring to the present day. It usually involves comparing social processes at different times and places. Using this method, it is possible to identify and compare the chain of events of Yasawi time and to identify the role of women of that period. Wijaya says that the logical-historical approach is one of the methods of analyzing a literary work in which the author and the reader grasp the meaning of a literary work by recalling a moment/historical moment long into the written literary work [2].

Using the literary-cognitive method, the general premises of Yasawi's works are analyzed, allowing the reader to perceive them from the perspective of cognitive poetics. English philologist Peter Stockwell says that the term «cognitive poetics» refers to a range of literary studies based on the concepts of cognitive linguistics

and psychology [3]. That is, the method mentioned allows us to consider the wisdom of Yasawi from a psychological point of view, to properly perceive the events of that era from a cognitive point of view.

Results and discussion

All the sages of Sufi origin born in The Middle Ages have left an indelible mark on the worldview and culture of the people. In assessing Sufi poetry, it is important not to lose sight of the role of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in shaping Islamic culture. The Koran had an enormous impact on Muslims' perception of beauty, both aurally and visually, but followers of Islam distinguished between the Koran and the poetry of the Arab tribes, which was produced by wandering singers who claimed to have drawn their inspiration from the Jinn. The morality of much of the pre-Islamic poetry seems ambivalent because of its glorification of tribal feuding, brawling, amorous worldly pleasures and pride. After the spread of Islam, the glorification of the warrior was replaced by submission to God. However, the long odes of pre-Islamic times (Qasidas) have remained as literary models, where the search for the beloved and meditating on the nature of images formed their basis along with purely philosophical themes.

Sufi love lyrics concentrated on the description of the outer features of the beloved. The most characteristic of them are the moon-face and the black plaits, which reflect the inseparable divine qualities of mercy and wrath, of Islam and infidelity. The image of female braids, with endless variations, appears as snares that captivate the hearts of lovers, with eyebrows likened to bows that release arrows that mortally wound.

The Persian gardens, renowned for their glory since antiquity, have served poets to create the most memorable images. The slender cypress hints at the beloved's camp, reflected in the image of a paradise tree. It is here that the bird of the soul takes its seat when it ascends to heaven. Whether it is the nightingale singing lonely to the rose, or the falcon returning to the heavenly hunter, their home is the abode of paradise, where the Phoenix-like bird Simurgh lives.

Arab and Persian Sufi poetry, however, cannot be separated from the tradition of court poetry. From their social setting, it would seem that the poetry that is practiced in Sufi convents, which celebrates divine love and the strong bonds that bind mentor and disciple, has little in common with the formal odes composed by professional poets in honor of their noble patrons.

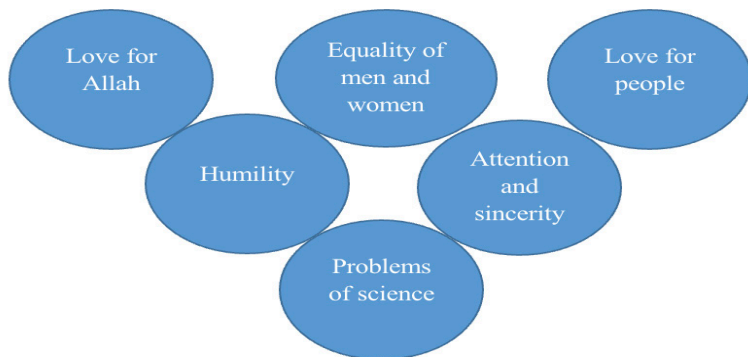
The origins of Arabic mystical poetry lie in the rhythmic construction of prayer. Arabic mystical prose often describes a delight in rhyming and metrical prose (saj), which is one of the most striking aspects of Arabic literature in general. The saj continues to be repeated in Sufi fraternities at joint gatherings, often accompanied by music.

Yasawi's poetry is also closely linked to the musical accompaniment called the zikr (meditation) in Sufi society. He glorified the transmission of Islam in the right direction, and described the zikr in detail in his work titled *Diwani Hikmet*. By involving women in that zikr, expressing their status in society, he tried to portray the image of gentle women through his work. His teachings and works led to radical changes in the history of the Turkic people and Sufi poetry and had a significant impact on public consciousness.

Ahmed Yasawi's teachings on goodness and morality have become known not only in Turkic poetry, but also throughout Sufi poetry. The followers of our great ancestor, nurtured on the spiritual table, brought up in his school, glorified the humanistic teachings of the wise thinker and passed them on to the next generation.

«*Diwani Hikmet*» by Yasawi is a gift to all mankind, as this book contains almost all the necessary advice for people. As a proof of this, M. F. Köprülü said “*Diwani Hikmet*” has become a sacred work among the people. This work, based on the verses and surahs of the Quran, has become priceless gold for ordinary people who do not understand the language of the Quran. The book covers everything from love of God to respect, morality, patience and even a woman's role in society. Researchers have assessed his work «*Diwani Hikmet*» from a literary-historical point of view and concluded that it is a noble heritage of Sufi poetry. *Diwani Hikmet* was a priceless guide for ordinary people of that time [4].

The wisdom of Yasawi consists of seven principles (see picture 1). According to these seven principles, the hikmets, grouped by thematic genre, define wisdom, knowledge, perfect intellect, thought, social status, art and explain what is haram and what is permissible.



Picture 1 – The principles of Yasawi Hikmets

A number of scholars, notably M. Zharmukhameduly, Osman Turer, D. Kenjetay have commented on the above issues, while the number of researchers who have raised the issue of women in Diwani Hikmet are insignificant. Yasawi wrote his wisdom not for one or two tribes but for the whole nation, that is, the Turks. For this reason, since most of the Turks were nomads and most of them were illiterate in writing, he wrote wisdom in the dimensions of Turkic and folk poetry. According to Memmedova-Kekeç, Ahmed Yasawi was one of the scholars of the Turkic world, a poet who left a mark in the history of literature with his poems. There is no doubt that the wisdom widespread among the people contributed to a sharp rise in the status of the Turkic language and a new impetus to the artistic thinking of the people [5].

Yasawi's 101nd wisdom shows the great love between mother and child. By translating this hikmet, Trapman beautifully conveys its meaning to readers, thereby making them reflect on today's relationship between sons and mothers.

Mothers disintegrating in tears, unable to find solutions,
Hiding covered heads, lacerated faces, pulling their hair out,
Assuming their children starving and destitute,
They bawl, tearing themselves to pieces, just look around.
Mothers perplexed, just waiting and staring,
Their faces turned yellow as bile,
Screaming: «Oh my beloved children,» they sob,
Breaking down, they tear their hair out, just look around [6].

Abdel Azeem S. wrote about this in his book that among the few precepts of Islam that Muslims still faithfully observe to the present day is the considerate treatment of mothers. The honor that Muslim mothers receive from their sons and daughters is exemplary. The intensely warm relations between Muslim mothers and their children and the deep respect with which Muslim men approach their mothers usually amaze Westerners [7]. Confirming Abdel Azim's words, D. Otelbaeva writes that if we consider the medieval history of the West, the place of women is ambiguous, but in Turkic history a woman mother occupies an honourable place, her role is very great [8]. Yasawi was well acquainted with the noble worldview of nomadic Turkic peoples, who prioritised feelings of brotherhood and tribal ties based on kinship.

During the Yasawi era, the influence of Islam increased among the Turks. Islam entered Turkic society through the Arabs and Persians, together with their culture and traditions. Persian society at that time boys had an advantage over girls. If a son was born, the mother, nurse and doctor received a higher share. Mothers of boys received twice as much as mothers of little girls. The female sex in Persia received a domestic upbringing, and education was hardly given to them at all. A girl was barely ten years old when she was asked to be a wife and betrothed to

someone. Families were patriarchal, with many wives and concubines; marriages were arranged with close relatives, even brothers and sisters. Yasawi wanted to prevent the spread of Persian and Arabic culture among Turkic peoples and sought to show in his Hikmets the true ideal image of a woman in Islamic poetry. Islam bestows a very high status on women and gives them every opportunity for a pure, pious, meaningful life full of deep feelings and heartfelt experiences. According to Yasawi, men and women have identical rights before God; The Lord created them both with the same mind, heart and soul. However, the religion of Islam has established a number of duties that befit women by virtue of their character and men by virtue of their endurance. Yasawi began to revive the status of women in his hikmets, taking into account the ancient Turkic culture and the special place of women in society. In his article, G. Telebayev said that Yasawi also welcomed love for women, believing that their beautiful faces reflect the divine light [9]. Yasawi himself puts it this way «Täjirim sonyñ bergi bükil tilegin, Mahabbatpen jalyndatkaj zhuregyn (May Tengri fulfill all wishes, Love light up in her heart)» [10]. Moreover, nomads could not keep women and men apart. Ahmet Yasawi, following this custom of the Turks, included men and women together in his zykyr and conversation. He claimed that it was an indispensable method of self-improvement along the Sufi path. Scholars of the time opposed that action of Ahmet Yasawi. In Diwani Hikmet it is said about Baba Mashin, one such scholar:

At that time Baba Mashin was telling people,
A sheikh named Ahmet appeared in Turkestan.
He allowed the girls and men to communicate,

After banning such a thing appeared in Turkestan [11]. Yasawi was not only accused of raising women's issues but also of innovating religion. In fact, this provoked a negative reaction in orthodox circles, but Yasawi argued convincingly for the acceptability of joint zykyr. In this connection, the legend of Sadiq Sapabekuly about Yasawi can be cited as an example. According to popular legend, the scholars of Horasan and Maurenkhr, who had heard a rumour that men and women could talk on different subjects, did not think Yasawi's behavior was right and went on a campaign to the city of Yasi. Hoja Ahmed, with his high spiritual faculties, sensed that they were coming and gave one of his Murids (a disciple) an inkwell with a closed lid and sent him to meet the scholars. The scholars, who were going to test Ahmet Yasawi, took the inkwell from the young man who had met them, opened the lid and saw fire inside and a bundle of cotton wool next to it. However, neither the fire went out nor the cotton wool burned. The scholars understood Hoja Ahmed's teaching that 'if a man and a woman come together on God's way, the Lord will remove bad feelings from their hearts'. Everyone was amazed at such a miracle of Hazrat and asked him for forgiveness, even becoming his disciples [11]. This example of Yasawi proves his true preaching (zykyr of

truth). With this illustration, he says that there should be no horizontal barrier to love between girls and young men: just as fire in a box does not affect objects, so nothing prevents young men from falling in love in the right way. This means that inappropriate nonsense will have no effect.

By analysing this legend, we can prove that the role of girls and women of the time held a special place in society. The fact that the contents of the box were kept in the same state for a long time refutes the notion that society blamed Yasawi and spread negative tendencies among the population. Yasawi was particularly saddened by the incorporation of Arab traditions and Persian culture into Turkic society. He tried to protect Turkic girls, who had been growing up freely since ancient times, from the negative influence of this culture. However, the common people did not understand his actions and perceived him as a propagandist. The fact that women could freely perform *zykyr* shows how much Yasawi valued women. He wanted to show the image of a woman based on pure Islam, not the image of a woman based on Arab and Persian culture. Yasawi was relentless in his advocacy of gender equality and tried to show that the traditions of other countries had nothing in common with Turkic peoples. Even if there is no specific Hikmet about women, using the methods used in our study and the legends associated with Yasawi, we believe that we have succeeded in identifying the image of women in Sufi literature. Medieval Sufi literature highlighted women's religiosity without considering the religion they belonged to. The Virgin Mary, the wives and daughters of prophets, and the daughters of khans in love were all examples of female ideals.

Conclusion

Thus, based on the above, we can conclude that poetic works about sensual love for a real woman, an earthly woman, are very rare. Sufi literature in this respect is not experiential, not even positive. There is always an abstract love of the Almighty in the foreground, and there is a religious cult of the female ideal as soon as the poet starts talking about love passions and feelings.

This peculiarity of Sufi literature can be attributed to its limitations and assessed as a profound spirituality. Perfection of the spirit is what the Sufi poets were interested. A study of medieval Sufi, namely Turkic, literature gives the impression that the poets of that period were not at all interested in the problems of earthly love. We see female images canonized by religion, on the one hand, and by written literature, on the other. Analyzing the role of women in Sufi literature through Yasawi Hikmets, we have identified the ideal image of a woman. The images of the ideal woman were more vital, earthly and rational. The female image described by Yasawi did not become canonical. There was little chance that the Muslim East, especially by the Arabs and Persians, would recognize this ideal woman, but for Turkic literature, the woman remained the Muslim religious cult

of the female ideal. The ideal pious image has remained unchanged until today, in all periods of historical and social change.

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ОРТА ҒАСЫРЛЫҚ СОПЫ ӘДЕБИЕТІНДЕГІ ӘЙЕЛ ИДЕАЛЫ (МҰРАТЫ) (ЯСАУИ ХИКМЕТТЕРІ НЕГІЗІНДЕ)

Әйелге деген қарым-қатынас барлық әдебиеттің моральдық жағын анықтайды. Ортағасырлық сопылық әдебиетте басты кейіпкерлер әрқашан әйелдер болған. Қазіргі қоғамда ортағасырлық

шығармаларда әйелдер дәрменсіз және діни нанымдардың құрбаны ретінде бейнеленген деген пікір бар. Мұсылман әйелдерінің образдары сопылық әдебиетке діни наным-сенімдер мен рухани ұмтылыстарға сәйкес енді. Олар әлеуметтік маңызы бар әйелге тән белгілі бір қасиеттерді бойына сіңіріп, үлгі-өнеге болды және діни қуғын-сүргінге ұшыраған жоқ. Керісінше, олардың белсенді өмірлік ұстанымы жаңа қоғамдық қатынастардың, жаңа адамгершілік пен әдет-ғұрыптардың қалыптасуында маңызды рөл атқарды. Әдебиет қоғамда туындаған жаңа моральдың орнығуын жақтайтындығы түсінікті. Бұл үдерісте сопылық ақындар маңызды рөл атқарды. Олардың поэзиясында әйел адамгершілігі тұрақты, рухани таза мұсылман әйелі ретінде бейнеленген. Бұл жұмыстың мақсаты – Ясауи хикметтері арқылы әйел бейнесін зерттеп, ортағасырлық сопылық әдебиеттегі әйел идеалын ашу болып табылады. Зерттеудің мақсатына жету үшін Ясауи хикметтері жан-жақты талданып, сопылық әдебиетте әйел идеалды бейнелерінің өміршең, шынайы және парасатты екенін анықтауға тырысамыз. Сопылық дәстүрлер осы уақытқа дейін филологтар, музыкатанушылар, фольклортанушылар тарапынан әртүрлі деңгейде зерттелді. Дегенмен, қолда бар зерттеулердің ішінде әйел бейнесіне арналған арнайы жұмыстардың аздығы ғылыми жұмыстың өзектілігін анықтайды. Зерттеу мәселесін шешу үшін герменевтикалық, тарихи-салыстырмалы және әдеби-танымдық әдістер қолданылды. Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сүйене отырып, сопылық әдебиеттегі идеалды әйел бейнесі ислам дінінің қағидалары мен Ясауи шығармасында дәріптелген түркі халықтарының әйел образдарының сипаттарының жиынтығы болып табылады деген тұжырым жасауға болады.

Кілтті сөздер: Әйел, түркі әдебиеті, Диуани хикмет, сопылық әдебиет, ислам, Ясауи ілімі, зікір, әйел табиғаты.

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ЖЕНСКИЙ ИДЕАЛ В СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ СУФИЙСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ (НА ОСНОВЕ ХИКМЕТОВ ЯСАВИ)

Отношение к женщине определяет моральную сторону всей литературы. В средневековой суфийской литературе главными героями всегда были женщины. В нашем обществе распространено мнение, что средневековые произведения изображают женщин безголосыми и подавленными религиозными предрассудками и верованиями. Образы мусульманских женщин вошли в суфийскую литературу в соответствии с религиозными верованиями и духовными устремлениями. Они были носителями определенных характерных качеств социально значимой женщины, служили образцами для подражания и не подвергались религиозным репрессиям. Наоборот, их активная жизненная позиция сыграла важную роль в становлении новых общественных отношений, новой морали и нравов. Очевидно, что литература стремилась решить возникающие в обществе проблемы в пользу утверждения новой морали. Важную роль в этом процессе сыграли поэты-суфийцы. Их поэзия изображает женщину как морально устойчивую и духовно чистую мусульманку. Цель данной работы – изучить образ женщины через хикметы Ясави и выявить женский идеал в средневековой суфийской литературе. Для достижения этой цели исследования будет проведен всесторонний анализ хикметов Ясави, и таким образом мы попытаемся определить, что женские идеальные образы были более жизненными, более земными и рациональными в суфийской литературе. Суфийские традиции до сих пор изучались на разных уровнях филологами, музыковедами и фольклористами. Однако среди имеющихся исследований скудость специальных работ, посвященных женскому образу, определяет актуальность научной работы. Для решения проблемы исследования были использованы герменевтический, историко-сравнительный анализ; литературно-когнитивный методы. По результатам исследования можно сделать вывод, что

идеальный образ женщины в суфийской литературе представляет собой сочетание характеристики принципов исламской религии и характеристики женских образов тюркских народов, воспетых в хикметах Ясави.

Ключевые слова: Женщина, тюркская литература, Дивани Хикмет, суфийская литература, ислам, учение Ясави, зыкыр, женская природа.

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