

*Ahmad Yasawi*

## **Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi or Ahmed**

**Yesevi** Kazakh: Қожа Ахмет Ясауи(1093–1166) was a Turkic poet and Sufi, an early mystic who exerted a powerful influence on the development of Sufi orders throughout the Turkic-speaking world. Yasawi is the earliest known Turkic poet who composed poetry in Middle Turkic. He was a pioneer of popular mysticism, founded the first Turkic Sufi order, the *Yasawiyya* or *Yeseviye*, which very quickly spread over Turkic-speaking areas. He was an Hanafi scholar like his murshid, Yusuf Hamdani.

# *Early life*

**Ahmad Yasawi** was born to Ibrahim in Sayram at the end of the 11th century. He lost his father at the age of seven and was then raised by Arslan Baba. By then, Yasawi had already advanced through a series of high spiritual stages and, under the direction of Arslan Baba, the young Ahmad reached a high level of maturity and slowly began to win fame from every quarter. His father Ibrahim had already been renowned in that region for performing countless feats and many legends were told of him. Consequently, it was recognized that, with respect to his lineage as well, this quiet and unassuming young boy, who always listened to his elder sister, held a spiritually important position.

Yasawi later moved to Bukhara and followed his studies with Yusuf Hamdani. Upon the demise of Yusuf Hamdani, first 'Abdullah Barki and then Hassan-i Andakī became the head of Hamdani's Khanqah. Yasawi became the head murshid of the Naqshbandi order when Hassan-i Andakī died in 1160. He then turned this position to Abdul Khaliq Gajadwani under Hamdani's advice and moved to Turkistan City in order to spread Islam in Turkistan.



# *Influence*

*Ahmad Yasawi* made considerable efforts to spread Islam throughout Central Asia and had numerous students in the region. Yasawi's poems created a new genre of religious folk poetry in Central Asian Turkic literature and influenced many religious poets in the following countries. Yasawi made the city of Yasi into the major centre of learning for the Kazakh Steppe, then retired to a life of contemplation aged 63. He dug himself an underground cell where he spent the rest of his life. Turkish scholar Hasan Basri Çantay noted that "It was a Seljuk king who brought Rumi, the great Sufi poet, to Konya; and it was in Seljuq times that Ahmad Yesevi, another great Sufi, lived and taught. The influence of those two remarkable teachers has continued to the present." Yasavi is also mentioned by Edward Campbell (writing as Ernest Scott) as a member of the Khwajagan.

***The Mausoleum of Khawaja Ahmed Yasawi*** (Kazakh: Қожа Ахмет Яссауи кесенесі) (*Qoja Ahmet Iassayı kesenesi*) is a mausoleum in the city of Turkestan, in southern Kazakhstan. The structure was commissioned in 1389 by Timur, who ruled the area as part of the expansive Timurid Empire, to replace a smaller 12th-century mausoleum of the famous Turkic poet and Sufi mystic, Khoja Ahmed Yasawi (1093–1166). However, construction was halted with the death of Timur in 1405.

Despite its incomplete state, the mausoleum has survived as one of the best-preserved of all Timurid constructions. Its creation marked the beginning of the Timurid architectural style. The experimental spatial arrangements, innovative architectural solutions for vault and dome constructions, and ornamentations using glazed tiles made the structure the prototype for this distinctive art, which spread across the empire and beyond

# Location

The Mausoleum of Khawaja Ahmed Yasawi is situated in the north-eastern part of the modern-day town of Turkestan (formerly known as Hazrat-e Turkestan), an ancient centre of caravan trade known earlier

as Khazret and later as Yasi,<sup>[8]</sup> in the southern part of Kazakhstan. The structure is within the vicinity of a historic citadel, which is now an archaeological site.

Remains of medieval structures such as other

mausoleums, mosques and bath houses characterize the

archaeological area. To the north of the Mausoleum of Khawaja

Ahmed Yasawi, a reconstructed section of the citadel wall from the 1970s separates the historical area from the developments of the modern town.



# *History*

## *Khawaja Ahmed Yasawi*

Khoja Ahmed Yasawi (Khawaja or Khwaja) corresponds to "master", also spelled as Khawajah Akhmet Yassawi, was the 12th-century head of a regional school of Sufism, a mystic movement in Islam which began in the 9th century. He was born in Ispidjab (modern Sayram) in 1093, and spent most of his life in Yasi, dying there in 1166. He is widely revered in Central Asia and the Turkic-speaking world for popularizing Sufism, which sustained the diffusion of Islam in the area despite the contemporary onslaught of the Mongol invasion. The theological school he created turned Yasi into the most important medieval enlightening center of the area. He was also an outstanding poet, philosopher and statesman. Yasawi was interred in a small mausoleum, which became a pilgrimage site for Muslims.



*Mausoleum of Khoja  
Ahmed Yasawi*