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LIFE AND SUFI PERSONALITY OF IHSAN TAMGUNEY

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Özet

Allah dostları dengenin mimarlarıdır. Kainattaki her olgunun, her mefhumun, her zerrenin hakkını vererek yaşayan hayat dolu insanlardır. Bu makalede, bu dengenin mimarlarından biri olan İhsan Tamgüney'in hayatı ve tasavvufi görüşleri ele alınmıştır. İhsan Tamgüney 1904-1991 yılları arasında yaşamış ve Şeyh Şerafettin Dağıstani'den manen beslenmiş önemli bir mutasavvıftır. O, Türkiye'de ve dünyada yüz binlerce insana etki etmiş bir şahsiyettir. Onun hayatıyla ilgili bilgiler, hakkında yazılan yazılardan ve birinci elden yapılan mülakatlardan derlenerek ortaya konulmuştur. İhsan Tamgüney'in hayatı yakın tarihe ışık tutması açısından önemlidir. O'nun örnek şahsiyeti, sade, mütevazı ve her anı dolu olan yaşamı günümüz insanının pek çok problemine çözüm olabilecek mahiyettedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İhsan Tamgüney, Sultan Baba, Tasavvuf, Şeyh Şerafettin Dağıstani

ИХСАН ТАМГҮНЕЙДИН ЖАШООСУ ЖАНА ТАСАВВУФТУК ФИЛОСОФИЯСЫ

Аннотация

Аллах достору тең салмактуулукту куруучулар жана сактоочулар. Ааламдагы ар бир көрүнүштүн, ар бир мевхумдун, ар бир зерренин акысын берип жашаган адамдар. Бул макалада бул тең салмактуулуктун куруучуларынын бири болгон Иксан Тамгүнейдин жашоосу жанан тасаввуфтук көз караштары чагылдырылган. Иксан Тамгүней 1904-1991-жылдары жашаган жана Шейх Шерафеттин Дагестаниден руханий сабак алган бир мутассавыф. Ал Түркияда жана дүйнөдө жүз миңдеген адамдарга таасир берген адам болуп эсептелет. Анын жашоосу тууралуу жазылган маалыматтар, макалалар жана өз оозунан алынган маектешүүлөр топтолуп, сунулган. Иксан Тамгүнейдин жашоосу жакынкы тарыхты жарык кылган нур катары маанилүү. Ал үлгүлүү инсан, жөнөкөй жана ар бир мүнөтүн руханий баалуулукка толгон жашоосу бүгүнкү күндөгү проблемасы көп болгон адамдар үчүн чечүүчү мааниге ээ боло алчу деңгээлде.

Ачык сөздөр: Иксан Тамгүней, Султан Баба, тасаввуф, Шейх Шерафеттин Дагестани.

Abstract

Friends of Allah are the architects of balance. They are the people, full of life, living by doing justice to every case, every concept and every atom in the universe. This paper studies the life and mystical teachings of Ihsan Tamgüney, one of the architects of such balance. Ihsan Tamgüney is a significant Sufi who lived between 1904 – 1991 and who spiritually benefited from Sheikh Sharafaddin Daghestani. He is a person who had an impact on hundreds of thousands of people in Turkey and in the world. Information about his life has been demonstrated by quoting from what is written about him and the first-hand interviews. Ihsan Tamgüney is

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an important figure in the sense that his life puts a light on history. His example personality, his simple, humble life every moment of which is full of memory is characterized to state for a solution for many problems of today's man.

Keywords: Ihsan Tamguney, Sultan Baba, Sufism, Sheikjh Sharafaddin, Daghestani

Introduction

Friends of Allah are the helpers of the religion of Allah, whose face remind of Allah when looked, awakening peace and joy in the hearts. They are the teachers of the school of Gnosticism. They are the inheritors of prophets who have arisen in social atmosphere that devastates the soul. In our study, we will work on the life, personality and sufi views of Ihsan Tamguney, who is named among the architects of the social texture. The paper contains interviews by some newspapers and journals following the death of Ihsan Efendi with the people who were near him, including the interviews that we have made with him.

Life

Ihsan Efendi is mainly known with his title "Sultan Baba". Hoca Baba was the phrase used to address him before Sultan Baba. One of his pupils, about twenty years before his death, saw in his dream that Ihsan Efendi was called as Sultan Baba, rather than Hoca Baba. He tells this to Ihsan Efendi. Ihsan Efendi remains silent. Sultan Baba nick becomes widespread thereafter.²

Ihsan Tamguney was born as the second of three siblings in Lome village in Arhavi town of Artvin, in 1904. He lost his mother when he was three and his father when he was seven. He was grown up both as an orphan and motherless.

The grandfather of Ihsan Tamguney Efendi is a financial inspector. He used to go on inspection with horses; one day, when he was on inspection, he was shot to martyrdom by the terrorists. His father, Hasan Efendi, was a teacher in Ottoman period. His mother's name is Hanifi Hanim. Ihsan Tamguney has two brothers. His older brother's name was Nazmi Tamguney, who resided in Zonguldak and worked as a teacher there for long years. His younger brother's name is Necmettin Tamguney. Signs of Ihsan Tamguney are seen even when he was little. His surrounding is attracted by extraordinary situations. For example, he looks for the crescent in Ramadan month by climbing on the trees in order to see, and he also catches attention with his focus on prayer and remembrance of Allah during young ages. After staying with his uncles in the village, Ihsan Efendi migrates to Zonguldak, since his older brother was there. He starts to live abroad when he was nine. He stays in Zonguldak until he is twenty; upon a spiritual sign, he leaves there with his friends to Adapazari; after traveling the towns and villages of Adapazari, he goes to Bolu; after traveling the villages and towns of Bolu, he and his friends pass the Golpazari town of Bilecek to Kursunlu where they settle. Together with his friend who is from Of town of Trabzon, they work in Kursunlu on tin plating. They earn their lives through tin plating which they perform by traveling the towns and villages of Bilecek. After settling at Kursunlu, Ihsan Tamguney calls his older and younger brothers to Bilecek. They also settle at Bilecek. His older brother Nazmi Tamguney is assigned as a teacher there. Thereafter, Ihsan Tamguney quits tin plating work, and starts linen drapery. He also works as peddler.

Ihsan Tamguney performs his military service in 1937 in Kars as a sergeant. He went for military service very late. He explains the reason as follows: "I was prevented by the fear to hamper my worship." He tells a military service memory as follows: "I ought to pray, but there

2. 25 November 93, Milli Gazete

was no place. I was praying behind the toilet. The commander of squad saw me, said: “Son, what are you doing here?” I said: “I am praying sir.” “Is it possible to pray here, this is toilet” he said. “Well, sir, there is no other place”. Then he took me and assigned a prayer room for me. “Perform your prayers here comfortably” he said. This event demonstrates that Ihsan Efendi was keen on worships even during his youth.

Ihsan Efendi met Abdulvahit Demirkaya during his military service, a retired lieutenant colonel, who would become his successor after him. Abdulvahit Demirkaya tells about this meeting as follows: “When I attended the course as the first time as lieutenant, I was assigned to the sixth squad. I asked my friends: Is there any fellow countrymen of me here? They said: “There is a sergeant.” I asked to the seventh squad. He was Ihsan Efendi. He was a sergeant. But then he was discharged. We did not meet thereafter. In 1954, friends of my wife were with Ihsan Efendi. There was an old lady hereç I asked where she was from, and why she came to Istanbul. She said she came to visit her son in law. I asked who the son in law was, and whether he was a religious man. He said he is quiet ascetic. She took me with her when I said that I’d like to meet him. We recognized each other once we met. He was Ihsan Efendi. Thereafter we did not leave each other.”³

Ihsan Tamguney could only graduate from primary school since parents passed away when he was very little. However, he as a perfect Ottoman language literacy. He learned Latin alphabet afterwards. However, he has been in various communities of scientific speech in many towns and villages in Artvin, Zongildak and Bilecik, and he benefited from such chats at a maximum level. He has raised himself without any support from any other person.

Ihsan Tamguney was not married at an early age. He did not think of marriage during the first years with the opinion that this may hinder his trade and other works in addition to it. However, after completing his military service, he returned back to Artvin, where he married Refika Hanim with the encouragement of his relatives. He had four children from this marriage, named Ahmet, Fatma, Mehmet and Huseyin.

Ihsan Efendi migrates to Golpazari immediately after marriage. His first son, Ahmet Tamguney, was borne there. He builds a house and rents a shop. He uses the shop as a warehouse since he dealt with trade. He works as peddler by traveling to villages on mares. He gathers the villages around his exhibition, talks with the villagers and thus teaches them the truth. Ihsan Efendi settles in Istanbul Zeytinburnu with the help of a person, known as Celal Hoca of Rize, who resided in Istanbul Zeytinburnu for long period; yet it is not known how and where he met Ihsan Efendi. His surrounding expands rapidly after 1960s. He raised hundreds of thousands of students.

Ihsan Efendi put a high emphasis on conversation. He used to say that the Age of Happiness (Asr al-Saadah) was cultivated with conversations, and he claimed that breath used other than for conversation, remembrance of and prayer for Allah is wasted. He used to engage in conversation with his pupils after almost every morning prayer.

There are few books which Ihsan Efendi used to read throughout his life without any negligence. He never neglected to read Quran. He used to read the complete Quran twice a week, and he prayed for completion of Quran reading at Sunday and Thursday nights. In addition to this, he used to read Dalail al-Khayrat continuously without any negligence, though not at a level of Quran. There was something else which he read every day. He used to buy leading Islamic magazines, read them and recommended them to his pupils in order to let people have an Islamic

3. Cuma Journal, No: 122, November 1992

perspective against the events. The books which he recommended mostly in addition to these are : Ihya al-Ulum al-Din of Ghazzali, Tariqatname of Ashrafoghlu Rumi, Ahmadiyya Muhammadiyya of Ahmad Muhammad Yazir of Gallipoli. He used to read and recommend books of collections of sayings of Prophet, as well as Quran commentaries. Ihsan Efendi used to reproduce a text which he liked, and distribute it to his pupils. One of his pupils says the following on this issue in his interview by Cuma magazine: “Without any exaggeration, he used to tell twenty years before by replicating a very important note that belonged to Nurettin Zengi that the Gulf War would break out, while thus expressing that he had the love inside himself for the concept of struggling in the path of Allah, as he was complying with the orders of the Prophet (p.b.u.h).⁴

Ihsan Efendi did not pay much attention to extraordinary miracles. He emphasized that the important things were struggling and being on the right path. Ihsan Efendi had many projections for the future that could be seen as extraordinary sensations. He expressed that USSR would disintegrate and Russia would be divided into states. “We will not see, but you will, the US will also collapse like Russia.” he said. Another extraordinary situation was that he used to know who was who even among the ones whom he never met before. If the person has no full ablution, he used to recognize this and whispered to him: “My son, do this and this, and then come”, this was a pretty way of warning. In addition to this, he had many other extraordinary states which are known only to those who are close to him.

Ihsan Efendi did not work for any public position throughout his life. He used to deal with trade at all times. He worked as tinsmith in Kursunlu for a period of time, and quitted it thereafter, started to work as a peddler. He continued this work in Bilecik. Since he was a man of travel, he travelled all the villages and worked as peddler. He thus had the opportunity to chat with people in the village.

After he moved to Zeytinburnu, Istanbul, he opened a grocery store with Celal Hoca, who made him come to Istanbul. He left this work after two years due to a disagreement. He started to sell wood with his brother. He brought wood from Trace and sold. They lost money from this work, rather than earning profit. They incurred loss even if they did the sawing work themselves. Thereafter they understood that the person who brought the wood engaged in fake weighing. Ihsan Efendi quits this job and returns back to the grocery work. After working as grocery in various places in Nuri Pasa neighborhood of Zeytinburnu, he opens a small shop in where now Guneyhan is located in 1962 (Ziya Gokalp street). He both sells and continues to educate people here from 1962 to 1991. He had not undertaken any government post. He did not work as a public worker since he did not want that the illicit money of the state be consumed by him and his children, although he had gone bankrupt twelve times in the trade. He said that the Republic of established on interest.

Ihsan Efendi did not suffer any sickness during his life of 86 years. He sometimes was seen as a sick person. The perfect teachers act as lightning rods, attracting all the disasters and dangers to themselves. They seem as if they were sick. However, such diseases did not last long. He had only two operations until the age of 86. Eye surgery and prostate surgery. In 1970s, he visited Canakkale once. In his return, he saw that everywhere is full of beaches from Canakkale to Istanbul, and he says: “Oh God, let me not see these.” Then his sight ability is taken from him. Ihsan Efendi had an operation from prostate, which is a diseases commonly seen in many of the elderly. Ihsan Efendi had thirty teeth even at his death. He said such for his other two teeth: “The Prophet said that tooth ache is one seventieth of the grave suffer. That is why we accepted that tooth ache.”

4. Cuma Journal, No: 122, November 1992.

He was taken to Huzur Hospital in Istanbul Aksaray for check up when he was 86. He had no disease. He only had arthritis due to sitting for long time. They start the treatment for that arthritis. The treatment lasts for one month. The arthritis is healed. Due to the drugs he took being heavy ones, the disease turns into a kidney disease. That disease lasts for twenty days. He passed away as a result of this treatment on 24 November 1991 in Haydarpasa Numune Hospital, although he seemed not to be so much sick from his appearance.

Ihsan Efendi's body was washed after passing away on 21 November 1001 and brought to his home. All of his disciplines had the opportunity to see him the last time from his window from noon to the evening. The following day he is taken to Guney village on 25 November, Monday, a rainy November morning. Many politicians, scholars and valuable people participated in his funeral after the noon prayer. As per his bequest, he is buried opposite Sheikh Sharafaddin in Guney village. Ihsan Efendi said the following on this issue: "I am not afraid of being buried here, but I am afraid of my disciplines visiting me without first visiting Sheikh Sharafaddin.

Mystical Personality of Ihsan Efendi

Ihsan Efendi belongs to the Naqshbandiya sufi order. Although he recommended frequently the Naqshbandi way in his speeches, it is said that he teaches also the 12 Sufi orders. His masters is Sheikh Sharafaddin Daghestani.

The discipline mass of Ihsan Efendi comprises of the ordinary public. There are few scholars among them. He has lots of disciplines among those who work in the field of Islamic sciences, natural sciences such as chemistry etc. However, those coming from Islamic sciences are low. He has no special directing on this issue.

The interest of Ihsan Efendi on Sufism and sufi orders started from very early ages. He is not known to have any direct connection with a Sufi master. He was spiritually taught in the way of Uwaisiyya by Sheikh Sharafuddin Zayn al Abidin Ibn Abdurrashed Daghestani, who has completed his spiritual path under the guidance of Muhammad Madani, and who was the 37th chain of the order, who passed away in 1936.

Ihsan Efendi did not meet Sheikh Sharafuddin in this world. He personally stated that he received his spiritual and sufi training from Sheikh Sharafuddin. He paid frequent visits to the grave of Sheikh Sharafuddin located in Guney village. He expressed that the events in Sufism should not be compared to the worldly events, and that it was wrong to look for a hierarchy. According to him, the mystical events should be considered within their specific principles and order.

It is known that Ihsan Efendi participated in many sufi gatherings during his young ages. He is said to undergo numerous sufi sufferings, namely arbain.

It can be seen that Ihsan Efendi speeded up his teaching activities, which he had been doing since the beginning upon a spiritual sign, after migrating to Istanbul Zeytinburnu. The sufi path has enlarged after 1960s.

We can summarize the 24 hours of Ihsan Efendi as follows: The life starts at night. There is no exception. He never woke up at 01.05 He is awake at 01:00. He did not let any night pass in his bed. And none of those who were close to him witnessed that he set the alarm to wake up. After 01:00, he used to pray and read Quran for 3 to 4, even 5 hours. He reaches the morning prayer with such actions. This practice did not change either in summer nights, or during winter nights, whether he slept early or not. He does not sleep after waking up at 01:00 He deals with 3 things: Quran, glorifying the God, prayer and submission. He performs the morning prayer

with group. He deals with trade and revenue bringing actions. He used to say that sleeping after the morning prayer prevented one from earning good money. And this has almost no exception. He did not eat early breakfast for fasting during his life. Only he used to drink some water, ate few olives, just for obeying the actions of the Prohpet. He has single meal. Non except his wife knew that he was fasting for 360 days in a year. His worldly life starts with the morning prayer. He deals with worldly actions until evening prayer. He met and talked with hundreds of people every day, including those new ones. These people included those with financial problems, health problems, psychological problems etc. He used to perform Ishraq, Dhoha, Awwabin and Tahajjud prayers. In addition to this, Ihsan Efendi organized the day according to prayer times. He has some day sleep after the mid-noon prayer. This sleep did not exceed half to one hour. He breaks his fast with evening prayer. He reads Quran between evening and night prayers. He performs the night prayer with group. He sleeps immediately after the night prayer with almost no exception. And he is awake at 01:00 every night.

Ihsan Efendi approach to the children with love. He never acted harshly against them. He was sensitive in terms of the religious training of the children. He used to direct them in order to let them learn religious information by giving them awards. Ihsal Efendi is a very soft hearted man. He is very calm. His son, Huseyin T., talks about a memory as such: “One day we arrived at home late. My mother did not let us enter. My mother was a beating woman. My father, on the other hand, was a superhuman if this could be said. He was at the limits of being a soft and calm person. My mother did not let us enter since we came late. We , all brothers and sisters, slept on the steps. My father thought that we were in the room. He asked to other mother when he could not find us in our room as he woke up at night. My mother said “They are punished, do not let them in”. My father let us in. My deceased father had a character that resembled that of the Prophet. Similar to what Anas (Ra) said of the prophet “ I passed my ten years with the Prophet, he did not even shout at me despite my naughty behaviors.” My deceased father was a person who took the ethics of the Prophet as a model.”

Ihsan Efendi used to say that all living and non-living things obeyed to the rules of Gods and glorified him. He used to talk about this; once, when he entered to the animal shelter, he saw that the animals were pronouncing the name of Allah. They become unconscious by repeating the name of Allah. He says to them when they awake: “We are the real animals, not you.”⁵

His daughter tells: “ I did not forget the moment when a man with an umbrella was waiting at a time when the women were at a high number in his shop. He used to utter the words being exhausted from waiting: I have been waiting for hours, no one came to take of me, how dare this is possible? A person, who knows the moods of people, said: please wait your turn. He knows that you are here. He is a great person. You will incur damage if you pass anything inside you!

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