

MAHMUDKHUJA BEHBUDIY'S ENVISIONED HEALTHY GENERATION*A.E. Kurakhmedov**Associate Professor of SamSIFL*

Annotation: This article focuses on the life, ideas, and enduring legacy of Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy, a prominent Uzbek enlightener. The text highlights Behbudiy's multifaceted vision for a healthy generation, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and physical well-being.

Keywords: Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy, Healthy Generation, Jadidism, Jadid Schools, Enlightenment, Ma'rifatparvar, Behbudiy's role, Secular Education/Modern Science, National Identity/Self-awareness.

The name of the great enlightener Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy began to resonate loudly, especially after we gained independence. During the former Soviet era, various opinions were expressed about him. While some proudly claimed he was "the leader of a country called Turkestan" [Вадуд Махмуд 1920], others declared him an "agent of the bourgeoisie [M. Ваҳобов 1971]," making him an enemy of the entire nation. Many such conflicting opinions can be cited. But what was he truly like? Behbudiy was a deep-hearted person who understood the world profoundly. He did not deny God like the materialists, nor did he believe in false statements like "the earth is on the horn of an ox, and the ox is on a fish" like the innovators; he did not deny progress. He would not abandon secular sciences, stating, "Modern science, far from harming Islam, benefits it". On the contrary, he strove to implement them in schools. For this purpose, he wrote and published several textbooks. He opened a new Jadid school, allocated space for it in his courtyard, and provided it with books and funds.

He provided numerous examples to the younger generation, emphasizing that we should not only study in new ways in our history, but that our ancestors had written many of the books we intend to read, and that we should study all sciences like them. He states: "If one were to write about the condition and classifications of all the scholars of 'Turkestan,' it would require a book larger than this one. Shaykh al-Ra'is Ibn Sina Abu Ali classified more than a hundred books in linguistics, logic, geography, music, ethics, chemistry, nature, metaphysics, wisdom, medicine, astronomy, etc., and he is the foremost among Muslim sages. Most of his books have been translated into European languages, and the French call him 'Avicenna.' His death was in the year 428 AH. Abu Nasr Farabi knew all the languages of his time and invented an instrument called the 'qanun'. All his classified books number about seventy, and he has classifications in the sciences of Tawhid, Fiqh, Music, Mathematics, Astronomy, and Wisdom. His death was in the year 339 AH" [Muntakhabi Jugrafiyai 1905]. In this manner, he lists the names of more than 20 scholars who lived in Turkestan and their books, many of whom we still do not know. Why do we frequently mention our famous commanders and scholars like Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, Mirzo Ulugbek, and Babur today? Isn't this primarily about self-awareness, developing the nation, and for that, holding up our most distinguished ancestors as examples? Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy began to implement this very concern at the beginning of our century, when we were still oppressed under colonial rule. Even the "Samarqand" newspaper, published in Russian in 1906, wrote about the results of this educational method,

stating that children in Behbudiy's school mastered the 3-4 years of lessons taught in old schools within a year.

Behbudiy had a very broad understanding of a healthy generation; that is, the generation he dreamed of was not only religiously and scientifically sound but also physically healthy. For example, in the article "Ehtiyoji Millat" (Needs of the Nation), we can read sentences like: "Looking at other nations, it is seen that they have regular schools, and in those schools, alongside religious knowledge, secular sciences are also taught, because secular science and knowledge are necessary to exist in the world" ["Samarqand" newspaper, 1913, No. 3]. This excerpt confirms our above point once again, showing that Behbudiy supported science and knowledge. Following this, he draws a firm conclusion: "A nation devoid of modern science and knowledge will be trampled by other nations" (Same source).

To master such sciences, the generation must also be physically strong and agile. Behbudiy vehemently fought against all the vices that hindered the physical development of young people in his time. In several issues of the "Samarqand" newspaper, which he edited and published, he criticized opium addicts and beer shops and beer drinkers that were brought from Russia and distributed among Muslims. For example, in the 26th issue of the newspaper, we can read the following news: "Seven beer shops have been opened in the Muslim quarter of Samarkand city, and these beer shops will contribute to the moral decay of the people even more than now and corrupt the common people further. The beer sellers... even though they have obtained permission, they were also selling liquor. Some of the beer shops are near schools and mosques". In this, Behbudiy insists on his demand that even if Tsarist Russia allowed the sale of alcohol among Muslims, it should still be sold "far from students". "...it is necessary to complain about the beer sellers, and quickly, others are multiplying behind their shops, and because of this, theft, murder, and immorality will increase even more. What Russians drink is different; the common Muslim drinks with extreme depravity. This must be stopped" (Same source). He always wrote about the harms of alcohol. Alcohol distracts the nation from enlightenment - from the movement for freedom.

In several of his articles, Behbudiy lamented, "We go to a doctor, we can't explain our pain, and we don't have doctors ourselves," and he repeatedly mentioned that the reason for this was also a lack of knowledge. He would write interesting and necessary news about doctors and medicine from the world press in the newspaper and present it to readers. For example, in the 40th issue of "Samarqand," under the heading "Number of Doctors," the following figures are given: "Today there are 25,927 doctors in Russia. Of these, 23,734 are men, and 2,193 are women. There are 2,576 dentists, and 4,726 veterinarians". Behbudiy even acquainted his readers with the decreasing birth rate and a report from Germany. "In Germany, the birth rate has been decreasing year by year; for instance, in 1900, 37 children were born per thousand people. In 1907, it decreased to 32, and in 1909, to 31. The low birth rate is noticeable in cities; for instance, in Berlin in 1900, it decreased from 37 to 34 per thousand".

Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy also extensively discussed the harms of naswar (snuff) and tobacco. His articles were reprinted by other publications. Behbudiy wrote the first introductory article in the journal "Oyina," which he edited and published. The "echo" of this article continued for several more issues. "What is smoke, tobacco? Tobacco is the name given to the leaves of a plant called tabaqqum brought from America. The word tabak comes from the



islands in America. Russians call it tabak, Turks call it tutun (smoke), and Arabs call it dukhan (smoke)". In this way, he tells how Christopher Columbus went to America, lived there, and saw tobacco among the local people, "...Columbus's companions also got used to it. And that was our naswar-cigarette-hookah tobacco. According to the research of historians, we did not have the tobacco plant in the old world. Columbus brought seeds of this plant and planted them in Spain. In 1517, this poison called tobacco spread throughout Europe". We believe there is no need to explain these facts. Finally, like all our ancestors, he also cared about the sexual education of young men. In one of his articles in the 53rd issue of "Oyina" magazine, he cautioned young men against various bad habits and informed readers about their consequences, like a doctor would.

It is clear that Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy urged everyone to raise the future generation to be healthy in all aspects. To raise a healthy generation, we must not forget Behbudiy's advice, and the work we do for this is also to bring joy to the spirit of our ancestor.

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