

**RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF VADUD MAHMUD, A JADID  
REPRESENTATIVE FROM SAMARKAND**

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the religious and philosophical views of Vadud Mahmud, a Samarqand representative of the Jadid movement, and examines their significance in the broader agenda of social and cultural modernization in Turkestan. The study discusses the socio-spiritual crisis that emerged under colonial rule, the limitations of the traditional educational system, and the Jadids' core principle that national revival is achievable through knowledge and enlightenment. Particular attention is paid to the Jadids' efforts to harmonize religion with modern learning, introduce new-method schools, and promote reform through the press and charitable societies—considered here in relation to Vadud Mahmud's intellectual and reformist stance.

**Keywords:** Jadidism, Vadud Mahmud, Samarqand Jadids, enlightenment, new-method schools, religious reform, philosophical views, national awakening, press, charitable societies.

Formation and Stages of Development of the Jadid Movement

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the socio-political life of Turkestan underwent a period of profound change. As a result of the region's conquest by the Russian Empire in 1865–1876, the socio-economic life of the local population was seriously disrupted.

Russia's colonial policy dealt a heavy blow to the national economy, education and culture, and the religious and enlightenment sphere.

During this period, local intellectuals were compelled to seek ways to rescue their people from backwardness, ignorance, and illiteracy. Consequently, the Jadid movement emerged, grounded in a new mode of thinking and aimed at national awakening. The Jadids argued that comprehensive reforms were necessary not only in education, but also in political, social, religious, and philosophical spheres.

The movement's main slogan was the idea that "the path to saving the nation lies in knowledge and enlightenment." For the Jadids, knowledge was not only a means of secular progress, but also the principal instrument for achieving national independence.

Crisis of the traditional education system. One of the factors that most strongly influenced the emergence of Jadidism was the crisis of the traditional education system in the region. By the end of the nineteenth century, the educational process in Turkestan's schools and madrasas was largely limited to religious subjects. In schools, children were first taught to memorize the Qur'an and later to acquire basic literacy based on Arabic script. In madrasas, instruction mainly covered religious disciplines such as Arabic grammar, fiqh, logic, and rhetoric, while almost no attention was given to secular subjects such as mathematics, natural sciences, history, and geography.

Within this system, students gained knowledge based solely on memorization and were deprived of the literacy, numeracy, and broader worldview needed for practical life. As a result, the level of literacy remained low, and a large part of the population was excluded from knowledge and enlightenment.

In his works, Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy sharply criticized the weaknesses of the old schools, calling them "institutions that cultivate ignorance rather than knowledge." In his view, introducing new-method schools was the only way to save the nation

Avloniy also, in his work *Turkiy guliston yoxud axloq*, places special emphasis on the issue of education and upbringing, pointing out that the old schools were not sufficiently effective and did not prepare children for modern life.

Likewise, Fitrat stressed the need to reform the old educational system and called the people toward knowledge and enlightenment through new schools.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, the crisis of the traditional education system became an important reason for the emergence of the Jadid movement.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, religious and educational reforms intensified in many countries of the Islamic world. These processes also directly influenced Turkestan's intellectuals. First of all, during this period, widespread views emerged in the Muslim world about the need to modernize the education system, adapt Sharia to the

requirements of social progress, and enable Muslim peoples to benefit from the achievements of modern science.

The Jadid movement, which emerged in Turkestan and the broader Central Asian region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a progressive and reformist intellectual movement that had a significant impact on the political, cultural, and spiritual renewal of Muslim societies. The emergence, formation, and stages of development of Jadidism are closely connected with profound transformations in social life, changes in worldview, and efforts to introduce modern knowledge.

Several socio-economic, political, and cultural factors contributed to the formation of the Jadid movement:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as Turkestan became part of the Russian Empire, European and Russian experience entered the region. New industries and technologies, a modern education system, printing and newspapers, and scientific innovations encouraged local intellectuals to pursue change.

In the old schools and madrasas inherited from the medieval period, only religious knowledge was provided. Remaining unfamiliar with modern sciences left society behind in development.

Reforms in Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt, India, and Tatarstan, as well as European progress, also motivated Central Asian intellectuals to seek renewal.

One of the most significant phenomena in our recent history is, undoubtedly, Jadidism. In the President's speeches, emphasis has repeatedly been placed on how important this movement is for our time. This is not accidental. In a recent congratulatory message to participants of a prestigious international conference dedicated to Jadidism held in our capital, the head of state also paid particular attention to the role of the Jadid movement in the history of Turkestan and its relevance for today.

To what extent has Jadidism been studied, and what other urgent problems still await solutions by specialists today? Within which themes and on what criteria should the Jadids' literary and scholarly heritage be researched? Which ideas from their works should be used in educating today's generation? Such questions are important for defining the prospects for studying Jadidism and Jadid literature in a systematic and planned manner.

We need to carefully examine the large and substantial work that has been done on Jadidism so far, and then think about how to continue it appropriately. In fact, Uzbek and international scholars began studying Jadidism and Jadid literature from the very beginning of the twentieth century, when it emerged and reached maturity. Research by Uzbek scholars such as Abdurauf Fitrat, Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, Abdurahmon Sa'diy, Olim Sharafiddinov, Otajon Hoshim, Vadud Mahmud, and Ahmad Shukriy; by related literary scholars such as Ismoilbek Gasprali, Zarif Bashiriy, and Jalil Mamatqulizoda; and by Russian scholars V. Bartold, A. Samoylovich, and A. Pyaskovskiy, are among such works.

Scientific truth—especially if it was buried by the ruling regime of that time—does not simply surface by itself. To uncover it, to clear away the “soil” covering it, and to bring it to light, one needs, so to speak, to “dig a well with a needle”—great patience, endurance, and high intellectual capacity. A researcher who takes this path must be ready for any hardship, effort, and difficulty. In our national literary studies, the study of Jadid literature by new criteria began in a complex and contradictory period—the Soviet era. At the forefront of research in this direction stood the scholar G‘ulom Karimov. First, he assigned his student Begali Qosimov the creative legacy of the Tashkent Jadid Mirmuhsin Fikriy as a candidate dissertation topic. Later, he recommended studying early-twentieth-century Jadid poetry within the framework of a doctoral dissertation.

Naturally, at that time it was impossible to study Jadidism openly under its own name, because the single-dominant communist ideology did not allow it. As the saying goes, “If you find the right way, even snow will burn”: the scholar found an approach—he studied Jadid poetry under the title “early twentieth-century Uzbek revolutionary poetry.” Yet in those years, across all levels of education—from school to higher educational institutions—early twentieth-century Uzbek literature was taught as consisting of only four writers: Zavqiy, Avaz O‘tar, Hamza, and Sadridin Ayniy. All were portrayed as victims who had suffered oppression from local rulers and were labeled “class enemies.” As Begali Qosimov noted, “Ayniy was beaten by Amir Sayid Olimxon, Avaz by Isfandiyorxon, and Zavqiy because he was beaten by Ergash qo‘rboshi. This criterion is laughable today, of course. But the times forced it.” By working through primary manuscripts, lithographic sources, and archival documents, the scholar established that there was an intense creative environment in Turkestan at that time and that more than one hundred poets and writers were engaged in literary activity. In this way, the monograph *Izlay-izlay topganim* came into being.

In that harsh period, it is clear to anyone familiar with the Soviet system that writing openly about the Jadids’ struggle for national independence required great courage. While analyzing “revolutionary” poetry (in fact, Jadid poetry), the scholar writes as follows: “Of course, the matter concerns national liberation and independence, and the right of every nation to live by its own will.” These remarks were taken from a book published in 1983 (which means they were written at least four or five years earlier!). Those who lived through the Soviet era understand and deeply feel how courageous it was to write such words at that time.

During the years of independence, the scholar continued his research in this field with renewed energy and determination. At the National University, he founded a department devoted to researching and teaching Uzbek literature of the National Awakening period, including Jadid studies. He trained students who earned academic degrees in Jadidism and Jadid literature. Together with them, he introduced the works of Jadid poets and writers into curricula and textbooks at all levels of the education system—secondary, specialized secondary, and higher education. He published the monograph “National Awakening: Courage, Enlightenment, Selfless Devotion.” He also led the creation and publication of the textbook “Uzbek Literature of the National Awakening Period” for higher educational institutions. He established scholarly cooperation with the German researcher Ingeborg Baldauf, the Japanese scholar Hisao Komatsu, the American scholar Adeeb Khalid, as well as researchers from Turkish, Tatar, and other academic communities.

Another devoted mentor of ours—Academician Naim Karimov—carried out highly significant studies on Jadidism and Jadid literature. On the basis of archival materials, he labored to bring to light the heritage of hundreds of poets and writers who had been repressed. He devoted not only his knowledge and intellect, but also his pure heart and spirit—his entire scholarly capacity—to the study of Jadid creativity. The scholar’s dozens of books, such as “Landscapes of 20th-Century Literature,” “Literature and Social Life,” and “Three Great Figures,” along with hundreds of articles, played an incomparable role in clarifying truths in our history and literature that had long remained obscured for our people.

In addition, our hardworking scholars such as Boybo‘ta Do‘stqorayev and Sherali Turdiyev carried out substantial work on the study of Jadidism. It would be unfair not to acknowledge this. We are indebted before the memory of our teacher-scholars for their efforts and the scientific results they achieved. We are obliged to continue the work they began at a high level.

Even today, many of our literary scholars and historians continue to work on Jadidism. The road ahead is still long, and there are enough scholarly problems awaiting devoted researchers.

In our renewed era, Jadid studies have come to encompass nearly all social sciences. It is evident that literary studies are leading in this regard. Linguists, historians, and specialists in teaching methodology are conducting academic research on this topic. We are aware that the Jadids’ views on economic development have also been studied. Research is being carried out in the field of philosophy as well. However, there are still many topics awaiting researchers. One of them is the “new school idea,” regarded as the cornerstone of Jadidism.

Textbooks created by the Jadids—their internal structure, the criteria for selecting texts appropriate to students’ age characteristics, and teaching methods—need to be studied in depth. However, all these textbooks were published in Arabic script. This requires the ability to read and comprehend sources written in Arabic script. Reading alone is not enough; literary understanding and a methodologist’s insight are also necessary. In addition, one must understand the characteristics of that period. The only specialist who meets these requirements is Professor Ulug‘bek Dolimov. He defended a doctoral dissertation on “Jadid Schools: Scientific-Theoretical and Practical Foundations of Teaching the Mother Tongue and Literature in Them,” and published monographs such as “Leaders of Enlightenment,” “Jadid Schools in Turkestan,” and “Pedagogy of the National Awakening.”

It is true that today dozens of dissertations are being defended in the field of Jadid pedagogy. However, many are not based on primary sources from that period, but rather on presenting existing information in a different form. Work done only for the sake of obtaining an academic degree can never justify itself in any era. A specialist must live within the topic being studied. Considering that the Jadids regarded the upbringing of the younger generation as the upbringing of the nation, the importance of this field becomes evident.

Aiming to reform all spheres of social life, the Jadids established charitable societies to finance their activities for the progress of the homeland and the nation. These societies operated through donations collected from the public and contributions made by wealthy national patrons. In Tashkent, the “Turon” society; in Bukhara, “Tarbiyai atfol”; in Qo‘qon, “G‘ayrat”; as well as

around ten partnerships served this purpose. All of this was primarily aimed at improving the functioning of new-method (usuli jadid) schools.

In addition, they set goals such as providing material and moral support for the poor and needy, building orphanages (which the Jadids called “Doru-l-aytom”), and establishing hospitals and outpatient clinics for the elderly and people with disabilities. They also envisioned educating the nation’s youth in schools and sending the most talented to developed countries for higher education. The expenses of publishing houses founded by the Jadids were also covered through charitable societies. For example, Abdulla Avloniy, in his autobiography, provides information about the “Publishing House” and “School” partnerships of the “Turon” charitable society. The enlightener’s words—“To obtain permission from the government, we had to struggle for one and a half months. Our application was rejected twice, and permission was granted the third time. I was one of the founding members of that charitable society, and in its first year I served as chairman. After that, until the period of freedom, I remained a member, helping schools, orphans, and the poor”—serve as evidence of this.

According to the leader of the Tashkent Jadids, Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov, national intellectuals, using the funds of charitable societies, “...sent students abroad in times when it seemed impossible. They raised schools up to intermediate levels. The societies became strong enough to provide material and moral support to students leaving abroad and to schools. Newspapers gained influence over public opinion and reached the level of selling three to four thousand copies... The government realized that Russian-native schools could not compete with ‘usuli jadid’ schools and therefore carried out reforms...”.

Through the efforts of Abdurauf Fitrat and his like-minded associates, in 1909 in Istanbul, the “Bukhara Ta’ mimi (General) Education” society began its work as a branch of the “Tarbiyai atfol” (“Children’s Upbringing”) charitable society. This society provided material and moral support to Turkestani students studying in Turkey and abroad in general. Thus, charitable societies carried out highly important work for the homeland and the nation. However, the activities of these charitable societies have not been studied systematically. Their broad activity in Turkestan’s history—in educating and raising the younger generation, uplifting the discouraged spirits of our compatriots in that difficult and complex era, establishing publishing houses and libraries, and raising national enlightenment—requires documented, consistent, and detailed research.

Another issue requiring systematic study is the investigation of the national press materials founded by the Jadids in the early twentieth century within the context of journalism, language and literature, history, and other disciplines. Boybo‘ta Do‘stqorayev’s textbook “History of Uzbekistan Journalism” and many scholarly articles are valuable in that they shed light on the roots of this issue. He assigned topics to his students on the editorial and publicistic activities of Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, Hoji Mu’in, and other Jadids, and served as an academic supervisor for their dissertations. Separate studies have been produced by our scholars on the journals “Al-Isloh,” “Oyna,” “Maorif va o‘qitg‘uvchi,” and the newspaper “Sadoi Turkiston,” but many press publications still have not been studied on a monographic basis.

Although in the early twentieth century there were no technological possibilities or internet opportunities like today, interactions within the Turkic world were extremely rapid and strong. Most importantly, the attention of the entire Turkic world was directed toward Turkestan—the ancient cradle of Turkic development. There was no issue of the “Tarjimon” newspaper, published in Bakhchisaray under the editorship of Ismoilbek Gasprali, that did not contain material about Turkestan. The main character of Ismoilbek’s work “Mukolamai salotin” (“Conversation of Sultans”) is Sahibqiron Amir Temur. In this work, whose genre the author defined as an “imaginary story,” Turkestan’s socio-political situation of that time is interpreted with deep artistic insight. The main character of the work “Dorur-rohat musulmonlari,” printed in this newspaper, was Mulla Abbas, originally from Tashkent, who, having studied in Europe, acquired the epithet “Fransaviy.” Through this image, the ideas of freedom and independence for Turkestan and for the Turkic world are portrayed.

Or consider Rizouddin Faxriddin’s journal “Sho‘ro,” published in Orenburg, and Fotih Karimi’s newspaper “Vaqt,” both known to have focused their main attention on Turkestan. About a quarter of a century ago, Jadid scholar Begali Qosimov recommended to one of his talented students that the coverage of the Turkestan theme in the “Sho‘ro” journal be studied as a diploma project. Unfortunately, that work was not completed. The satirical journal “Mulla Nasriddin,” published with colored caricatures under the editorship of the Azerbaijani intellectual Jalil Mamatqulizoda, covered life in Turkestan widely. Systematic scholarly study of these press publications, issued by intellectuals of brotherly peoples, remains an urgent problem on the agenda—examined from the perspective of Turkestan’s socio-political and cultural-enlightenment life of that period, the Jadids’ intense reform activity, and the literary connections of the Turkic world.

Another important issue is the need to study our Jadids’ political doctrine and social activity—their dream of liberating the homeland and raising the nation to the level of the world’s developed peoples. One example is sufficient. As early as 1907 (ten years before the proclamation of Turkestan autonomy!), the leader of the Jadid movement, Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, drafted the “Project of Turkestan Cultural Autonomy” and submitted it to the Muslim faction of the Russian State Duma for consideration. Based on the text included in the collection “Movements of Renewal and Revolutions in Turkestan, 1900–1924,” published in Haarlem (the Netherlands) in 2001, Professor Begali Qosimov first published the project in the Uzbek press in issue No. 8 (2003) of the journal “Jahon adabiyoti.” Here is what Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy writes in that project: “Those who claim (or suspect) that our nation is talentless and incapable of carrying out and safeguarding internal administration and autonomy are certainly mistaken. Turkestan should be granted autonomy even more than the Russian Muslims of Europe, because Turkestanis still govern themselves internally, and they have more capacity than our brothers in European Russia.” It must be acknowledged that writing an appeal to the Russian State Duma that “autonomy should be granted to Turkestan,” and even presenting a detailed, point-by-point project, required tremendous courage under those despotic conditions.

Although Behbudiy’s demands were framed as “cultural autonomy,” they also had great political significance. The very first clause of the project states: “For the State Duma, representatives should be elected from Turkestan in proportion to the Muslim population (N.J.)” The fact that in the January–February 1907 elections to the State Duma, 6

representatives were elected from the nearly five-and-a-half million indigenous population, while 7 were elected from a small group of 322,000 Russian-speaking residents, is evidence of how justified Behbudiy's demand for representatives "in proportion to the Muslim population" truly was.

Another valuable aspect of the project is that Behbudiy proposes to the State Duma a fairly well-developed system for administering the religious and social affairs of Muslims throughout Russia. In his view, this system should be as follows:

- an Islamic office (mahkama) should be established in St. Petersburg;
- this office should be led for a defined term, on the basis of election, by a Muslim knowledgeable in both religious and modern sciences;
- the material and moral support of this institution should be carried out in consultation with the members of the Union of Russian Muslims and the representatives of the Muslim faction in the State Duma;
- in Tashkent, the Turkestan administration of religious affairs and internal matters should be established, and it is necessary that "from the first-rank class of ulama, a person knowledgeable in Sharia and the times be appointed by election for a five-year term and be called shaykh al-Islam";
- in each province, a branch of the Turkestan administration of religious affairs and internal matters, as well as an executive office that enforces legal rulings and requirements, should be established.

Behbudiy's genuine statesmanship—and, in today's terms, his tolerance—is also evident in the fact that, while giving clear recommendations regarding the composition of responsible officials working in the Turkestan administration and its branches, he does not ignore the issue of other sects and other ethnic groups living in the region. This indicates that Behbudiy's "Project of Turkestan Cultural Autonomy" also envisaged fully guaranteeing the rights of people of other religions and sects living in the region. Such broad-mindedness shows that, while Behbudiy took the nation and national identity as core principles, he stood far above belittling others' rights and chauvinistic attitudes.

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