

THE BASIS OF THE DEBATE ON JADID SCHOOLS IN ABDURAUFG FITRAT’S WORK “MUNOZARA”

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Annotation: *Abdurauf Fitrat was one of the leading figures of the Jadid movement in Central Asia. His famous work “Munozara” is written in a dialog form between a European intellectual and a traditional Bukhara teacher. In this work, Fitrat compares old and new education systems. He criticizes the traditional “usuli qadim” schools because they are based only on memorization and do not develop real understanding. In contrast, he supports “usuli jadid” schools, which teach both religious and modern subjects such as mathematics, geography, and history.*

Keywords: *Jadid movement, enlightenment, old method of education, new method of education, education reform, teacher, school, knowledge, society, development, ignorance, reform, colonialism, culture, critical thinking.*

Kalit so’zlar: *Jadidchilik harakati, ma’rifatparvarlik, usuli qadim, usuli jadid, ta’limislohoti, mudarris, maktab, ilm, jamiyat, taraqqiyot, jaholat, islohot, mustamlakachilik, madaniyat, tanqidiy fikrlash.*

Ключевы слова: *Джадидское движение, просветительство, старая методика обучения, новая методика обучения, реформа образования, мударрис, школа, знания, общество, развитие, невежество, реформа, колониализм, культура, критическое мышление.*

The early twentieth century in Central Asia was a period of deep transformation, shaped by intellectual awakening and political pressure from colonial structures. In this context, the Jadid movement emerged as a powerful reformist force advocating modernization of education, social life, and cultural thinking. Jadid intellectuals believed that the decline of Muslim societies in the region was directly connected to ignorance, outdated educational systems, and isolation from global scientific progress.

Among the most influential representatives of this movement was Abdurauf Fitrat, whose works combined literary talent with strong ideological engagement. Fitrat’s intellectual development was shaped during his studies in Istanbul (1909-1913), where he encountered modernist ideas, reformist discourse, and comparative perspectives on education and society.² These experiences deeply influenced his worldview and later writings, especially his seminal work *Munozara*.

“Munozara” is not merely a literary text; it is a socio-political and educational manifesto that reflects the urgent need for reform in Bukhara and the broader Muslim world of Central Asia. The work criticizes stagnation in religious education and promotes a rational, science-based approach to learning.

are minimal. Many graduates of madrasas are unable to communicate fluently in Arabic, explain religious texts properly, or apply knowledge in practical contexts.

Through the character of the mudarris, Fitrat illustrates the intellectual stagnation of this system. The mudarris is portrayed as someone who is devoted to teaching but lacks awareness of global scientific developments. For example, he does not understand basic geography and believes that excessive learning may disrupt social order by leaving other professions empty. This reflects the deep-rooted misunderstanding of knowledge and its purpose in society.

In contrast to the traditional system, Fitrat promotes “usuli jadid” schools as a modern alternative. These schools are designed to reform the educational structure by introducing new teaching methods, shorter study periods, and a broader curriculum.

The key characteristics of “usuli jadid” education include:

- 1.Integration of religious and secular sciences
- 2.Use of simplified and systematic teaching methods
- 3.Emphasis on understanding rather than memorization
- 4.Development of critical and independent thinking
- 5.Preparation of students for real social and professional life

Subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, and natural sciences are included alongside religious education. This integration is intended to produce well-rounded individuals who can contribute to the development of society.

Fitrat also emphasizes efficiency in education. Unlike traditional schools, jadid schools aim to achieve better results in a shorter time. This is considered essential for societies that are lagging behind technologically and intellectually.

A significant part of “Munozara” is devoted to the depiction of the socio-political condition of the Bukhara Emirate. Fitrat presents a critical picture of a society affected by poverty, ignorance, and colonial pressure. According to the narrative, the population suffers from low levels of education, economic instability, and weak governance structures.³

Fitrat uses comparative examples to illustrate this idea, showing how ignorance leads to stagnation, while education leads to advancement. Knowledge is presented not only as an individual necessity but also as a collective responsibility.

This idea reflects the broader Jadid worldview, where education is considered the foundation of national revival. Without intellectual reform, no political or economic reform can succeed.

Another important aspect of Fitrat’s reformist thought is the education of women. In “Munozara”, he strongly argues that women must also have access to education. This was a progressive idea in the context of early twentieth-century Central Asia, where women’s education was often limited or completely neglected.

Fitrat argues that mothers play a crucial role in shaping future generations. An educated mother raises educated children, which leads to the overall development of society. Therefore, excluding women from education means weakening the intellectual foundation of the nation.

“Munozara” is more than a literary work - it is a reformist manifesto that played a significant role in shaping intellectual discourse in Central Asia. It exposed the weaknesses of traditional education, introduced the concept of modern schooling, and encouraged critical thinking among readers.

The work contributed to the awakening of national consciousness and inspired future generations of reformers. Its impact extended beyond literature into education, politics, and social thought.

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