



THE JADID MOVEMENT IN TURKESTAN: A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF MODERNIZATION IDEAS

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Abstract

The article provides a socio-philosophical analysis of the Jadid movement as a modernization process in Turkestan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The ideas of the Jadids on enlightenment, the formation of national self-awareness, and the renewal of social structures are examined.

Keywords: Jadidism, modernization, enlightenment, national revival, Turkestan, colonial policy.

INTRODUCTION

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a turning point in the history of Central Asia. As a result of the intensification of the Russian Empire's colonial policy, the region became embroiled in a contradictory process of socio-economic transformation. On the one hand, provincial centers were gradually incorporated into the empire as administrative and transport hubs; on the other hand, the centuries-old traditional systems of education and public administration entered a phase of serious crisis. Madrasas and makhtabs, which had performed the functions of socialization and preservation of cultural heritage, ceased to meet the requirements of the time: teaching was scholastic in nature, there was no unified curriculum, and the students' worldview was limited to religious disciplines.

Against this backdrop, the influence of European educational models intensified, along with new ideas about progress, rational science, and the role of knowledge in society's development. The Central Asian intelligentsia - travelers, educators, writers, and merchants who had become familiar with the education systems in Russia, Turkey, and the Ottoman Empire - recognized the need for reforms.



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Jadidism (from Arabic *usul-i jadid* - "new method") emerged, a movement uniting the aspiration for modernization through enlightenment, renewal of social consciousness, and the formation of a new type of personality - active, critically thinking, and socially responsible.

The Jadids advocated for the introduction of secular subjects, teaching of exact sciences, study of Russian and European languages, establishment of printing, and development of the press. They considered overcoming cultural and educational isolation, improving literacy, and spreading new ideas through theatrical performances and public discussions as their most important tasks. Thus, Jadidism became not just an educational reform, but a **socio-philosophical project** aimed at transforming public consciousness and shaping a modern national identity.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The methodological foundation of this study is based on a complex of scientific approaches that provide a comprehensive understanding of the Jadidism phenomenon as a religious-philosophical and socio-cultural phenomenon. The main methods employed were comparative-historical analysis, content analysis of journalistic sources, and philosophical-sociological interpretation of texts [1]. The **comparative-historical method** revealed patterns in the formation and development of Jadidism within the context of general Islamic reform movements of the late 19th - early 20th centuries. Comparing the ideas of I. Gaspraly, A. Fitrat, M. Behbudi, and other representatives of Jadidism with similar movements in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and other regions of the Muslim world demonstrates their shared spiritual and moral orientation [2]. For the Jadids, renewal (*tajdid*) was understood not as a break with tradition, but as a return to the true spirit of Islam, to its original focus on knowledge (*'ilm*), reason (*'aql*), and social justice [3].

Content analysis of Jadid journalism (particularly in newspapers such as "Taraqqiyot," "Khurshid," "Tujjor," and others) enabled the reconstruction of the ideological and semantic structure of their texts, revealing the main themes, categories, and images through which the reformers expressed their religious and philosophical worldview [4]. Jadid journalism becomes a space where the



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synthesis of faith and reason, religious sentiment and rational reflection takes place. Through the analysis of texts, one can trace the idea of the necessity for spiritual awakening in Muslim society, the purification of religion from dogmatism and superstitions, as well as the realization of an individual's responsibility before God and society [5].

philosophical and sociological interpretation of the Jadids' ideas allowed us to view them as a special form of religious humanism, with humanity at its center - as bearers of reason, will, and ethical responsibility [6]. From this perspective, Jadidism emerges not merely as an educational or cultural movement, but as a spiritual quest for a new understanding of humanity's place in the world, its relationship with God and society. The Jadids perceived Islam as a living system open to development and renewal, and religious knowledge as the foundation for social engagement and moral improvement [7].

The research source base comprised works by I. Gaspraly, A. Fitrat, M. Behbudi, archival materials, and Jadid periodical publications [3]. Examining primary sources revealed the inner spiritual logic of the reformist movement, its aspiration to unite tradition and modernity, faith and progress, religious ideals and practical activity [2].

Thus, the applied methods in their interconnection provide not only a historical and cultural analysis of Jadidism but also its religious and philosophical interpretation as a phenomenon aimed at reviving the spiritual identity of Muslim society in an era of social and cultural transformations [5].

MAIN PART

By the end of the 19th century, the Turkestan region was in a state of deep colonial dependence on the Russian Empire. The colonial policy undermined the economic and cultural foundations of the local population and contributed to the stagnation of traditional institutions. The local economy deteriorated, education remained under the control of conservative religious structures, and the system of madrasas and maktabas retained its medieval scholastic character.

In the context of the crisis of the traditional way of life and the pressure of imperial modernization, a new generation of Muslim intelligentsia emerged, recognizing the need for reforms. This intelligentsia, having absorbed the ideas



of the European Enlightenment but remaining deeply rooted in Islamic culture, came to the conclusion: without modernization of education, neither political, nor cultural, nor spiritual changes were possible.

It was this realization that became the ideological foundation for the emergence of Jadidism - a movement aimed at renewing Muslim society through reform of education, language, thinking, and religious understanding.

The basis of the Jadids' practical activities was the reform of education. They created "maktab-i usul-i jadid" - *new method schools*, which implemented a transition from mechanical memorization of texts to meaningful learning. In these schools:

- secular disciplines were taught - history, geography, mathematics, and natural sciences;
- new textbooks and visual aids were used;
- great attention was paid to the development of the native language and writing;
- Girls began to be admitted to education, which was a revolutionary step for its time.

For the Jadids, **enlightenment was not limited to the transmission of knowledge**. It was understood as a path to spiritual and social liberation of the individual. That is why their slogan can be expressed by the formula:

"Enlightenment → consciousness → freedom".

In this chain, enlightenment serves as a means of awakening consciousness, and consciousness as a condition for spiritual and social freedom. For the Jadids, knowledge is not only a rational category but also a form of serving God, for, according to Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is one of the highest virtues.

Thus, the reformist pedagogy of the Jadids combined rationalism and religious ethics, science and spirituality, education and the nurturing of individuals capable of actively participating in the life of society.

The activities of the Jadids extended far beyond the realm of enlightenment. Through a system of new schools, the publication of newspapers and magazines, theatrical productions, and public discussions, they laid the foundations of national self-awareness.



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The Jadids were the first to begin mass publication of newspapers and magazines in Turkic languages - "*Taraqiyot*", "*Khurshid*", "*Tujjor*", "*Bukharai sharif*", "*Samarqand*" and others. These publications became platforms for discussing pressing social, cultural, and political issues.

In the journalism of the Jadids, ideas of autonomy, national representation, own currency, army, and parliament began to emerge. For the first time in the history of the region, the concept of a unified cultural and political space of the Turkic-Muslim world arose.

Through the development of language, literature, and education, the Jadids formed a new cultural identity - a Muslim-national one - based on the awareness of common historical roots and spiritual values. Their activities can be viewed as an early form of modern nationalism that relied not on ethnic principles, but on cultural and civilizational ones.

Jadidism is not merely an enlightenment movement. At its core, it represents a religious-philosophical concept of renewal, aiming to harmonize tradition and modernity, faith and reason, spirituality and social action.

The fundamental idea of Jadidism is *tajdid* - renewal, revival. This concept has deep Islamic roots: Prophet Muhammad said that "at the end of each century, Allah will send to the ummah someone who will renew its faith." The Jadids saw themselves as the continuators of this mission, striving to "renew Islam" not by changing its essence, but by purifying faith from dogmatism and ignorance.

From a religious-philosophical perspective, Jadidism was based on three interconnected principles:

1. **Unity of faith and reason.** Reason (*'aql*) was perceived as a gift from God, a tool for understanding the world and grasping the truth. Consequently, scientific knowledge and rational thinking were not opposed to religion, but rather viewed as forms of serving God.
2. **Ethical Activism.** Faith should not be passive. A true Muslim, according to the Jadids, is obligated to act, work, educate, and transform society. This position brings them closer to the ideas of Islamic humanism, where humans are co-participants in the divine plan.
3. **Social Responsibility.** The Jadids viewed society as a living organism where the spiritual and social are inseparable. They perceived reforms in



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education, culture, and economics as a religious duty, as the implementation of the principle of *amr bi-l-ma'ruf* - "enjoining what is right."

The philosophical depth of Jadidism is manifested in its combination of Islamic spirituality, enlightened rationalism, and social idealism. This synthesis represents an attempt to build a new model of a person - believing and thinking, free and responsible, spiritual and active.

This is the concept of modernizing society:

Conservatives	Jadids
traditionalism	renewal
religious-dogmatic model	secular science + religious ethics
subordination to the colonial system	aspiration for independence

CONCLUSION

Jadidism became one of the brightest chapters in the spiritual history of Muslims in the East. It was not merely a reaction to external challenges, but an inner awakening aimed at reviving reason, morality, and social solidarity.

For the Jadids, religion and progress, faith and knowledge, tradition and innovation were not antagonistic. On the contrary, they saw in their unity the foundation of true development. In this sense, Jadidism is a philosophy of spiritual renewal and social responsibility that still retains its significance today as an example of the harmonious combination of religious worldview and modernization aspirations.

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