

**LIFE OF MAHMUDKHOJA BEHBUDI AND HIS ROLE IN THE UZBEK  
JADID MOVEMENT**

**Zulfiya Ermatova,**

International Islamic academy of Uzbekistan  
2nd year student of the faculty of classical  
oriental philology

**Supervisor: Dilshodakhon Muminova,**

International Islamic Academy of  
Uzbekistan PhD, Associate Professor of the  
Department of Uzbek and foreign  
languages

**Annotation:** This article examines the pivotal role of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi in the Uzbek Jadid movement, shedding light on his educational initiatives and contributions to the national awakening. It highlights Behbudi’s pioneering efforts in establishing new-method schools, his use of the press and drama as tools for enlightenment, and his promotion of multilingual education as a foundation for societal development. The article emphasizes that Behbudi’s legacy of national identity, intellectual growth, and progress continues to serve as a powerful source of inspiration for today’s youth.

**Keywords:** Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Jadid movement, new-method schools, “Oyna” magazine, educational reform, dramaturgy, national identity.

Mahmudkhoja Behbudi stands as one of the leading figures of the Uzbek Jadid movement, known for his work as a writer, journalist, and publisher. Throughout his life, he devoted himself to the advancement of his nation, playing a crucial role in disseminating modern knowledge and progressive ideas across Central Asia. His tireless efforts not only propelled the enlightenment of the region but also turned him into a symbol of the broader national awakening.

Born in 1875 in Samarkand - a city renowned for its rich history and culture - Behbudi grew up in an environment that valued both religious and secular learning. His father, a respected qazi (judge), encouraged him to seek comprehensive knowledge. After receiving a traditional education in maktab and madrasahs, Behbudi quickly

recognized the shortcomings of the prevailing system, which relied heavily on rote learning. This realization sparked in him a thirst for more progressive educational models.

Travels across Russia, Turkey, and Egypt exposed Behbudi to modern schooling methods, particularly the new-method (Usul-i Jadid) schools flourishing in Turkey, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan. These experiences expanded his worldview and reinforced his belief that education was the key to liberating his people from ignorance and backwardness. Understanding that meaningful reform must begin with education, Behbudi became one of the foremost champions of the Jadid movement, which sought to renew society through learning. He did not merely theorize about change—he acted decisively to bring it about. Behbudi criticized the inefficiency of traditional schooling, where memorization replaced true understanding, and led efforts to establish new-method schools where subjects like mathematics, geography, history, medicine, and other sciences were taught alongside religious studies. These schools fostered critical thinking and prepared students for the modern world. For Behbudi and the Jadids, education was not just a means of personal advancement; it was the foundation of national revival. They believed that by opening modern schools and nurturing an enlightened generation, they could reshape the nation's destiny. In addition to his educational endeavors, Behbudi grasped the transformative power of the press. In 1913, he founded Oyna magazine, which soon became the leading voice for Turkestan's Jadids. Oyna addressed a wide array of issues, from national concerns and social injustices to women's education and political reforms. More than just a publication, Oyna served as a mirror, reflecting the realities of society and encouraging self-awareness among readers. The magazine's influence extended far beyond Turkestan, reaching audiences in Tatarstan, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Egypt. As Behbudi's disciple Haji Muin noted, “Oyna played a vital role in awakening the people, spreading its enlightening spirit across the region.” Through his writings, Behbudi consistently emphasized that a nation's future depended on education, intellectual empowerment, and unity. He also championed the education of women, believing that the progress of society hinged on the enlightenment of all its members.

Behbudi's contributions were not confined to journalism and education; he also left a lasting mark on Uzbek theater. His play Padarkush (“The Parricide”) tackled the destructive effects of ignorance, religious fanaticism, and societal stagnation. Through the tragic conflict between a father and son, Behbudi conveyed a powerful message:

**“CONFERENCE OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES IN SCIENTIFIC  
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH”**

**Volume 02. Issue 04. April 2025**

that enlightenment was as essential to the life of a nation as water and air. The play resonated deeply with audiences, sparking critical reflection on the consequences of societal backwardness. Beyond his creative works, Behbudi wrote extensively about the linguistic needs of his society. He famously argued that the people of Turkestan should master multiple languages—Turkic for everyday communication, Persian for literature and religious study, Arabic for theological scholarship, and Russian for modern sciences and technology. This multilingual approach reflected Behbudi’s vision of a nation that was both rooted in tradition and open to the wider world.

Tragically, Behbudi’s efforts to promote enlightenment and national consciousness made him a target for Soviet authorities, who saw the Jadid movement as a threat to their control. In 1919, in Kokand, Behbudi was executed by Red Army soldiers—a brutal act that dealt a devastating blow to the nation’s intellectual life. Though his enemies silenced him, they could not extinguish the ideals he championed. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi’s life remains a testament to the enduring power of knowledge, perseverance, and a deep, abiding love for one’s nation.

**REFERENCES:**

1. Qosimov S. Behbudiy va jadidchilik. „O‘zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati“, 1990.
2. <https://jadid.uz/jadids/mahmudxoja-behbudiy/>
3. Khalid, Adeb. The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia. University of California Press, 1998.
4. Erkinov, Aftandil. Print Culture and the Modern Muslim World: Central Asia, 1860-1920. Brill, 2015.

**Research Science and  
Innovation House**