



## IDEAS OF NATIONAL AWAKENING AND THE RESTORATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE WORKS OF ABDURAUF FITRAT

**Shahrizoda Shuhratbek qizi Abdufattayeva**

Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies

Department of Eastern Philosophy and Hermeneutics

PhD student

E-mail: abdufattoyevashahrizoda@gmail.com

### Abstract

This article analyzes the socio-political and intellectual ideas of Abdurauf Fitrat, one of the leading representatives of the Jadid movement in early twentieth-century Turkestan, with particular emphasis on the concepts of national awakening and the restoration of cultural identity. Using textual and historical analysis, the study examines Fitrat's major works, including "Munozara", "Bayonoti Sayyohi Hindi", and "Rahbari Najot", to demonstrate how enlightenment, language reform, historical memory, and cultural unity constitute the core elements of his national thought. The article argues that Fitrat understood national awakening not merely as a political struggle, but as a comprehensive cultural and intellectual process aimed at overcoming colonial domination and social stagnation. By situating Fitrat's ideas within the broader context of Muslim reformism and colonial modernity, the study highlights his decisive role in shaping the ideological foundations of the Turkestan national liberation movement and the formation of modern Uzbek national identity.

**Keywords:** Fitrat, "Debate", "Statement of the Indian Traveler", "Leader of Salvation", national awakening, national unity, cultural identity, language, history, ideology of national liberation, colonialism, "old-timers", Jadidism.

### Introduction

Abdurauf Fitrat, the beloved son of the Uzbek people, was born on October 4, 1886, in the city of Bukhara, Bukhara Emirate, into an intelligent family. He left an unforgettable mark in history as an Uzbek historian, philologist, translator, writer, playwright and poet, one of the founders of the modern Uzbek language and literature. Fitrat is also considered a prominent representative of Central Asian Jadidism and the first Uzbek professor.

"Fitrat" is Abdurauf's literary pseudonym, which means "a key to talent". His father, Abdurahimboy, was an Uzbek, and his mother, Bibijon, was a Tajik. Fitrat's father was a religious, educated person who loved traveling, commerce, and was engaged in trade. He often left his family for his profession, even moving to Kashgar for 15 years from 1904. Fitrat's mother, Bibijon (full name Nastarbibi, in some sources Mustafbibi), was a sensitive and literate woman who mainly raised her children herself. In addition to Abdurauf, the family had two more children, a brother, Abdurahmon, and a sister, Mahbuba. Her mother worked hard to ensure that her children grew up to be literate and knowledgeable people.

### Discussion and results

Abdurauf first studied at school, then at the Mirarab madrasah in Bukhara. He deeply studied Arabic, Persian-Tajik, Turkish literature, philosophy, history and culture of the peoples of the East. From a young age, he was deeply interested in all areas of science. His interest in modern sciences led him to Turkey. His trip to Turkey played a great role in the formation of



# Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access | Peer Reviewed

 This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

Fitrat's worldview. Along with his education in Turkey, Fitrat began to analyze socio-political processes in the world, his political and legal knowledge increased. He assessed his country from the outside and, realizing how far his people were lagging behind in development, decided to fight for the prosperity of his country.

As we delve into Fitrat's work, we can see that the ideas in his works are connected to the highest goals of the well-being of the nation and the development of the country. The Jadid movement that emerged in the socio-political life of Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century had fundamental goals such as the adaptation of the nation to modern development, the renewal of society through enlightenment, and the spiritual liberation of the people from the burden of colonialism. In this process, Abdurauf Fitrat occupies a special place as one of the most active leaders, wise statesmen, and profound literary figures. At the heart of his socio-educational activities are, first of all, the ideas of national revival, restoration of cultural identity, and creation of an oriental model of modern reforms.

Fitrat's works such as "Debate", "Statement of the Indian Traveler", and "Leader of Salvation" deeply analyze the crisis of the nation, the identity that is disappearing under the influence of colonial ideology, the disconnection from science and enlightenment, and the social stagnation of society. He sees the root of the crisis in the Muslim society of Turkestan as primarily the decline in enlightenment, and proposes that for the revival of the nation, first of all, the upbringing of a literate, highly intellectual, and self-aware generation is necessary.

Fitrat's works "Munozara" and "Sayyohi Hindi" served as an unofficial program of the national revival movement in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century and caused a sharp change in the worldview of young people and their joining the ranks of the Jadids. For Fitrat, national revival is not only a political, but also a broad cultural process, which includes the restoration of historical memory, the development of the native language, and the reinterpretation of national literary and cultural traditions in accordance with the modern environment.

The main aspect of Fitrat's views on cultural identity is the principle of combining nationality with modernity. He considered the preservation of national culture not as unenlightened or isolationist conservatism, but as strengthening national identity through the conscious use of the achievements of universal civilization. Therefore, he was in close contact with the Arab, Persian, and Turkish cultural environments and developed a model of cultural reform suitable for Turkestan based on scientific and literary observations of the Istanbul period. According to Fitrat's ideas, the restoration of national identity is a process of re-awareness of the nation's internal strength in the fields of language, history, spirituality, and literature.

Fitrat emphasized that language is the basis of national awakening, the main unifying force of the nation. That is why in his treatises "Uzbek language", "Our language", "Rules of literature" he emphasizes the need to reform the language, bring it closer to the people and scientifically standardize it. He evaluates language on two levels: as a communicative tool and as a symbol of national identity.

As the philologist A. Azizkhodjayev noted, "For nature, language is the most effective tool for the intellectual awakening and growth of social consciousness of society. The lamp that illuminates a dark society is precisely the knowledge and enlightenment that passes



# Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access | Peer Reviewed

 This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

through language"<sup>1</sup>. Purifying the language and reviving it on the basis of the vernacular is, in Fitrat's view, a fundamental requirement for "awakening national identity." He criticized the Persian-Tajik mixed literary language and set as his main goal the creation of a simplified, popular, and universal literary Uzbek language for the nation's self-understanding. This approach formed Fitrat's view that "the main force of national awakening in Turkestan society is the identification and strengthening of language."

Fitrat's views on the nation are in harmony with the political-cultural critical position of Jadidism. As Adib Khalid writes, for Fitrat, the nation is a much more complex social phenomenon than the concept of "blood kinship," and it rests on three foundations:

1. Linguistic unity - Fitrat indicates that the main foundation of a nation is to know and protect its language.
2. Historical memory In Fitrat's works, the restoration of historical consciousness is interpreted as an important condition for national awakening. He argues that a people who forget their historical past "cannot rise to the level of a nation."
3. Unity of cultural values. Fitrat, who sees the nation as "a conscious unity resulting from cultural unity," especially emphasizes the need to restore cultural identity. In Fitrat's works such as "Hind Ikhtilolchilari", "Oila", and "Sayha", the ideas of national identity, freedom, and liberation are associated with this cultural unity.

Fitrat's views on spirituality are not in line with a religious-reform approach, but with socio-enlightenment modernization. According to D. Ahatova, who defended her candidate's dissertation on Fitrat's educational and pedagogical views, "In Fitrat's eyes, spirituality is a force that determines the spiritual elevation of the people, their understanding of their identity, and the ability of society to educate itself, a source of spiritual awakening"<sup>2</sup>. Fitrat understood well that in order for the people to unite as one nation and fight for freedom, they must first of all awaken spiritually. That is why he sponsored the opening of schools and the organization of theaters in order to awaken the people spiritually and thereby raise their spirituality. Through theatrical performances, he hoped that the people who did not have the opportunity to receive education would understand the essence of the events taking place in society, understand what the consequences of indifference to the fate of the nation would lead to, and feel the pain of the nation.

Fitrat interprets not traditional Islam, but the "enlightenment essence of Islam" in accordance with the development of society. For Fitrat, Islam is enlightenment against ignorance, justice against oppression, and discipline against corruption. Fitrat sees Islam as a spiritual support that regulates the life of society and provides solutions to problems. He sees both ignorance in society, oppression and corruption that are being inflicted on the people as the cause of all this, as a lack of full understanding of the essence of Islam and hypocrisy in actions. In his works, Fitrat criticizes "religious scholars" and "old-timers" who distort and narrowly understand Islamic ideas, which hinder the people from acquiring knowledge and enlightenment.

<sup>1</sup> Azizkhodjayev A., A'zamkhodjayeva S. Alimova D., Rizayev Sh. Unforgettable figures (representatives of the Jadid movement). – T.: Academy, 1999. – P. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ahatova D. Educational and pedagogical views of Abdurauf Fitrat (PhD dissertation). – Tashkent, 1998. – P. 45.

One of the leading motifs of Fitrat's work, the idea of the struggle against Bolshevism, is especially vividly expressed in the plays "True Love" and "Indian Rebels". The playwright transferred the tragic events taking place in Turkestan during the years of Soviet power to India, a British colony, and in a certain sense created the image of his compatriots in the form of Indian independence fighters fighting against the British colonialists. Jawaharlal Nehru admitted that these works of Fitrat gave strength and support to the struggle of the Indian people against colonialism.

Fitrat, who devoted his entire life to the struggle against the forces that hindered the development of the nation, on the one hand, colonial oppression, and on the other hand, dogmatic religious scholars and narrow-minded "old-timers", was accused of skepticism and rebellion by many Jadids for his progressive democratic ideas and thoughts. The tsarist authorities accused him of opposing colonialism, and during the Soviet era, when communist ideology was rampant, he was accused of nationalism, a supporter of the idea of pan-Turkism, and an "enemy of the people" with slander.

## Conclusion

Although Abdurauf Fitrat has left this world, his ideas continue to live on. His ideas of enlightenment and nationalism have not lost their relevance. Fitrat's speeches calling for the struggle for national identity, freedom, and enlightenment have resonated. Like Fitrat, who risked his life for the freedom of the country, half a century after the repression of the Jadids, the Uzbek people gained their freedom and became a state that adopted the enlightenment dreamed of by our Jadid ancestors as its weapon. Fitrat's views on national awakening and the restoration of cultural identity not only formed the intellectual core of the Jadid movement, but also became fundamental in the process of forming the Uzbek national identity at the beginning of the 20th century. His legacy also serves as an important scientific source in studying issues of national identity, educational progress, and social modernity today.

## References:

1. Adeeb Khalid. The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia. Comparative Studies in Muslim Societies, Volume 27. (Online version) – Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. – P. 76.
2. Ahatova D. Educational and pedagogical views of Abdurauf Fitrat (PhD dissertation). – Tashkent, 1998. – P. 45.
3. Azizkhodjayev A., A'zamkhodjayeva S. Alimova D., Rizayev Sh. Unforgettable figures (representatives of the Jadid movement). – T.: Academy, 1999. – P. 18.
4. Halim Kara. Reclaiming National Literary Heritage: the Rehabilitation of Fitrat and Abdulhamit Sulaymon Cholpan in Uzbekistan.// Europe- Asia Studies, Vol. 54, No.1., – İstanbul, 2002. – S. 123-142.
5. Halim Taşkaya. Abdurauf Fitrat ve yaş buharaliler cemiyeti. – İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Soysal bilimler enstitüsü, 2015. – 174 s.
6. Timur Kocaoğlu. Buhara Cumhurbaşkanı Osman Hoca ve İstiklal Savaşı Sırasında Türkiye'ye Altın Yardım Meselesi, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti'nin Kuruluş ve Gelişmesine Hizmeti Geçen Türk Dünyası Aydınları Sempozyumu Bildirileri. // Kayseri Türk Dünyası Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları No:2, – İstanbul, 1996. – S. 421-424.



# Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access | Peer Reviewed



*This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0*

7. Yusuf Avcı. Özbekistan'da Fitrat'ın ceditçiliği, eğitimciliği ve eğitim felsefesi. // Türk Dünyası Dil ve Edebiyatı Dergisi, Sayı 21. – İstanbul, 2018. – S. 39-51.