

## **MAHMUDKHUJA BEHBUDI'S ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE MORAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF CONTEMPORARY UZBEKISTAN**

**Maxsudjonova Aziza Kadamboyevna**

**Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences and**

**Physical Education, Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry**

[angelochik86@mail.ru](mailto:angelochik86@mail.ru)

**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9118-471X>**

***Abstract.** This article analyses the enlightenment ideas of the eminent early-twentieth-century Jadid reformer Mahmudkhuja Behbudi and demonstrates, on a scholarly basis, how they influence the moral and social development of modern Uzbekistan. The author examines Behbudi's views on education, ethics, social justice, civic responsibility and women's rights, and shows how these ideas are manifested under the conditions of New Uzbekistan. The study emphasises that Behbudi's intellectual legacy is contributing to the upbringing of today's youth, the formation of civil society, the restoration of national identity and the realisation of the Third Renaissance concept. The main conclusion is that his progressive thinking occupies an important place in contemporary moral–social progress.*

***Keywords:** Mahmudkhuja Behbudi; enlightenment; Jadid movement; moral education; social society; civic responsibility; national identity; Third Renaissance; educational reform; women's rights*

Mahmudkhuja Behbudi was one of the leading figures of the Jadid movement in Central Asia, a renowned enlightener, religious scholar, and public figure who dedicated his work to the spiritual, moral, and social advancement of the nation. His ideas hold significant importance today in the process of building New Uzbekistan.

1. The Essence of Behbudi's Enlightenment Ideas. Behbudi's enlightenment programme embraced science, ethics, upbringing and social activism. He promoted new forms of schooling, education for girls, and the study of modern sciences and languages. His educational convictions were famously encapsulated in slogans such as "A nation without education is no nation" and "Enlightenment is the path to salvation."

2. Influence on Moral Education. In contemporary Uzbekistan, Behbudi's ethical principles find expression in youth education, the national curriculum and the revival of family values. He

advanced virtues such as humanity, purity, honesty and diligence as core moral tenets—values now integrated into modern moral-aesthetic education frameworks.

3. Social Justice and Civic Activism. Through essays such as “Turkiston Qayghusi” (The Woes of Turkestan), Behbudi advocated social justice, legal consciousness, equality and civic responsibility. Current efforts to strengthen civil society, protect human rights and expand public oversight continue the agenda he first articulated.

4. National Revival and the Third Renaissance. Behbudi’s notion of a “national awakening” aligns with today’s Third Renaissance discourse. Linking national progress to learning and science, Uzbekistan’s New Development Strategy under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev explicitly builds on the Jadids’ heritage, especially Behbudi’s, in reforming education, restoring national identity and fostering patriotic youth.

5. Women’s Issues and Gender Equality. Behbudi’s insistence on women’s education and social participation laid theoretical foundations for Uzbekistan’s modern gender policy. His plays “Padarkiston” and “Bahar” defend women’s rights and social roles - ideas now enshrined at state-policy level.

Behbudi’s enlightenment vision—particularly his claim that “the salvation of the nation lies in knowledge and enlightenment”—is inextricably linked with Uzbekistan’s contemporary social and spiritual reforms. By criticising ignorance, apathy and moral decay, he identified knowledge and ethics as the chief instruments for reforming both individuals and society.

Today, the priorities of youth education, quality schooling, national self-awareness and the revival of moral values rank high on the state agenda. In this context, studying Behbudi’s legacy is not only academically significant but also practically essential for shaping moral consciousness, social responsibility and civic awareness in modern Uzbekistan.

In an era when wide-ranging reforms seek to lay the groundwork for a Third Renaissance, a return to the intellectual and pedagogical heritage of the Jadid enlightenment - in particular Behbudi’s - has become imperative. His maxim that education is the most powerful weapon for a nation’s salvation resonates strongly with present-day demands. Works such as “Rahbar-i Najat,” “Tarikhi Islam,” and “Turkiston Qayghusi” once formed the intellectual backbone of Jadid thinking; today they serve as spiritual and educational guideposts for the younger generation.

Throughout his life Behbudi demanded that general education include what he called the “intellectual sciences” - a broad array of natural and social disciplines -thus reviving rationalist traditions. He especially stressed the need to study history and geography, arguing that history

explains everything: the rise and fall of states, the roots of Islamic decline, and the consequences of misinterpreting sacred foundations.

Behbudi linked his people's prosperity not only to education but also to political self-determination. In numerous articles and tireless activism he exposed the colonial policies of the Russian Empire and the Provisional Government, yet he advocated bloodless struggle, believing that parliamentary means could achieve much. A staunch supporter of Turkestan autonomy, he preferred evolutionary paths to progress.

His programme envisaged elected state bodies, the abolition of qadi courts and their replacement with state courts, appellate commissions and a supreme judicial chamber. The range of issues he tackled - from education and politics to morality, marriage, historical geography and language policy - was remarkably wide.

The greatest practical fruit of his efforts was the magazine "Oyna" (Mirror), founded in 1913, which soon became the voice of the Jadids. Covering scientific, literary and socio-cultural topics, it reported on developments from Japan to America and highlighted new libraries, cinemas and theatres.

Behbudi aimed to raise a generation capable of regaining the lost freedom of their forefathers and reclaiming their homeland, wishing them to be both enlightened and faithful to Islamic values as a shield for national identity. He urged wealthy citizens to fund education, famously advising them to sell their possessions to send their sons to study in Europe.

He also drew attention to public health in his article "Hifzi Sihhati Oila" (Protecting Family Health), discussing the harms of early marriage, polygamy and lack of sex education - subjects virtually unprecedented in the Muslim press of his day.

Condemning the ruinous extravagance of traditional weddings and funerals in "The Vices That Devour Us" (1915), he cited Qur'anic verses and warned that such practices squander resources and drag society toward decline.

**Conclusion.** Mahmudkhujja Behbudi's enlightenment ideals continue to serve as a scholarly and practical foundation for Uzbekistan's social, moral and spiritual development. They are effectively applied in modern education, moral upbringing, civil-society building and the restoration of national identity—giving his legacy enduring strategic significance.

#### **References**

1. Hojaye F. Collected Works, Vol. 1. Tashkent, 1996, p. 78.
2. Lazizzada L. "Behbudi," Ma'rif va O'qituvchi, no. 2, 1926.
3. Oyna, 1914, no. 27, pp. 503–504.

4. Behbudi M. "Bayoni Haqiqat." Ulug' Turkiston, 12 June 1917.
5. Karimov N. Mahmudkhuja Behbudi. 2010/2016, p. 52.
6. Samarkand newspaper, 30 July 1913.
7. Alimova D. A., Rashidova D. A. Mahmudkhuja Behbudi and His Historical Thought. Tashkent: Akademiya, 1999, p. 38. Конец формы