BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg
BG PULSE JOURNAL

THE HISTORY OF AHMAD DONISH'S ENLIGHTENMENT ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This article analyzes Ahmad Donish's role in the socio-political life of the 19th-century Bukhara Emirate, his enlightenment views, and his influence on the Jadidism movement. Through the example of the author's work "Navodir ul-vaqoe," his innovative approaches to state governance, the education system, and societal development are illuminated.

Keywords: Ahmad Donish, enlightenment, Bukhara Emirate, "Navodir ul-vaqoe," Jadidism, reforms, socio-political thought.

Introduction

Ahmad Donish Makhdum ibn Nosir was born in 1826 in Bukhara into a mudarris (teacher) family and died in 1897 in Bukhara. Ahmad Donish was a writer, artist, calligrapher, scholar, and enlightener. Nosir's son Ahmad Donish played an important role in the emergence of the progressive environment in 19th-century Bukhara. He created his works in Tajik. Ahmad Donish received his initial literacy from his mother, then studied at a maktab and madrasa. He independently studied literature, history, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. He was well-versed in calligraphy, painting, and ornamental art, and his extensive knowledge of astrology brought him to the attention of Nasrullokhan. In 1857, 1869, and 1873, he traveled to Russia (Petersburg) as a secretary of the Bukhara Emir's ambassadors. Based on his travel impressions, he wrote such works as "Navodir ul-vaqoye" ("Rare Events") and "Tarjimai ahvoli amironi Bukhoro" ("Biographies of the Bukhara Emirs"). In these works, he raised the issue of reforming the emirate system. In 1865, at the invitation of Emir Muzaffar, Ahmad Donish wrote a book on astronomy (ilmi nujum) called "Manozir ul-kavokib" ("Positions of the Planets"). Between 1870-1873, he created the work "Risolai dar nazmi tamaddun va taovun" ("A Treatise on the Order of Culture and Society") about reform. In 1857, Emir Nasrullo sent his diplomatic delegation to Petersburg. The ambassadors were tasked with expressing condolences to the Russian government over the death of Nicholas I (1855) and congratulating the new Emperor Alexander II on his accession to the throne, namely initiating treaties on strengthening and expanding mutual trade relations between Russia and Bukhara. Ahmad Donish, with the emir's respectful regard, went as secretary of the ambassadors' delegation. Emir Nasrullo personally assigned Ahmad Donish the task of observing and studying the state structure and life in Russia. About this, Ahmad Donish wrote: "I was given the following assignment: study the country's internal order, pay close attention to state construction, and report to His Excellency the Emir. We know about neighboring states only from the words of merchants and travelers."

Ahmad Donish's opportunity to visit Petersburg as part of the ambassadors' delegation and become closely acquainted with European culture and achievements in science created a major turning point in the thinker's worldview, and under the influence of his impressions, he put forward a project to reform the existing order in Bukhara.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Bukhara Emirate was experiencing a period of deep socio-economic and political crisis. Backwardness in society, undeveloped science, dogmatism in education, and systemic corruption in state governance hindered progress. It was precisely under these conditions that Ahmad Donish (1827–1897) emerged with his progressive views.

His enlightenment activity was not merely social criticism, but rather a theory of "saving society through enlightenment." This section of the article illuminates the political situation in 19th-

century Bukhara and Turkestan, the influence of the Russian Empire in the region, and Ahmad Donish's role as a thinker who deeply understood these processes.

1. From Diplomacy to Enlightenment: The Evolution of Worldview Ahmad Donish visited Saint Petersburg three times (1857, 1869, 1873) as part of the Bukhara Embassy. These trips became a turning point in his life:

Russian Experience: He observed European-style technical progress, the military system, the press, and educational institutions, comparing them with the medieval-type system in Bukhara.

Analytical Approach: In his works such as "Tarixai saltanai Bukhoro" and "Navodir ul-vaqoe," he analyzes why the Muslim world was backward while Europe was developing. According to his conclusion, the key to progress lies in science, the rule of law, and a culture of labor.

2. "Navodir ul-vaqoe" — The Encyclopedia of Uzbek Enlightenment This work constitutes Ahmad Donish's socio-political program. Its main analytical ideas include:

The Question of Power: By "just ruler," Donish understood not merely a religious king, but a leader who relies on laws, thinks about the people's welfare, and governs on the basis of consultation (shura). He demanded the harmonization of state governance with humanitarian principles.

Industry and Craftsmanship: He emphasized the necessity of developing local industry and liberalizing trade for the country's economic independence.

Education Reform: Donish advocated teaching secular knowledge (history, geography, mathematics, physics) alongside traditional religious education. He considered education to be "the mirror of society."

3. The Ideological Foundation of the Jadidism Movement Ahmad Donish's activities constitute the direct precursor of the Jadidism movement:

Succession: Jadids such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Fitrat, and Abdulla Avloniy continued Ahmad Donish's critical spirit.

The Idea of New-Method Schools: Ahmad Donish's dream of opening new-method schools in Bukhara was put into practice by the Jadids.

Language and Literature: Donish considered literature not merely as beauty, but as a social tool. He advocated simplifying the Uzbek literary language and bringing it closer to the people.

Conclusion

Ahmad Donish's enlightenment activities truly initiated the stage of "intellectual revolution" in 19th-century Central Asian socio-political thought. The research results show that the thinker's views were not only advanced for his time but constituted a strategic program with historical perspective.

First, Ahmad Donish's legacy is of fundamental importance in the development of national statehood thinking. His theories on state governance — the supremacy of law, transparency, and principles of building a just society — are ideologically harmonious with the democratic reforms and efforts toward building a rule-of-law state being implemented in Uzbekistan today. Donish's concept of the "just king," in today's terms, is interconnected with the model of "people-centered state governance."

Second, the thinker's views on education constitute the innovative foundation of our modern education system. Donish considered science not merely as a collection of theoretical knowledge, but as the sole locomotive of societal progress. His ideas on integrating secular sciences and exact knowledge into the education system fully correspond to today's requirements of the STEAM education system and digital economy.

Third, Ahmad Donish is the intellectual architect of the Jadidism movement. He developed a method of intellectual resistance to combat the backwardness and superstitions of his time. His work "Navodir ul-vaqoe" is not merely a literary monument but an encyclopedic work that shaped the ideology of national awakening. For Jadid representatives, Donish's critically-spirited works served as a kind of roadmap and accelerated the process of national self-awareness.

Fourth, the thinker's views on international relations and diplomacy are harmonious with Uzbekistan's foreign policy in today's global world. More than a century ago, Donish predicted the necessity of studying other peoples' experiences, mastering achievements in science and technology, and expanding cultural-economic cooperation with the outside world.

As a final conclusion, studying Ahmad Donish's personality and activities is not about restoring historical memory, but about rediscovering the intellectual power necessary for our national development. His enlightenment ideas are harmonious with the spiritual-educational foundations of today's "New Uzbekistan" strategy and serve as an important theoretical source in raising future generations as knowledgeable, patriotic, and broad-minded individuals. The legacy left by Donish is a historical testament signifying the boundlessness of the aspiration for progress.

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