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Cultural Life in Turkestan and Bukhara at the End of the 19th Century at the Beginning of the 20th Century, the Educational Activities of Sadriddin Ayniy

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Abstract: this article presents socio-cultural life in Turkestan and Bukhara in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pedagogical views of Sadriddin Ayni on madrasa education, scientific-theoretical analysis on the content and methods of the lesson in madrasas.

Keywords: Jadidism, Religious Man, Political Consciousness, Orthographic Reading Rules, "Usuli Jaded", Hujra, Stick Discipline, Pedagogy, Creative Approach.

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1. Introduction

The pedagogical thought of educational theorists such as Sadriddin Ayni, who made a significant contribution to the treasury of world science and culture through their cultural and scientific heritage, still remains insufficiently studied in the history of pedagogy. During the years of Soviet power, the people of former Turkestan and Eastern Bukhara, like other people of the former Union, experienced various reforms and socio-cultural transformations in economic and cultural development [1]. Under the influence of the First Russian Revolution and the intensification of the national liberation movement, the leading people of Turkestan and Bukhara began to understand the main causes of the difficult economic conditions of the working masses and sought ways to improve their living standards [2]. The Revolution of 1905 and the strengthening of the national liberation movement inevitably influenced the growing struggle of the people for culture and school education. School education became an integral part of the general democratic movement [3].

However, at that time, the local bourgeoisie opposed the revolution, national liberation, and the national interests of the working people. By 1905, the local bourgeoisie, having become a significant force, sought to consolidate its position by suppressing the emerging political consciousness of the working masses in cooperation with the Tsarist government [4]. Although the local bourgeoisie attempted to establish close ties with Russian capitalists, it was primarily interested in exploiting the working masses of the region while simultaneously preventing, through various means, their exploitation by the Russian bourgeoisie [5].

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted systematically within a historical-pedagogical framework. The main research methods included source analysis, comparative analysis, and historical-logical approaches. During the research process, written sources related to the Jadid movement, the educational system of Bukhara madrasas, and the pedagogical views of Sadriddin Ayni were thoroughly examined. In particular, his historical memoirs, textbooks, and scholarly legacy were analyzed in terms of content, and their impact on the development of the educational system of that period was scientifically substantiated [6].

Methodologically, the study was grounded in the principles of historicity, systematicity, consistency, and objectivity. The content of education in madrasas, as well as teaching forms and methods, were critically analyzed, and their similarities and differences with Jadid schools were identified [7]. In addition, the influence of the socio-cultural environment on the educational process was comprehensively considered [8]. As a result of the study, the methodological differences between traditional and new-method schools were systematically revealed, and advanced pedagogical features contributing to the improvement of educational effectiveness were generalized [9].

3. Results and Discussion

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadid movement, which aimed to combat backwardness, stagnation, illiteracy, and other social problems, developed under different conditions and levels in Turkestan and the Bukhara Emirate. Supporters of Jadidism sought to preserve the foundations of religion and Sharia while adapting Islam to new conditions through reforms [10]. They also aimed to borrow and utilize the achievements of European culture in solving national problems. The ideas of Jadidism were mainly supported by progressive representatives of the Muslim clergy and leading figures of the local bourgeoisie [11]. Jadids attempted to address these issues through schools, charitable organizations, publishing houses, libraries and reading rooms, as well as through the press, literature, and theater [12]. Despite its tragic outcome, Jadidism played an important role in strengthening national self-awareness among the people of Central Asia. In the context of radical transformations in ideological theories, social views, and, in general, ideals and human existence, education and upbringing perform a stabilizing function, helping individuals adapt to new living conditions [13].

In Turkestan and Eastern Bukhara, the Jadids directed their initial efforts toward school reform, considering it the most effective means of introducing their ideas to the Muslim population [14]. They established a wide network of institutions known as “new-method schools” (usuli jadid). Such schools were opened in Samarkand, Tashkent, and Bukhara. During critical periods of profound historical transformation, it is essential to ensure the continuity of cultural and educational traditions while preserving the existing system of values and the unique identity of the people [15]. In such circumstances, tradition plays a decisive role in the process of educating and raising the younger generation. Based on the specific features of the education system and the experience of the history of pedagogy, human life can be understood as a link in a single chain of generations [16]. In other words, individuals live within a space of socio-cultural traditions, which significantly influence the formation of their character, behavior, aspirations, values, and interests. The main group of sources for the period under study includes numerous works by the Jadids themselves, as well as by their ideologists and inspirers, in addition to memoirs of school graduates such as those reflecting on the “usuli jadid” system [17]. The works of Sadriddin Ayni can rightfully be regarded as the most valuable sources and among the earliest studies on the history of Bukhara. Ayni’s views on Jadidism are reflected in his historical memoir works such as *“The History of the*

Intellectual Revolution in Bukhara” (1918), *“The History of the Bukhara Revolution”* (1921), and *“The History of the Manghit Emirs of Bukhara”* [18].

Sadriddin Ayni’s book *“Ta’rikhi inqilobi fikri dar Bukhoro”* (“The History of the Intellectual Revolution in Bukhara”) was written in Tajik in 1918. However, after the Bukhara Revolution, the manuscript of this work was lost, and the author entrusted his son, Kamoliddin Ayni, with the task of finding it. Kamoliddin Ayni managed to recover the manuscript from archival sources only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 2003, the work was published in Tehran in its original script; in 2005, it was published in Dushanbe in Cyrillic script; and in 2007, a facsimile edition of the manuscript was issued. This historical work, consisting of 22 chapters, is a truly valuable source for studying the history of the Jadid movement in Central Asia. In it, the author examines the development of Jadidism in Bukhara, including the period of the maturation of opposition Jadid ideas within the Emirate, the struggle of Bukhara Jadids against oppression and backwardness, and the emergence and functioning of “new-method” schools. The book also provides important information about the secret society of the Bukhara Jadids *“Tarbiyai atfol”* (“Children’s Education”), the publication of the Jadid newspaper *“Bukhoro-i Sharif”* and its supplement *“Turon”*, as well as about local teachers, including representatives of Tatar Jadidism who were among the founders of new-method schools [19].

The author assigns great importance to the conflict that arose between representatives of old and new schools, which divided society into progressive and conservative groups during the emergence of new-method schools. However, Fayzulla Khojaev, while focusing on the political activities of the Bukhara Jadids from the February Revolution of 1917 to the events of September 1920, pays comparatively little attention to their earlier educational and enlightenment activities. From the teacher Abu Abdullah Rudaki to Ahmad Donish and Sadriddin Ayni, all poets and writers of Persian-Tajik literature attached great importance to the profound spiritual and moral meaning of the sacred word of the Qur’an. It is well known that such figures of the Bukhara people as Abu Abdullāh Rudaki had mastered the Qur’an by the age of eight; Abu Ali ibn Sina by the age of ten; and Abu Hanifa Nu’mān, known in the Muslim world as Imam A’zam, by the age of five [20]. They memorized its surahs from an early age. Hafiz of Shiraz, in turn, was familiar with fourteen methods of Qur’anic recitation. Another world-renowned literary and public figure, Sadriddin Ayni, was also considered one of the finest experts and promoters of the Holy Qur’an.

Sadriddin Ayni himself regarded adherence to the word of God as the fundamental condition for human life, peace, and happiness, as well as the ultimate criterion for conduct in both this world and the hereafter. As he emphasized: “Whoever follows the Qur’an, the Word of God, will be happy both in this world and in the next”. Sadriddin Ayni frequently expressed such views not only in his works but also in personal conversations and in his memoirs about his parents, Sayidmurod Khoja and Zevara, particularly in his work *“My Brief Autobiography”*. There, he noted: “My father was a devout man; he never neglected prayer and regularly attended the congregational mosque” [21].

He also clearly wrote about this in his well-known work *“Memoirs”* (*Yoddoshtho*): “My father was a religious man; he believed in God and the Prophet, the Day of Judgment, Paradise, and Hell”. Historical evidence shows that the beginning of the 20th century marked not only the rise of national liberation movements among the people of Central Asia, including the Tajik people, but also the beginning of an Islamic revival. This is further confirmed by the high-quality re-publication of the Holy Qur’an in 1909. Sadriddin Ayni dedicated a historical lyrical prose work to this event, emphasizing that the publication and dissemination of such a sacred book as the Qur’an was a major historical and cultural milestone for Muslims. Sadriddin Ayni, as the initiator and the person who directly prepared this invaluable work for publication, devoted himself with great dedication to the development of teaching and methodological manuals, school textbooks, and the

systematization of orthographic rules for reading the Holy Qur'an. One such textbook was entitled "*Tartil-ul-Qur'on*" ("Reading of the Qur'an"), which was introduced for use by students in the madrasas of Bukhara. This textbook, intended for children in Central Asian schools receiving instruction in the Persian language, consisted of a preface based on the poetry of Abdurahman Jami, 28 sections, and an excerpt from a didactic poem. In compiling this work, Sadriddin Ayni set the goal of organizing the teaching of correct and accessible reading of the Qur'an in accordance with orthographic rules. As he stated: "One of the essential truths of reciting the Qur'an melodiously is adherence to the rules of orthographic reading" [22].

Indeed, the content and structure of the topics presented in this manual reflect comprehensive and fundamental knowledge of the Arabic language, particularly in the areas of reading, phonetics, morphology, and syntax. Therefore, in creating this manual, the author applied all his pedagogical experience and skill, striving to develop each topic thoroughly and to formulate questions and answers in a clear and meaningful way, adapted to the age, perception, and level of understanding of the learners. "This book, written on the basis of the latest achievements of science and advanced pedagogical practices, is one of the best textbooks for the study of academic subjects". The high scientific and methodological value of "*Tartil-ul-Qur'on*" ensured that, immediately after its publication, it gained wide recognition among scholars, students, and teachers. Before the October Revolution, it was used as an educational tool. It is well known that most madrasas in Central Asia were established not by the state as formal educational institutions, but by private individuals using their own financial resources. Sadriddin Ayni wrote: "At the end of the Ashtarkhanid rule, during the reign of Abulfayz Khan (1711–1747), madrasas in Bukhara and Samarkand fell into ruin. In Samarkand, they were used as inns; in Bukhara, the buildings were so dilapidated that people were afraid to enter them" [23].

He further noted: "This destruction continued during the early period of the Manghit dynasty. When Shahmurad became the Manghit emir, he introduced several reforms in Bukhara and Samarkand. He regulated the use of irrigated lands, organized markets, and restored the endowments (waqf properties) of madrasas". The conditions of students in the madrasas were extremely difficult. At times, poor students were unable to find a *hujra* (cell/room) for themselves, because after the decree of Emir Shahmurad, all the *hujras* of the madrasas in Bukhara and Samarkand became the private property of wealthy students and individuals who had no connection to the madrasa or to education. Although the buying and selling of *hujras* was strictly prohibited by Sharia, in practice, *hujras* in the Bukhara madrasas were sold for twenty to thirty thousand tangas. On this matter, Sadriddin Ayni wrote: "If a student had money, he would buy a *hujra* for himself and settle there. If he did not have enough money to purchase one, he would rent a room. Often, a student without ready cash would rent it by paying a certain amount of interest to the owner".

Providing a comprehensive description of the madrasas of Bukhara, Sadriddin Ayni expressed the following view: "These ancient madrasas, built three or four centuries ago, still seem to amaze us with their outward beauty. They appear as symbols of the feudal system, externally elegant, grand, and impressive, yet internally dark, suffocating, and unbearably cramped, filled with unpleasant odors". It should also be noted that madrasas did not have clearly defined curricula specifying the list of subjects, their distribution across academic years, or the number of hours allocated to each discipline. Moreover, there were no standardized state educational programs that were mandatory for all educational institutions. The only instructional support for madrasas consisted of textbooks. These books formed the basis of instruction, although even a student who had completed primary school could remain functionally illiterate. Instruction began with the study of the book "*Iloji*" ("Knowledge"). As Sadriddin Ayni wrote: "In this book, Arabic grammar was taught in the Tajik language, with examples given in Arabic" [24].

After this, students proceeded to study the book *"The Beginning of Knowledge"*, written in Tajik, which presented the fundamentals of Islam in a question-and-answer format. Subsequently, students began studying Arabic morphology using the books *"Muizzi"* and *"Zanjani"*. Syntax was then studied using the book *"Avomil"*. The students would work through all these Arabic texts alongside their Tajik translations. However, the book *"Avomil"* did not provide a complete presentation of Arabic syntax. Therefore, in order to supplement and expand their knowledge of this area of grammar, students studied the Arabic book *"Kafiya"*, in which Arabic syntax was presented more comprehensively. According to the traditions of the Bukhara madrasas, these books were to be studied under the guidance of an assistant teacher known as *domulloi kunjaki*.

Subsequently, students studied Mawlana Abdurahman Jami's *"Sharh-i Mullo"*, which provided a commentary on the Arabic syntax text *"Kafiya"*. All of these books were primarily written in the medieval period and represent examples of scholastic theology. A student who advanced to the study of *"Sharh-i Mullo"* was required to learn from a more experienced teacher, while simultaneously working with the teacher's assistants on texts such as *"Kafiya"* and *"Shamsiya"*. The latter, *"Shamsiya"*, is a textbook on logic written in the 13th century, which served as a teaching manual in madrasas until the October Revolution. After completing the study of *"Sharh-i Mullo"*, students began interpreting *"Shamsiya"* based on the book *"Hashiya-i Qutbi"*. At the same time, they studied *"Aqa'id"*, a scholastic work outlining the foundations of Islamic doctrine, including teachings on existence, God and His attributes, and the afterlife. Students spent approximately four years working on the interpretation of *"Aqa'id"*.

Following this, the study of metaphysics and logic began on the basis of the scholastic text *"Tahzib"*. This was followed by *"Hikmat al-'Ayn"*, a work presenting natural sciences within a theological framework. After completing *"Hikmat al-'Ayn"*, students proceeded to study *"Mullo Janol"*, a text devoted to metaphysics. In some madrasas, students also studied *"Mukhtasar al-Wiqaya"*, a concise course on Islamic jurisprudence, as well as *"Sharh al-Wiqaya"*, a commentary on the former text. It should be noted that about half of the listed books consist of commentaries on earlier works. The tradition of writing commentaries was highly developed in the medieval East. Such commentaries were produced not only in theology but also in the field of scientific literature. For example, as Ayni noted, *"Hashiya-i Qutbi"* is a commentary on *"Shamsiya"*, while *"Sharh-i Mullo"* is a commentary on *"Kafiya"*, and so on.

Thus, these works collectively covered the foundations of various fields of study, including Arabic language (morphology and syntax), logic, rhetoric, natural sciences interpreted through a theological lens, as well as religious practices and legal norms such as purification (taharah), fasting, funeral rites, pilgrimage to Mecca, marriage arrangements, buying and selling, slavery and manumission, and the rules of marriage and divorce. Knowledge of these subjects was considered essential for both religious and state activities. One of the significant contributions of Sadriddin Ayni to the Uzbek people lies in his ability, as a distinguished scholar of Islamic theology (fiqh), to clearly explain and interpret the essence of religious teachings that were widespread among the population of Central Asia.

It should be noted that Sadriddin Ayni was born, raised, educated, and matured within an Islamic environment and spirit. His entire family were followers of Sufism, and his parents and close relatives were respected and well-educated individuals. Mathematics and literature were not included among the compulsory subjects of the madrasa curriculum; however, those who wished could study them independently. Mathematics, when a teacher was available, was studied from the book *"Faroiz"*, which included arithmetic and elements of plane geometry.

Madrasa students, according to their interests, studied selected works of classical Eastern literature. The native language, however, was not taught at all. The works of

prominent Central Asian scholars, such as Abu Rayhan Beruni and Abu Ali ibn Sina, whose contributions held global significance, were not only excluded from the curriculum, but were often even declared heretical by madrasa teachers. Instruction was structured in the interests of the exploiting classes and aimed at promoting Arabization and subjugation of the working population. In the madrasas of Bukhara, instruction was conducted both individually and in groups. Students were allowed to reside in one madrasa while studying with a teacher in another. As a result, they often studied with different teachers at different times. In general, there were no formal classrooms for students who studied in hujras (cells) or under individual mudarris (teachers); only some senior teachers had special rooms designated for lessons. If conditions allowed, a teacher would work with a group of students; otherwise, instruction was conducted individually. Typically, madrasa teachers in Bukhara delivered eight to twelve lessons per day, allocating separate time slots for each group.

The academic year in Bukhara madrasas usually began on September 22 (the first day of the month of Mizan) and lasted until March 22 (before the beginning of the month of Hamal), thus covering approximately six months. Students attended classes only four days a week, with Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday designated as days of rest. In some cases, elderly teachers did not hold classes on Tuesdays, referring to it as "*Seshanbegi*", an additional day of rest. Consequently, the academic year in madrasas consisted of only 96 or even 72 instructional days, while students were expected to study there for up to 19 years. These facts indicate that a considerable portion of students' time was spent in idleness. A student could attend three or four lessons per day. Teachers remained in their rooms, while students had to go to them. If the teachers were busy, the students were required to wait. As a result, students spent a considerable amount of their time waiting for their instructors. Describing such debates, Sadriddin Ayni wrote: "In one group, a discussion arose about the word 'human'. We searched for its definition. During the debate, words such as 'human', 'animal', 'speaking being', and others were mentioned. The discussion lasted for an hour and a half.

At the end of the lesson, one of the students who had silently listened to the debate asked the teacher in confusion:

– "What is this, a speaking animal?"

The teacher replied:

If, after all our discussions, you have understood nothing, even though you participated in the debate, then there is no need to explain it further. Every concept is best explained by an example. Here, you yourself are one of the representatives of a speaking animal".

Such was the content and educational significance of debates in the madrasas of Bukhara. As can be seen, during an hour and a half of discussion, unfortunate students often failed to understand anything and wasted their time, while the student who asked a question was mockingly labeled a "speaking animal". Analyzing the content and methods of teaching in madrasas, Sadriddin Ayni provided a typical example that reveals the essence of the entire system of education and upbringing of the younger generation within the walls of Bukhara madrasas before the October Revolution. He wrote: "It was believed that we were studying logic. However, in the madrasas of Bukhara, this science existed mostly in name only. For an entire year, students studied "*Hashiya-i Qutbi*", a commentary on the logical text "*Shamsiya*". Despite such a system of instruction, "...there were still some graduates of the Bukhara madrasas who were educated individuals. Admittedly, such people were as rare as fruit-bearing trees in a barren desert". Sadriddin Ayni's observations are confirmed by historical evidence. Indeed, although madrasas were limited in many respects, they produced great scholars such as Ulugh Beg, Qazizade Rumi, the mathematician and astronomer Jamshid al-Kashi (15th century), and, in the 19th century, Ahmad Donish.

One day, madrasa students submitted a petition to the Amir, stating: “Our lessons in the madrasa have become extremely disorganized; order and discipline in classes have disappeared, and unnecessary subjects have been included in the curriculum. Useless debates and disputes hinder the achievement of educational goals. Despite receiving substantial income from waqf endowments, senior muftis (jurists) and mudarris (teachers) continue to take whatever they can from poor students as tuition fees. Students are forced to sell their clothing and, ultimately, fall into debt, abandoning their studies in the middle of the academic year in search of work. We respectfully request that His Highness the Amir issue an order to remove unnecessary subjects from the curriculum and introduce necessary ones; to abolish the so-called “iftikhoton” fee, and to require teachers to be satisfied with the income from waqf endowments”. Students were required to pay their teachers a certain amount of money for studying each book. At a time when one *pud* of wheat cost five tangas (75 somoni), students paid their teachers from five to one hundred and fifty tangas, and upon graduation from the madrasa, from one hundred to two hundred tangas. The demands of the madrasa students had a reformist character and reflected emerging changes in the consciousness of the more progressive members of the madrasa community.

In Sadriddin Ayni’s pedagogical views, significant attention is devoted to the critique of the material and technical base of madrasa education, the number of students, its aims and objectives, as well as its content, forms, and methods of instruction. As a direct witness, he critically described in his works the madrasas of Bukhara as institutions responsible for training state officials and religious figures. The critic Sadriddin Ayni is portrayed through the image of hundreds of students like himself, who lived in poverty and hunger. Madrasa students suffered particularly with the onset of winter cold, as poor students wore light clothing and lacked warm footwear. Ayni himself endured these harsh conditions. Recalling his years of study, he wrote: “On rainy or snowy days, if I went outside into the street or courtyard, my shoes would immediately fill with water; the skin of my feet would crack as if cut by a knife, and blood would flow from within” [25].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Sadriddin Ayni was a distinguished historian of pedagogical science. His works on the history of pedagogy among the people of Turkestan have significantly enriched the body of historical-pedagogical knowledge that has been preserved to this day. Ayni’s reflections on the history of madrasas fill important gaps in existing literature on the history of education. Sadriddin Ayni regarded the cultivation of discipline as one of the most essential components of the moral education of the younger generation. He deeply understood the essence of the state system in the Bukhara Khanate. The execution of innocent people, the cruel punishment of the working population through various means, and the widespread oppression of society constituted the foundation of the Amir’s rule. This form of discipline was commonly referred to as “stick discipline”. One of the main shortcomings in the study of Sadriddin Ayni’s legacy is the lack of independent research and monographs devoted to his worldview, pedagogical activity, and educational ideas. This is particularly significant, as his contributions extend not only to practical educational activity but also to his role as a prominent theorist and historian of pedagogy among the people of Central Asia.

It should also be noted that Sadriddin Ayni provided a scientific and theoretical justification for the importance of family upbringing in society. He regarded love as the natural foundation of the family. Therefore, in the formation of a family, he emphasized the importance of mutual affection between a young man and a young woman: “...for the marriage of a mature man and a mature woman, their mutual consent is sufficient”, he wrote. Sadriddin Ayni was not merely a teacher; rather, he approached educational and

upbringing issues with creativity. As he noted in his autobiography, relying on his own knowledge and experience, he independently developed and creatively applied all lessons during the teaching process.

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