

# The importance of Mirzo Ulugbek madrassah in developing the system of education in its time

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## ABSTRACT

This article describes the education system at the Mirzo Ulugbek madrasah. The author lists the disciplines taught in the eastern education system and madrasah. Famous teachers of the Mirzo Ulugbek madrasah, textbooks written by them, are classified in the madrasahs taught by Shamsiddin Muhammad, a scholar.

**Keywords:** madrasah, system, education, textbooks, teachers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Enlightener scholar and statesman Abdurauf Fitrat wrote in his “Rahbari najot”: “Our country was famous as the source of enlightenment, rising of culture sun in its time”. Our state was well-known to the world thanks to thousands of popular scholars. Schools and madrasahs which educated hundreds of scientists were called as “cradle of world development” by Abdurauf Fitrat.

Oriental scholars worked hard in order to inform people about religious and secular sciences, investigated to improve their knowledge and intellect.

Rare works created by them are used as main manual of madrasahs to teach about world and person, subsistence, philosophical, sufi themes as the meaning of the world. So, these wise persons lived in respect and helped to solve theoretical and practical problems of the mankind.

All these issues are collected into several sciences and divided into several types. Professor Najmiddin Komilov defined the main science types as following: «Knowledge includes only Muslim subjects, in particular, interpretation of Koran, saint words, wise advices and jurisprudence according to people of shariat. Philosophers consider the knowledge as subsistence, complex of subjects about person and society, Sufis think of it, as the invention by intuition, forecasting and rules of maths leading to perfectness. Besides it, mathematics (counting, algebra, geometry etc.), medicine are also explained there».

Persons’ identity, their culture and spiritual qualities have always been the focus of intellectuals of each era. In particular, the problem of education of the young generation, the formation of developed personalities continued uninterruptedly in all stages of human development.

This historical continual education is closely related to the activities of schools, madrasa and senior madrasa (madrasa Oliya). In the past, the largest higher madrasa played the role of universities in their time. Such madrasa produced scholar professional educators and teachers. Whole scientific schools were established at this madrasa, and there scientific discoveries are made that attracts the attention of scientists worldwide.

Educational process, the selection of teachers, admissions, teaching in madrasa acting in Central Asia was very specific. They were different; each one is not repeated, evidenced by certificates issued to students, textbooks and manuals created for madras students.

Some prestigious higher madrasa had the opportunity to hire well-known scientists and provide them with all the conditions for residence and employment in scientific activities and pay them decent wages. It is not casual, because the subjects taught at madrasa were difficult to bring them to the students needed a highly skilled scientists. The complexity of the texts in the textbooks and manuals and Arabic script demanded the creation of different ways of interpretation and explanation that is a kind of

technique. As a result there appeared the eastern methods of teaching. There are 20-25 kinds of explanation, interpretation and analysis of text and so on.

In particular importance there was the higher madrasa which was set up in Samarkand by Ulugbek. It was considered as higher education institution, not only in Mavarannahr but also in other countries where Islam was the main religion. If we talk about the training program on example of the Madrasa of Ulugbek we see specific and natural sciences were taught and deeply were studied. The fact is that students read and studied books not only in Arabic or Farsi, but in Greek, Indian and Latin. There were books from all over the world in madrasa which were in their originals, that would be to read and comprehend the wisdom of foreign scientists, students studied foreign languages including Greek, Indian and Latin and other languages. For example: “The great building” (Batlimus), Claudia, Ptolemy, or “Grand assembly” (in Arabic “Al mansasty”) and written comments were read in Greek. In the early twentieth century, madrasa libraries were disbanded; very valuable manuscripts were dragged off by foreign connoisseurs of science and culture. Thus, priceless manuscripts of our ancestors were abroad. This shows that every madrasa to raise its prestige and glory had links with well-known scientists from other countries, and tried to bring to the attention of the students the works of foreign authors. As the confirmation of the above information is the fact that in the fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent there is stored a diploma with liner which was given to a graduate of madrassas Oliya in Samarkand Shamsiddin Muhammad Balkhi by main Mudaris of madrasa Ulugbek Kazyzady Rummy in February 1435.

This proves that the appearance of such renowned scholars as Abu Rayhan Biruni, Forobiy, Ibn Sina Firdavsiy, Alisher Navoi and others is not a coincidence, but is the result of perfection of the education system and shows the high level of teaching in madrasa.

Recently scientists of the West are attracted by educational, scientific work and the work of the famous Madrasa of the East. We know that, in the manuscript collections and libraries of foreign countries are stored textbooks, materials for madrasa and the works of scientists, copies of diplomas issued to students. For example: in museums and libraries, in particular, at the German Institute of Oriental Studies are stored dozens of rare manuscripts, copied during Temur and temurids period also with their miniatures.

In turn, the interest of today’s scientists to the education system in madrasa does not calm down, but grows. An example of this are the reports of the international conference on “The Merits of Ulugbek in the development of science” held in the 9-11 of June, 2009.

Especially the report on “Al Biruni and his method of teaching” is worthy. Of particular significance are the reports of foreign scientists such as Frederik Byupertis – Bressend (France), Muhammad Baghiri (Iran), Hrestony Bekonst and Fez Gunergun (Turkey), Eiichi Isayaha (Japan), Mnazura Haidar (India), Atilla Uzguch (Turkey), Shamshir Ali (Bangladesh) and others. In their reports, they are especially emphasized the merits of Ulugbek of higher education of his time. Based on this information, as well as the volume of scientific production internationally renowned scholars east, and encyclopedic knowledge of it can be concluded that the system of education and methods of teaching in madrasas was at a high level.

The Madrassah Mirzo Ulugbek in Samarkand has a special place indeed in wide range of madrassahs in the history of Mavarounnahr. As scholar Najmiddin Komilov noticed, under the leading of Mirzo Ulugbek there both popular scientists of the East developed the subjects in its time and educated the wise persons of different spheres. The rare document preserved till nowadays can show the subjects taught in madrassah, works, textbooks and manuals at that time.

It is the document (old arab. sanad) signed and permitted by main mudarris of madrassah Kozizoda Rumi in 1435 given to Shamsiddin Muhammad Balkhi, student of madrassah of Mirzo Ulugbek in Samarkand. Sanad- is an Arabian word, which means proof, case and document. There the following words in this Arabian document: «...in order to be educated Shamsiddin Muhammad al-Balkhi travelled far away from his native land. Being in difficulty he lived for about 16 years in Samarkand. Day by day he strived to study. He learned well as he was wise and clever. He understood the secret meanings of the book «Lavome ul-asror min matole ul-anvor» («clearing of secrets by radiance of rays») by Abu Bakr Armavi and disclosed «Badoe ul-ibkor min tavole ul-afkor» («The forming of thoughts to the literary of flower buds») during the lessons».

As it is seen, this document is the certificate about graduation of madrassah, and it includes the subjects, works belonging them, list of works, textbooks and manuals and their assessments of those subjects of the student. We decided to speak about works on history and literature given in this document.

One can across the following information in the document: «Mafotih ul-abvob ul-adab» («The keys of doors of Arabian knowledge») was analysed. Beautiful phrases are explained in «Kashshof» and its explanations. Famous explanation of Koran by Abulkosim Mahmud ibn Umar Zamakhshariy was interpreted”.

This scholar was from Khorezm and he studied scientifically the grammar of Arab language. He was named «jorulloh» which means «neighbor of Allah» at that time.

«...pearls from river of Koran poems were taken out. Besides it, graceful words of «Mavokiy ul-kalom» (Philosophy of religious persuasion) were spoken... «Hidoya» was proved, «Nihoya» found out the correct way to study poetic issues of «Hidoya”.

There the work «Al- hidoya fi sharh ul-bidoya» by Burhoniddin Marginoni was intended. This work includes law and rules of shariat, meeting of law.

“Reaching this degree, he made his mind to improve his compatriots’ knowledge and returned home. He asked to let him return with higher document. I agreed with him ...

Muso ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud popular by name Kozizoda Rumi, middle of 838 Muslim year (1435, February) ”.

This document is kept in the fund of Institute of Oriental studies named after Abu Rayhon Beruni under the number P10683-III.

This document is not only the certificate, but also the proof about education system in madrassah, about Mirzo Ulugbek’s great consideration to science. It can also define social-political, cultural issues of that time.

That student Shamsiddin Muhammad was from Khurasan, town Balkh, he came to Samarkand, Movarounnahr to study in higher madrassah of Mirzo Ulugbek. This fact shows that the madrassah was very popular at that time, and not only youth of Movarounnahr, but also youth from Khurasan, India, Rome and other eastern states studied there. On the example of Shamsiddin Muhammad we can define that study lasted for 16 years.

The works studied by this student were given separately in the certificate and it is seen that these books belong to science, literary and stories. There are several sources about textbooks and manuals studied in madrassah:

1. **«Lavome al-asror fi sharh matole al-anvor»** («clearing of secrets by radiance of rays») by Abubakr Armavi. This book’s author is Kutbiddin Muhammad bin Muhammad ar-Rozi at-Tahtoni (766-1364) , this book was written in 1328 in Arabic language. It is a comment to logic chapter of the book «Matla ul-anvor» («Radiance of rays») about debate of philosophy and logics by Sirojiddin Urmavi ( 682-1283).
2. **«Al-Kashshof ad-dakoyik at-tanzil»** («Book of comments of given truths»). Famous book devoted to description of Koran. The author is Abulkosim Mahmud bin Usmon Zamakhshari (538-1144). Ma’sud Taftazoni (1322-1390) wrote the comment «Sharhi kashshof» to this book. It was widely used by teachers and students of madsarrah.
3. **«Al-hidoya»**. The author of this book devoted to jurisprudence is Burhoniddin Marginoni (he was born in 1123 in Marginon (Roshidon), died in 1196 in Samarkand. The tomb is in Chokardiza).
4. **«Al-jome al-sahih»**. It is the complex of correct hadis of prophet Muhammad and was collected by Imam al-Bukhari ( he was born in 810 in Bukhara and died in 870 in Samarkand region, Hartang place). In the period of independence of the republic magnificent mosque-complex was built on his tomb.
5. **«Kitob al-fikh al-akbar»**. This popular work belongs to the founder of khanafiya persuasion, imam A’zam Abu Hanifa an-Numon ibn Sobit al-Kufi (80-150/700-767).
6. **«at-tazkira fi-l-hayat»**. The author of the book about astronomy is Nosiriddin Tusi (1201-1274), system of astronomy defined by Batlimus (Ptolemy) was deliberated in it. Mirzo Ulugbek used it while giving lectures.

7. «**At-tuhfat ash-shohi**». This book is also about astronomy and its author was Kutbiddin Mahmud ibn Ma'sud Sherozi.
8. «**Badoe al-ibkor min tavome al-afkor**» («The forming of thoughts to the literary of flower buds »).
9. «**Mafotih al-abvob al-adab**» («The keys of upbringing doors») and others.
10. Several books and comments of such scholars as Chagminiy, Taftazoniy, Said Sharif Jurjoni, Giyosiddin Jamshid Koshiy, Kozizoda Rumi were given in the list of manuals in the certificate.
11. «**Talvikhoh at-tavzih**» («Clarifying and commenting the radiance»).
12. «**Takvim al-mezon fi-t-tadil va tarjih**» (« Balance of scales and mending the weight »).
13. «**Minkos al-vusul alai lm al-usul**» («Methods of reaching a real belief»).
14. «**Ihkom al-ahkom muntakhabi muntahil amali va-s-suol**» («Strengthening the last selected hope and wish»).
15. Religious poems of Koran (Ayats).
16. «**Mavoki al-kalom**» («Philosophy of religious belief»).
17. «**Nihol**» («Comments of Hidoya»).

It is seen from given list of scientific, religious and secular works, the great attention was paid to educational process, specialties in the madrassah and lessons was organized according to special order.

## 2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there we can speak about *ilmi nujum* (astronomy) which was a part of astronomy in the curriculum of madrassah Mirzo Ulugbek. *Ilmi nujum* means astrology, forecasting in the Arabian language. This science was devoted to divination according to the sky orbs and was widely spread in the eastern states. That's why, these scholars were invited to teach at the madrassah and several hours were distributed to them. Mirzo Ulugbek specially taught it as an astronomer and named the fourth book "Jadidi Kuragoni" as "Ilmi nujum" (Science of astrology<sup>(4)</sup>).

In other words, the aim of education in madrassahs was to study and to agitate the subjects of that time thoroughly. So, as Mahmudkhuja Behbudi said, «...schools and madrassahs were both "mother of the nation" and main educational institution of enriching the spiritual world of the people».

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