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A NEW STAGE IN THE STUDY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF TURKESTAN SCHOLARS DURING THE PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the new stages in the study of the activities of Turkestan scholars during the period of independence, modern approaches in historiography, and the processes of restoring the national and spiritual heritage. It also highlights the opportunities created during the years of independence for studying the scientific, religious, and educational activities of Turkestan scholars, the work of research centers, and the study of archival and manuscript sources. The article also discusses the reassessment of the heritage of Jadid scholars, the development of international scientific cooperation, and the role of the heritage of scholars in the spiritual education of young people.

Keywords: Turkestan scholars, period of independence, historiography, spiritual heritage, Jadidism, scientific research, manuscripts, religious and educational heritage, national revival, historical sources, Islamic civilization, enlightenment, scientific centers, national values.

During the former Soviet period, a one-sided approach was taken toward religious and educational heritage. However, after independence, broad opportunities were created to restore historical truth, reassess national values, and deeply study the heritage of great scholars. In particular, after Uzbekistan gained



independence, the process of returning to the spiritual roots of the people began. Within this process, the scientific heritage of scholars, thinkers, and religious-educational figures who lived and worked in Turkestan began to be studied at the level of state policy.

The term “Turkestan scholars” refers to scholars who lived in Central Asia and made significant contributions to the development of Islamic sciences, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, Sufism, logic, philosophy, literature, and other fields of knowledge. Among them, such great scholars as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi, Bahauddin Naqshband, Burhanuddin Marginani, Mahmud Zamakhshari, Abu Mansur Maturidi, and Khoja Ahrar Vali occupy a special place. During the years of independence, the scientific and spiritual heritage of these great figures was restored, their works were published, and scientific research was carried out.

During the years of independence, especially after Uzbekistan gained independence, the study of the activities of Turkestan scholars, Jadids, and representatives of the national liberation movement rose to a fundamentally new level. This process was aimed at restoring historical truths that had been prohibited or distorted by the former Soviet ideology and at strengthening national self-awareness.

During the period of independence, the new stages in the study of the activities of scholars are being carried out in the following directions. The activities of Turkestan scholars, including members of Shuroi Ulamo, who were labeled as “reactionaries” and “counter-revolutionaries” during the Soviet period, as well as our Jadid ancestors such as Fitrat, Behbudi, and Cholpon, have been reassessed, and their patriotic services have been recognized. Secret documents and archival materials related to the Jadid movement in Turkestan, the national independence movements of 1917–1924, and the socio-political views of scholars began to be studied.



The activity of the Turkestan Autonomy, established in November 1917 as the Turkestan, or Kokand, Autonomy, and the role of scholars in it, as well as their efforts to build a democratic state, are being scientifically analyzed. The study of the independence movement focuses on the activities of mujahids and scholars who fought against the Soviet regime and sacrificed their lives for the national independence of the people. This movement is being studied not as the "Basmachi movement," but as a national independence movement.

Scientific and educational research during the period of independence has examined the religious and educational heritage of scholars and their views on harmonizing Islam with secular knowledge from a new perspective. As a result of these studies, the socio-political landscape of Turkestan at the beginning of the twentieth century has been reconstructed, and the role of scholars and Jadids in the national awakening has been properly assessed.

From the early years of independence, a new methodological approach was formed in historical science. The activities of Turkestan scholars began to be studied not on the basis of communist ideology, but on the basis of national and religious values. If religious figures were interpreted as "reactionary forces" during the Soviet period, during the period of independence they came to be recognized as great enlighteners who served the spiritual development of the people. This marked a fundamental turning point in historiography.

At the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, many scientific centers and international organizations were established. In particular, the establishment of such scientific institutions as the Imam Bukhari International Scientific Research Center, the Imam Tirmidhi International Scientific Research Center, and the Center of Islamic Civilization has played an important role in the in-depth study of the heritage of Turkestan scholars. In these centers, ancient manuscripts are studied, scientific translations are carried out, and international conferences are organized.



During the period of independence, major changes also took place in the field of source studies. Manuscript works that had previously been kept secret or had not been studied were introduced into scientific circulation. Thousands of manuscripts preserved in the collections of the Institute of Oriental Studies were made available to researchers. As a result, new information about the scientific activities of Turkestan scholars came to light. In particular, works related to hadith, fiqh, Sufism, and kalam sciences have been republished, and their content is being scientifically analyzed.

Moreover, during the years of independence, the number of dissertations, monographs, and scientific articles devoted to the life and activities of Turkestan scholars increased sharply. The teaching of such subjects as Islamic history, source studies, and the history of Sufism in higher education institutions stimulated the development of scientific research. Many young researchers became interested in studying the heritage of Turkestan scholars.

During this period, international scientific cooperation also strengthened. Uzbek scholars have been conducting research in cooperation with scientific centers in Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other countries. As a result, the heritage of Turkestan scholars has become more widely known in world scholarship. In particular, the scientific heritage of such hadith scholars as Imam al-Bukhari and Imam al-Tirmidhi is highly valued at the international level.

During the period of independence, special attention was also paid to the history of Sufi orders in the study of the activities of Turkestan scholars. The role of the Naqshbandi order, the Yasawi school, and other Sufi movements in the spiritual life of society was studied. The views of such Sufi thinkers as Bahauddin Naqshband, Ahmad Yasawi, and Khoja Ahrar Vali on human perfection, morality, and spirituality were reanalyzed from the perspective of the present day.

The study of the activities of Turkestan Jadid scholars also became one of the important directions of the independence period. The contribution of such Jadid



enlighteners as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, Abdulla Avloni, and Abdurauf Fitrat to national awakening and the development of education was widely highlighted. These intellectuals, who had been condemned as “enemies of the people” during the Soviet period, began to be honored as devoted figures of the nation after independence.

Mass media and modern technologies also play an important role in the study of the heritage of Turkestan scholars. Through television programs, documentaries, websites, and electronic libraries, the public is becoming more closely acquainted with the lives of great scholars. This, in turn, increases the younger generation’s interest in national and religious heritage.

In studies conducted during the period of independence, not only the religious activities of Turkestan scholars but also their scientific, philosophical, and educational activities are widely examined. This is because they made major contributions not only to Islamic sciences, but also to the development of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, geography, linguistics, and other fields. In this respect, the scholars of the Turkestan Renaissance are evaluated as important representatives of the development of world civilization.

The study of the activities of Turkestan scholars during the period of independence has become a new stage in historiography. During this period, historical justice was restored, and the heritage of great scholars began to be revalued as an integral part of the spiritual life of the people. The establishment of scientific centers, the study of manuscripts, international cooperation, and modern scientific approaches serve the in-depth study of the heritage of Turkestan scholars. Today, this rich scientific and spiritual heritage remains an important source for educating the younger generation in the spirit of patriotism, enlightenment, and humanism.

During the years of independence, a fundamental shift occurred in the historiography of Uzbekistan. The ideological views that dominated historical



science during the Soviet period began to be replaced by new concepts based on national interests, historical truth, and objectivity. In particular, the formation of new approaches in national historiography changed the people's attitude toward their own history. History is now viewed not merely as a collection of political events, but as an important scientific field that reflects the spiritual life, culture, values, and national identity of the people.

During the Soviet period, historiography was based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. Historical events were evaluated from the perspective of class struggle, while national values and religious heritage were considered secondary. Many historical figures were interpreted as "feudal," "reactionary," or "enemies of the people." After independence, however, the need arose to reconsider history, restore historical truth, and objectively illuminate the rich past of the people. As a result, new methodological approaches were formed in national historiography.

One of the main principles of the new concepts is historical objectivity. Historical events are now being analyzed not one-sidedly, but deeply, on the basis of various sources. Historians seek to present events not under ideological pressure, but through scientific evidence and sources. This has increased the credibility of historical science. For example, if Amir Temur was described as a conqueror during the Soviet period, during the years of independence he was restored as a great statesman, military commander, and patron of science. His activity began to be studied as an important part of the history of national statehood.

Another new approach in national historiography is the civilizational approach. According to this concept, the peoples of Uzbekistan and Turkestan are regarded as an integral part of world civilization. Historical development is analyzed not only through economic relations, but also in connection with culture, science, religion, and spirituality. As a result, the contribution of scholars who lived and worked in Central Asia to the development of world science has been widely

highlighted. In particular, the scientific heritage of great scholars is being studied from a new perspective.

The concept of national statehood has also occupied an important place in historiography. On the basis of this approach, the history of Uzbek statehood began to be studied continuously from ancient times. Previously, the history of the Uzbek people was mainly interpreted in connection with the Russian Empire and the Soviet period. Today, however, ancient states, the Turkic Khaganate, the Samanids, the Karakhanids, the Timurids, and the khanates are also evaluated as important stages in the history of national statehood. This concept has played a major role in restoring the historical memory of the people.

In the new historiography, an objective approach to religious and spiritual heritage has also been formed. During the Soviet period, religious values were interpreted as remnants of the past, whereas after independence, Islamic culture and the heritage of scholars came to be recognized as an important part of national spirituality. The activities of such scholars as Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi, and Bahauddin Naqshband began to be widely studied. The heritage of great scholars is considered an important factor in the spiritual education of the younger generation.

One of the new approaches in national historiography is the increased attention to source studies and archival research. After independence, many archives that had previously been closed were opened. New scientific studies were carried out on the basis of manuscript works, historical documents, and foreign sources. This expanded the source base of historical science. In particular, the study of Oriental manuscripts and sources in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages created new opportunities for historical research.

Anthropological and cultural approaches have also developed in historiography. History is now studied not only as the history of rulers or political events, but also as the history of ordinary people’s lives, customs, culture,

education, and everyday life. This has expanded the scope of historical science and made it possible to study all layers of society.

Furthermore, during the period of independence, a new approach to the study of the Jadid movement was formed. While Jadids were condemned as "nationalists" during the Soviet period, in today's historiography they are evaluated as leaders of national awakening and enlightenment. The activities of Jadids are being widely studied as a movement that called the people toward progress.

Today, an interdisciplinary approach also occupies an important place in historiography. Historical science is developing in close connection with archaeology, ethnology, sociology, political science, and cultural studies. This helps to understand historical processes more deeply. Modern technologies, digital archives, and electronic libraries are also increasing the effectiveness of scientific research.

During the years of independence, new concepts and approaches were formed in national historiography. Principles such as historical objectivity, national statehood, the civilizational approach, source studies, and the restoration of spiritual heritage have given great impetus to the development of historical science. These new concepts are of great importance in shaping the historical consciousness of the people, developing national self-awareness, and educating the younger generation in the spirit of patriotism.

In modern studies, the reassessment of the heritage of Turkestan scholars and enlighteners, particularly during the years of independence, has become one of the most important directions in the process of understanding national identity and restoring historical truth. This process rejects the one-sided views formed during the Soviet period and aims to interpret their scientific, spiritual, and socio-political heritage in a new way.

The reinterpretation of the Jadid movement shows that the heritage of such enlighteners as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi and Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov is



being studied not as the legacy of "bourgeois nationalists," but as the heritage of courageous intellectuals who sought to awaken the nation, establish new-method schools, develop the national press, and promote progress.

The harmony of Sufi and scientific heritage is also reflected in the study of the legacy of Sufi scholars such as Najmiddin Kubro. Their efforts to harmonize Sharia and Tariqa, as well as their role in the struggle against the Mongol invasion as examples of patriotism and spiritual courage, are being emphasized.

Enlightened Islam and reformism occupy a central place in modern interpretations of the services of Turkestan scholars in spreading Islamic enlightenment, promoting religious tolerance, and supporting scientific progress.

Historical sources and reconstruction are being applied in the reassessment of sources related to various stages of Turkic-Islamic history, such as the Karakhanid period, through methods of scientific integration and historical reconstruction.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, fundamental changes took place in national historiography. This process aimed to abandon Soviet ideological pressure and form objective, scientific approaches based on national interests.

For this reason, scientific research related to artificial intelligence, robotics, and information technologies is expanding rapidly. These areas are of great importance in easing human labor, increasing production efficiency, and creating new opportunities.

Another urgent problem in scientific research is the issue of qualified personnel. In some cases, the insufficient interest of young people in science or the departure of experienced specialists abroad leads to a decline in scientific potential. Therefore, encouraging young scientists, involving them widely in scientific activity, and developing scientific schools are important tasks.

The issue of funding is also one of the main problems of scientific research. Conducting scientific investigations requires significant financial resources. If grants and investments are insufficient, scientific projects may remain incomplete.



Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the state and the private sector and increase investment in scientific research.

The weakness of international cooperation in scientific research also creates certain problems. Since modern science has a global character, cooperation with foreign scientific centers, exchange of experience, and implementation of joint projects are of great importance. Today, international conferences, academic exchange programs, and foreign grants have become important factors in scientific development.

In some cases, the lack of connection between scientific research and practice is also a problem. Some scientific works may be valuable from a theoretical point of view, but they are not applied in practical life. Therefore, scientific research must be harmonized with the needs of production, the economy, and society. The practical implementation of the results of innovative research makes a significant contribution to the development of the state.

In conclusion, scientific research is a factor of development for any society. Scientific investigations in modern technologies, ecology, medicine, history, and other fields are an important foundation for future development. At the same time, solving problems related to material and technical resources, funding, qualified personnel, and international cooperation is of great importance for the progress of science. In the future, further development of scientific research, support for innovative ideas, and the creation of broad opportunities for young scientists will remain important factors in the development of the country.

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