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ABDURAUF FITRAT'S VIEWS ON THE DESTINY OF THE HOMELAND AND THE IDEA OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

Sayidov Murot Nomozovich
Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor
Jizzakh State Pedagogical University
murodnamazovich@gmail.com

Abstract
This article examines, from a sociohistorical perspective, the dedicated contributions of Abdurauf Fitrat, a prominent Uzbek enlightener, thinker, and leading representative of the Jadid movement, to the cause of national freedom and independence. It explores how Fitrat regarded the suffering of his homeland as his own and made the struggle for his nation's liberty and independence the central purpose of his life. Particular attention is paid to the expression of national self-awareness in his educational and sociopolitical thought.

Keywords: Abdurauf Fitrat, sorrow for the homeland, national awakening, national liberation, national independence, national self-awareness, enlightenment, patriotism, Jadid movement, firm conviction, human dignity, cradle of the Turkic people, sacrifice for the homeland.

Introduction

Abdurauf Fitrat was one of the leading representatives of national awakening and the renewal of social thought in Turkestan. His views are distinguished by an understanding of social progress as inseparably connected with knowledge and enlightenment, freedom of thought, national self-awareness, and social reform. Fitrat associated the advancement of a people primarily with its level of education, worldview, and active participation in social life. Accordingly, he advocated reforming traditional teaching methods, embracing the achievements of modern science, and educating young people to become independent thinkers with strong moral and spiritual values.

One of the central elements of Fitrat's social thought was the development of national self-awareness and the preservation of the people's spiritual values. He regarded the national language, history, literature, and cultural heritage as the spiritual foundations of the nation and sought to reconcile them with the demands of modern development. At the same time, he did not reduce social progress to the preservation of the past; rather, he connected it with new ways of thinking, civic engagement, and openness to reform.

Fitrat regarded Amir Temur as a great patriot devoted to his nation. He valued the counsel that the Sahibqiran addressed to his children: "It is your duty to remedy the suffering of the nation. Care for the weak; do not abandon the poor to the oppression of the wealthy. Let justice and

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freedom be your guiding principles" [2, p. 61]. Fitrat himself sought to follow these principles. He also called upon the rulers and religious scholars of his time to demonstrate the same devotion to their nation and homeland as Temur had done. He appealed to Amir Temur's spirit for support for his people and country.

Fitrat attributed the backwardness of the Emirate of Bukhara to the indifference of its rulers and officials toward their people and to the absence of unity among different social groups:

"None of the social groups in our Turkestan lives in fraternity with the others. There is division and hostility between the religious scholars and the young, between the young and the wealthy, and between the wealthy and the masses. Even within their own ranks, there is no sign of firm conviction or lasting unity" [4, July 25].

The writer considered the absence of cooperation and solidarity a grave misfortune for a nation, capable of bringing immense suffering and even leading to its disappearance. He also interpreted the Russian conquest of Central Asia as a consequence of this lack of unity. Identifying the tsarist government as the principal beneficiary of divisions within Turkestan, he wrote:

"…The imperial government sincerely wished that the other nations under its rule should remain oppressed and impoverished, never experience prosperity, and live like beggars. Therefore, its task was to intensify our disputes and inflame the divisions among us" [4, July 25].

In developing his ideas about human dignity, Fitrat drew upon the humanistic traditions of Alisher Navoi and Yusuf Khass Hajib. He was particularly influenced by Bedil's teaching that "the most precious being in the world is the human being." He quoted Bedil as follows:

"If a person believes in himself and follows his conscience, he can accomplish any task and attain any truth or aspiration. Whoever fails to revere the dignity of the human being, whoever he may be, is accursed" [7, p. 64].

Fitrat likewise believed in the strength of his people and urged them not to abandon their struggle until independence had been achieved:

"…You rise, you struggle, you retreat, and after a while you raise your head again and illuminate the world—let those who struggle against oppression learn from you" [7, p. 46].

The writer himself struggled tirelessly for the freedom of his homeland. The central concern and guiding idea of his creative work was the achievement of prosperity and spiritual advancement for his nation, homeland, and people.

An important aspect of Fitrat's patriotism was his pride in his country's rich history, great heroes, distinguished culture, and inexhaustible popular heritage. He emphasized that Turan had once been one of the greatest states in the world and had produced scholars of international renown:

"Our Turkestan takes pride in being the cradle of the Turkic people. Is that all? Turkestan produced a Turkic hero such as Temur, one of the last and greatest Turkic sovereigns to safeguard the Islamic realm after the Abbasids. Turkestan also produced such pillars of learning as Abu Ali, Ulugh Beg, al-Jawhari, and al-Farabi, among the greatest scholars who advanced civilization after the Abbasids" [6, pp. 112–138].

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Fitrat grieved over the deplorable condition into which such a great country had fallen in his own time and sought to understand its causes. He expressed his homeland's need for national heroes such as Amir Temur in the following words:

"O glorious cradle of the lineages of Chinggis, Temur, and Oghuz! Where are the heights to which you once ascended? Why have you fallen into the depths of servitude? …Where are your lionhearted sons who shook the world with their battle cries? …Where are your swift and valiant sovereigns? Where are your mounted warriors who advanced like arrows?

"Why has the strength of your empire, which once sheltered humanity beneath its wings, faded away? Have you lost your power? Have you been left without anyone to defend you?" [8, p. 123].

Speaking on behalf of a fragmented and oppressed Turkestan, Fitrat appealed at the tomb of Amir Temur:

"My heart burns, my eyes are darkened, my spirit is broken, and my head is bowed. I have come to visit you, my Sultan! I have come to seek a remedy at your tomb for my bowed head, my constrained conscience, my burning blood, and my tormented soul, my Sovereign!" [5, March 10].

He described to the Sahibqiran the condition of Turan, which had been plundered and impoverished under Russian colonial rule:

"My great Sovereign! The honor of the Turkic people has been plundered… Their dignity, reputation, faith, and conscience have been trampled beneath the feet of tyrants. Their homeland, possessions, hearth, and Turan have fallen into foreign hands. Their identity, consciousness, thought, and discernment have been ensnared by ignorance" [5, March 10].

In his article Yurt qayg'usi ("The Sorrow of the Homeland"), Fitrat portrayed the oppressed and impoverished condition of his country through the voice of a young Uzbek man:

"When I lie down, she appears in my dreams; when I awaken, she is beside me; when I close my eyes, she is in my mind; when I open them, she stands before me—a sorrowful vision. It is the image of a woman… A woman wearing nothing but an old and torn silk dress. Her head and feet are bare, and her arms are covered in dark mud up to the elbows. She has no voice left to cry out and no strength left to escape! …Oh… Now I know… Now I understand! You are my homeland, the sorrowful image of my homeland" [8, p. 23].

In this work, Fitrat personifies the homeland as a sorrowful and humiliated woman. Through her torn and threadbare clothing, bodily wounds, and hands bound by the chains of oppression, he artistically conveys Turkestan's difficult social and political circumstances. These symbolic images represent the country's impoverishment, its subjection to colonial oppression, and the deprivation of its people's freedom and ability to determine their own destiny. Through this portrayal of the homeland, Fitrat exposes social injustice and the devastating consequences of colonial policies that obstructed the people's progress and well-being.

The thinker firmly believed that this situation could be changed. He advanced the idea of restoring Turkestan's historical strength and renewing the glory and achievements associated with the reign of Amir Temur. In Fitrat's interpretation, this aspiration was not merely an expression of nostalgia. It was a moral appeal intended to awaken national pride, strengthen

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the desire for freedom, and deepen responsibility for the country's future. He therefore urged people to unite in the pursuit of national independence and to struggle actively for their homeland's freedom and future.

In Fitrat's patriotic thought, love for the homeland emerges as a profound spiritual sentiment encompassing the entirety of human existence. In his view, concern for the country and its destiny should be reflected in every individual's feelings, thinking, and practical actions. Devotion to the homeland is expressed not only through words but also through a sense of responsibility for its freedom, development, and prosperity, the preservation of national values, and faithful service to the interests of the people. In this respect, the ideas conveyed through Fitrat's image of the homeland have considerable social and spiritual significance for fostering national self-awareness, aspirations for freedom, and a sense of personal responsibility for the country's destiny.

The struggle for the nation's bright future and the independence of the homeland constituted the central purpose of Fitrat's life. He shared in his country's sorrows and joys, cherished it, and placed it above all else. His ideas about patriotism can serve as an important resource for educating young people in a spirit of love for their homeland.

The great philosopher Hegel stated: "The true courage of enlightened peoples is reflected in their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the homeland" [3, p. 3].

In conclusion, Abdurauf Fitrat—a versatile writer, an enlightened thinker, and a devoted advocate of national liberation—may be regarded as one of the national heroes who influence historical processes in the sense described by Hegel. Through his scholarly and literary legacy, sociopolitical views, and practical activities, he made a substantial contribution to the national self-awareness, spiritual awakening, and aspirations for freedom of the people of Turkestan. For Fitrat, the destiny of the homeland was a sacred value that transcended personal interests, while the freedom of the country and the prosperity of its people became the guiding aims of his life.

The thinker's life and work demonstrate his fidelity to his convictions and his willingness to place the ideals of national independence above personal safety. He understood the struggle for the freedom of the homeland not only as a political objective but also as a profound moral duty. His conception of "dying for the homeland as the very meaning of living" expresses his patriotic commitment, his sense of responsibility for the people's destiny, and his deep faith in national freedom.

Although Fitrat's life ended tragically, his ideas of enlightenment and national liberation left an enduring mark on history. His legacy remains important for educating younger generations in loyalty to their homeland, respect for national values, independent thinking, and responsibility for the country's future. In this sense, Abdurauf Fitrat stands not only as a great advocate of enlightenment in his own era but also as a historical figure whose dedication to national liberation and spiritual awakening continues to serve as an example for subsequent generations.

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