

The Influence of Modern Concepts that Emerged at the End of the 19th Century on the Social Life of the Turkestan Region

Yakhyo Abdurakhmanov Ubaydulloyevich*

Independent Researcher at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

*Correspondence: Yakhyo
Abdurakhmanov Ubaydulloyevich
Email:
yahyoabdurahmonov.tii@gmail.com

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to analyze the emergence and influence of modern concepts that appeared at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries on the social, political, and intellectual life of the Turkestan region. Using a qualitative historical-analytical method, the research examines how modernist ideas—originating in the Muslim world, particularly from reformist movements in Egypt, Turkey, and India—were adapted by local intellectuals and Jadid reformers to promote social transformation. The study draws on historical documents, scholarly works, and reformist writings to assess how modernization affected education, law, political thought, and national consciousness among the peoples of Turkestan. The results show that the spread of reformist thought led to the rise of new educational systems, increased political awareness, and the development of socio-religious reforms that bridged traditional Islamic principles with modern rationalist ideas. The study concludes that these reformist concepts played a key role in shaping the intellectual and cultural revival of Turkestan, laying the foundation for national awakening and modern identity formation in Uzbekistan and Central Asia.*

Keywords: *Modernization, Jadidism, Turkestan, Islamic Reform, Socio-cultural*

Transformation

Introduction

As a result of the influence of modern (new) concepts that emerged in the Muslim world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reformist and Jadids movements also arose in the Turkestan region with the aim of finding solutions to highly relevant and important religious and social issues. Paying attention to the role of the Jadid movement in the development of Uzbek society, and thoroughly and comprehensively studying its socio-religious and national-spiritual significance, is one of the crucial factors in determining the present and future socio-political development objectives of the Renewing Uzbekistan.

In his interview with the newspaper New Uzbekistan, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of the Republic of Uzbekistan clarified what is meant by the concepts of the Third Renaissance and New Uzbekistan:

At the beginning of the last century, our patriotic and nationalistic ancestors courageously entered the field of struggle under the banner of Jadidism, that is, renewal and freedom, justice and equality, knowledge and enlightenment, and the understanding of national identity,” said the President. He added: “The goal of these great individuals was

to arm the people of Turkestan, who had long remained in the grip of ignorance and backwardness, with secular science, advanced crafts, and professions, and to bring them onto the path of global development. The new-method schools, theaters, libraries, museums, newspapers, and magazines established by the Jadids, as well as charitable societies organized to send the youth of Turkestan to study abroad, awakened our people from centuries-long slumber and gave them immense strength in the fight for national independence.

Methodology

The Jadid movement, which had a significant influence on the socio-cultural life of the Turkestan region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is still being widely studied by scholars as a subject of multidisciplinary research.

Among the Uzbek historians who contributed to the study of national liberation struggles, public movements during the Kokand Khanate, and their socio-economic consequences—including issues such as the “monoculture of cotton” in agriculture—are B. Ahmedov (1924–2002), A. Asqarov (1935 y.), H. Ziyoyev (1923–2015), R. Shamsutdinov, H. Sodiqov (1943 y.), and H. Bobobekov (1941 y.). These scholars have also addressed various topics related to the history of the Turkestan region.

In works devoted to the history of Turkestan during the colonial period under Tsarist Russia, it is understood that the stagnation in the region resulted from excessive institutionalization led by the clergy of Islam, which once had been dynamic and unified. Historical research emphasizes that Jadid representatives saw the path forward in adapting modern cultural elements to the foundations of Islamic society, primarily through public education and significant part of their activities focused on reforming schools.

F. M. Nuriakhmetova, in her article “The Main Ideas of Muslim Reformism: Religious Traditions and Innovations,” highlights the historical importance of the reformist process, stating: The historical significance of reformism lies in the fact that it laid the foundation for the original conceptual approaches of Islam, allowing the Muslim world to define the prospects for both religious and secular reforms.

The national awakening that occurred in our region during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century manifested itself in the form of *Jadidism*, which lasted until the mid-1920s.

The socio-cultural and educational movements that began globally by the late 19th and early 20th centuries also reached Bukhara, Khiva, and Turkestan and these movements began to influence, first, the socio-cultural life of the region and, second, the religious-legal system of the Muslim society.

The modern concepts that emerged in Turkestan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries can be categorized as follows:

- a. Concepts that influenced the political and economic system of Muslim society;
- b. Concepts that influenced the educational and ideological system of Muslim society;
- c. Concepts that affected the self-awareness and political consciousness of members of Muslim society;

- d. Concepts that influenced the national ideology and worldview of members of Muslim society;
- e. Concepts that influenced the religious-legal (*fiqh*) system of Muslim society.
 - i. **Modern concepts affecting the political-economic system of Muslim society** arose in the late 19th century due to several key historical events. These included the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881, the British control of Egypt in 1882, the eventual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and the resulting transition of most Muslim-majority regions into European colonial hands. The defeats of Muslim countries in military conflicts with European and Russian powers turned these countries into arenas of military, political, and economic expansion. Governments in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Iran, and India were forced to grant major privileges to European traders, bankers, and industrialists, severely undermining the economic independence of Muslim states.
 - ii. **The modern concepts that influenced the educational and ideological system of Muslim society** can be understood, on one hand, as the result of state leaders initiating reforms aimed at changing the systems of institutions, traditions, and the overall religious-social order within their societies—motivated by the hope of quickly adapting to ongoing political and economic changes and not falling behind. On the other hand, these concepts also emerged as a result of various ideas and groups arising among members of the society.

For example, in the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Ottomanist reformers who sought to eliminate the gap between tradition and modernity led to the development of ideas such as establishing a national constitution, a parliamentary system, and uniting various ethnic, religious, and social groups. Groups also emerged that advocated for finding a point of convergence between Western and Eastern political thought. At the same time, another group of reformers took shape—those who completely rejected interference in the religious system and insisted on not deviating from the traditional forms of the 'Revival of Islam.'

In Egypt, unlike the traditional religious scholars (*ulama*), a new group of intellectuals emerged who were educated in European universities and were fluent in several European languages. In response to European military, economic, and intellectual aggressions, reformers within this group advocated for a fundamental renewal (*tajdid*) of Islamic legal and theological concepts, calling for the reform of traditional Islamic knowledge through the path of *ijtihad*.

Thus, various factors led to the emergence of these movements. Some reformers, who understood the necessity for change but completely rejected any interference in the religious system, did not stray from the traditional forms of 'Revival of Islam.' Others, who were raised in the spirit of Islamic teachings, sought a path that would integrate religious norms in building the ideal Muslim society they envisioned, reflecting the moods and hopes of the majority. As a result of these efforts, the need to adapt rational approaches to the Quran and Hadith to contemporary views became evident.

- iii. **Modern concepts affecting the self-awareness and political consciousness** of members of Muslim society included ideas that challenged traditional interpretations of Sharia and supported the integration of modern political structures.

One of the most notable developments was the formation of a class of muftis and scholars who strongly believed in the importance of constitutions and parliaments. They disagreed with the view that “the concepts of constitution and parliament are foreign to Sharia,” and instead argued that in case of disagreement, priority should be given to *maslahah* (public interest). There also emerged a group of intellectuals who believed that Muslims needed to learn modern sciences from Europeans. They argued that the backwardness of Muslims and their lack of knowledge was the primary reason why Europeans had gained superiority over them. These intellectuals also supported progressive views regarding the use of substances like alcohol in medicine, chemistry, pharmaceuticals, and perfumery, basing their arguments on rational and legal reasoning.

Jasser Auda, in his book “Maqasid Al-Shariah: A Beginner’s Guide”, notes that Rashid Rida held great hopes for constitutional and parliamentary reform. He strongly opposed traditional views that rejected these concepts as incompatible with Islamic law. Rida issued fatwas (religious rulings) supporting the view that in cases of conflict, public welfare (*maslahah*) should prevail over literal texts.

According to Auda, Rida advocated for the study of modern sciences, believing that the ignorance of Muslims served as a weapon in the hands of Europeans. Although Rida’s progressive ideas—especially his permissive views on alcohol use in various scientific fields—were considered too controversial by many traditional scholars, his emphasis on reform and modernization left a significant impact on Muslim thought.

Auda also examines the intellectual roots of the Muslim reform movement that emerged in the Arab world during the 19th and 20th centuries. He explores the views of scholars such as Imam Ghazali, Najmuddin Tufi, and Al-Shatibi regarding the implementation of Sharia objectives (*maqasid al-shariah*) and how these views influenced the search for solutions to the socio-political and economic crises of that era.

In Auda’s opinion, the need to reconsider traditional Islamic jurisprudence arose from the ideological decline in Muslim societies and the political crises facing Muslim states, especially as they encountered European-style modernization. The social and political transformations that began in the 18th century enabled European countries to surpass others globally, leading to their dominance in international affairs.

- iv. **Modern concepts affecting the national ideology and worldview of Muslim society** were shaped by global events and shifts in power, particularly involving Egypt and Europe.

The ceremonial opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought Egypt into the spotlight of European newspapers and international diplomacy. This event increased Western attention toward Egypt, but it also exposed the country's fragile economic situation. During the rule of the Khedives, who nominally answered to the Turkish Sultan and lacked true sovereign power, Egypt fell deep into debt. These debts were incurred as private loans from European banks and companies, with interest rates that were often significantly increased. The growing financial burden drastically worsened Egypt's economic and social conditions.

To remedy the situation, Khedive Ismail decided to sell Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal. This act symbolized the broader reality: Muslim-majority countries were becoming increasingly dependent on the West, both financially and politically. These experiences pushed Muslim intellectuals and reformers to rethink their societal structures and cultural identities.

In his work *Al-Wahyu al-Muhammadi*, Rashid Rida promoted the idea of the "Purposes of the Qur'an" (*Maqasid al-Qur'an*). He emphasized that the pillars of faith (*iman*) needed to be reformed and better understood by the public. According to Rida: "Islam is a religion of great morality, knowledge, wisdom, and meaning. It is a religion that leads to social, political, and economic reforms, and also defends the rights and freedoms of women."

Such views reflected the rising awareness that Islam could serve not only as a spiritual system but also as a framework for national renewal and resistance to colonial domination.

Result and Discussion

Modern concepts affecting the religious-legal (*fiqh*) system of Muslim society emerged from reformers who began to promote the idea that Sharia laws were intended not to burden human life, but to ease it. These reformers criticized the traditional approach of strictly imitating classical methods of acquiring religious knowledge and instead advocated for the use of contemporary *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) as a more suitable and effective method for modern times.

One of the pioneers of these reformist ideas was Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), who proposed that conflicts among various Islamic theological schools (such as Ash'arism and Maturidism) and sects (such as the Mu'tazilites, Qadarites, and Ja'farites) could be resolved by following a middle path. In debates over whether to prioritize reason (*'aql*) or revelation (*naql*), Abduh favored reason, arguing that anything that could be understood rationally should be interpreted using appropriate methods of interpretation (*ta'wil*).

Muhammad Abdu placed the principle of "Maslahah" (public interest) at the core of his legal philosophy. According to him, God provided broad principles in the Qur'an that guide human conduct, but it was up to people to use their intellect to derive practical rulings through *ijtihad* for new questions arising in changing social conditions.

Based on these ideas, Abdu proposed that religious rulings (fatwas) should prioritize public welfare and benefit. He also advocated for the “*talfiq*” method, which involves drawing from multiple legal schools (madhhabs) when issuing fatwas. Although traditional scholars and experienced jurists often opposed this method, Abdu continued to apply it as part of his broader reform agenda.

He believed that the extensive experience accumulated by the four major Sunni madhhabs over centuries could serve as a rich resource for modern Muslims to solve contemporary problems and counter Western hegemony. The generation of reformers who followed Muhammad Abd al-Muhammad has continued to develop the principle of “*Maslaha*” and the theory of “*Maqasid al-Shari'a*” to this day. Based on this, it can be said that modern Muslim thinkers, social scientists, economists, and jurists consider the theory of “the aims of the Sharia” to be the main way to reform Islamic law and modernize Muslim society.

Following Abdu, his famous student Rashid Rida expanded upon these ideas. Rida believed that if “*fiqh*” methodology were reorganized based on the universal principles of “*Maslahah*”, it would help establish justice in society, eliminate inter-madhab conflicts in Egypt, and strengthen unity among Muslims. Even today, the new generation of reformers continues to develop the principles of “*Maslahah*” and the theory of “*Maqasid al-Shari'a*”. Thus, contemporary Muslim thinkers, sociologists, economists, and jurists see the theory of Sharia objectives as a central path for reforming Islamic law and modernizing Muslim societies.

To this day, the impact of the Jadid movement on the socio-cultural life of the region continues to be the subject of extensive scholarly research across various academic fields.

The modern concepts that entered the Muslim world as a result of Western economic and political progress in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought about significant reformist ideas aimed at transforming the Sharia-based legal systems in the territories of Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khiva. These concepts also triggered intellectual and ideological changes, giving rise to a new wave of educational and cultural renewal.

These new concepts led to major transformations in the lives of Muslims in the Turkestan region—changes that had never occurred before. The resulting reformist sentiments found their way into local society through various means and channels:

1. Direct learning from key figures of the Arab reformist movements who themselves championed these new ideas;
2. Indirect education via disciples and intellectuals who had studied under the founding thinkers of Arab reformism;
3. Engagement with reformist publications—reading periodicals published in Arabic that promoted reformist discourse.

Conclusion

In general, by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the ideas of the “Young Turks” and the growing global interconnectedness—especially through the

influence of Western culture and modern teaching methods—began penetrating Bukhara, Khiva, and the Turkestan region.

These reformist movements did not leave the intellectual class of Turkestan indifferent. On the contrary, they led to an elevated stage of development in the socio-religious, cultural, and educational spheres of society. In this context, expanding and analyzing the efforts of intellectuals who actively disseminated these progressive ideas and contributed to development through practical action has become an increasingly important and timely area of scholarly research.

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