

Teaching Methods And Educational Textbooks In Jadid Schools

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Abstract

This article discusses the teaching methods applied in the *usul-i jadid* (new-method) schools established by the Turkestan enlighteners at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. It describes the stages of organizing these schools, the instructional forms implemented at each stage, as well as the condition and content of the textbooks used by the enlighteners for teaching.

Keywords: Kalam al-Sharif, *usul-i jadid*, *qozikhana* (traditional school), Gasprinskiy, Saidrasul Aziziy, Ismail Gasprinskiy.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, reform movements in the field of education began to emerge in the Muslim regions under Russian rule. As is well known, these movements came to be recorded in history under the name “*Usul-i Jadid*” (the New Method). The enlightened supporters of this movement, known as the *Jadids*, sought to introduce certain reforms in schools and madrasahs that would align with the spirit of the time while preserving national identity.

These reforms included the development of unified curricula and textbooks for schools, the teaching of secular subjects—such as history, geography, arithmetic, and natural science—alongside religious disciplines, reducing the dominance of religious authorities, and ensuring that qualified teachers conducted instruction. The *Jadid* movement also aimed to organize the educational process based on the European model, which implied creating and teaching textbooks in the native language, and incorporating foreign languages (especially Russian) as well as secular sciences into the curriculum.

The enlightened *Jadids*, who clearly understood the necessity of such reforms, took the initiative to launch this educational movement.

In a letter addressed to F. Kerensky, Chief Inspector of Schools of the Turkestan

Region under the Minister of Public Education, it was stated that any local resident wishing to establish a school must first accept Russian citizenship, obtain a primary school teacher’s certificate from the education department, and receive permission to teach according to their proposed school plan and to conduct administrative affairs within the department. Permission to open private schools was thus granted under various conditions, including information about the age and number of pupils, the location of the school, and the subjects to be taught.

However, such educational institutions were allowed to operate only in cities where learning the Russian language was mandatory. Although the Directorate of Educational Institutions of the Turkestan Region had not developed a separate regulation concerning the establishment of new-method (*usul-i jadid*) schools, Tsarist officials managed these schools based on the existing rules governing confessional (traditional religious) schools. Consequently, proposals to open new-method schools could only be implemented through petitions submitted to local educational departments.

The foreign researcher S. Chatterjee, in his analysis of educational reforms in Central Asia, emphasized that the activities of the *Jadids* in the field of educational reform

were carried out with consideration for the region's historical and cultural roots. According to him, during this period, the influence of Islam on education had significantly declined; Islamic subjects were mainly assigned moral and ethical functions, while the main focus of education shifted toward mathematics, foreign languages, philosophy, and practical disciplines such as calligraphy [4].

The *Jadid* schools were primarily elementary institutions, though in some cases they included a two-stage system of education. The *usul-i jadid* schools established across the region were not unified under a single central authority; therefore, they lacked a standardized curriculum, teaching methodology, or a common syllabus. Each school's organization and instruction were largely based on the founder's personal knowledge and experience.

For example, in the school founded by one of the leading *Jadid* educators, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, instruction was carried out in two stages: the first stage was the *ibtidoiy* (elementary) level, and the second was the *rushdiya* (secondary) level. Each stage consisted of four grades, making a total of eight classes.

In the first year of the *ibtidoiy* stage, students were taught to read and write in Persian and Arabic scripts, memorized surahs from the Qur'an, and studied basic arithmetic. In the second year, lessons in *haftiyak* (weekly readings), faith (*iman*) and belief (*i'tiqod*) were introduced, alongside poetry and qasidas in Persian, Turkic, and Arabic. In the third year, students studied the Holy Qur'an, Islamic worship (*ibodat*), *tajwid* (rules of Qur'anic recitation), moral lessons from Sa'di's works, and received thorough instruction in Persian and Turkic languages, which included essay writing. Arithmetic lessons continued, with additional instruction in calculation, distribution, and record keeping.

In the fourth year, subjects included *Kalam al-Sharif* (Islamic theology), advanced *tajwid*, Persian and Turkic prose and poetry, ethics, Turkic and Persian languages, arithmetic, history, and geography.

Students who completed this level of education acquired basic knowledge and, if they wished, could continue their studies in the second stage (*rushdiya*). They were also qualified to work in positions requiring elementary educational competence. However, the subjects taught in the second stage—the *rushdiya* level—were more advanced and the learning process was of a deeper and more analytical nature compared to the elementary stage.

For instance, in the *rushdiya* section of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi's school, the first-year curriculum included Arabic language, geography, oral composition (*shifohiya*), Persian language, concise translation exercises (*tarjima jumla mukhtasar*), the *History of the Prophets* (*Tarikh-i Anbiya*), Islamic history, Sa'di's *Gulistan*, and the Turkic language.

In the second year of study, subjects such as Arabic language, oral composition (*shifahiya*), history, Islamic studies, ethics, Turkic language, arithmetic, and Persian writing were taught. In the third stage, students studied Arabic, arithmetic, penmanship, history, Turkic language, and Russian. In the fourth year, the curriculum included Arabic, Russian administrative correspondence (*qozikhona* writing), Turkic language and literature, health and hygiene, "School and Life," "Morality Without Love and Affection," and many other lessons related to everyday life [7].

The schools established by the *Jadids* were open to all social strata. The lessons were organized in accordance with European educational standards, while maintaining national and religious values. At the same time, special attention was given to the teaching of modern sciences.

For the newly established *usul-i jadid* schools, there were no libraries or printing houses to supply textbooks. Moreover, it was inconvenient to use textbooks published in other countries, such as those in Tatar or Kazakh. Therefore, the authors of teaching manuals and textbooks for these schools were the *Jadid* enlighteners themselves, who guided both instruction and the organization of lessons.

In 1898, Ismail Gasprinski published the book “*Rahbariy Muallimin yoki Muallimlarga Yo’ldosh*” (*Teacher’s Guide or Companion for Teachers*) at the *Tarjimon* printing house. The book served as a manual for teachers of the new-method schools. In it, Gasprinski outlined the organization of *usul-i jadid* schools, their instructional processes, and the differences between the new and old methods. He emphasized: “*It is necessary to enhance the competence of teachers and to reform the old-method schools for the benefit of the nation. For this, everyone must acknowledge that the new method is superior to the old one in every respect.*”

“We had never realized until now how much precious time we had wasted in the old schools. Of course, this was not our fault. But now that we understand the reasons and have gained confidence in the superiority of the new method over the old, to ignore all of this would be a great sin before God and before the nation,” Ismailbey remarked.

In this manual for teachers, Gasprinskiy thoroughly outlined the principles of the new method, enumerating them in detail. The educational process was to be conducted continuously and systematically according to the following guidelines: a maximum of 30 students per class; grouping students by proficiency levels; admitting students twice a year, at the beginning and middle of the academic year; opening new classes for newly admitted students; 4–5 hours of lessons per day; 6 school days per week;

10-minute breaks between lessons; preparing a timetable covering various subjects; avoiding overloading students with memorization of different texts, and so on.

To facilitate the practical application of the *usul-i jadid*, Gasprinskiy prepared and published textbooks for primary classes. The textbook he created consisted of four parts, arranged progressively from simple to complex. Each lesson built on the previous one, making it easier for students to grasp the material. Overcoming Islamic conservatism, Gasprinskiy included illustrations of objects, animals, birds, and insects to make each topic more comprehensible to children. This textbook was titled “*Xo’jai Sibyon*”. On the cover, a large inscription read: “*Parents are responsible for the illiteracy of their children.*”

The first part of the textbook begins with the alphabet. Once students are familiar with letters, the teacher demonstrates writing techniques. Students learn reading and writing simultaneously. To aid memorization, each letter is written in large print and accompanied by a picture of an object or animal that begins with that letter. There are 27 dedicated lessons for learning the alphabet. After mastering all the letters, students proceed to reading short stories. Upon completing the stories, they begin learning the basics of Arabic, which is taught in 13 lessons.

The second part of the textbook carries the inscription on its cover: “*A Special Textbook for Learning the Turkic Language.*” This section begins with the topic “*Mother Tongue and Basics of Arabic.*” The author emphasizes that children must fully comprehend the given texts, not just read them superficially.

The third part is titled “*Teaching Reading and Useful Messages.*” For reading practice, the following texts are recommended: “*Crimea,*” “*Peoples of the*

World, “*Trust,*” “*Morality,*” “*The Shepherd’s Daughter*” (poem), “*The Donkey and the Nightingale,*” “*The Ant and the Grasshopper,*” “*The Hardworking Child,*” “*From the History of Russia,*” “*Volcano,*” “*The Fox and the Crane,*” “*The Crimean Khanate,*” “*Two Russian Children,*” “*A Voyage by Boat,*” “*We Must Learn.*”

The fourth part bears the same title as the previous one and includes the following texts: “*The Green Island of Crimea*” (poem), “*The Captive and the Lion,*” “*Two Great Poets*” (Navoi and Pushkin), “*The People of Russia,*” “*From the Northern Countries,*” “*The Sea and Its Waves,*” and “*Hoja Nasreddin*” (jokes) [2].

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were more than ten alphabet textbooks in Uzbek for the new-method schools. Among the most popular were Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov’s “*Adibi Avval*” (1907), Abdulla Avloni’s “*Birinchi Muallim*” (1912), Rustambek Yusufbek’s “*Ta’limiy Avval*” (1912), Muxtor Bakir’s “*Savod*” (1913), and Saidrizo Alizoda’s “*Birinchi Yil*” (1917). These textbooks, widely used in Uzbek-language new-method schools in Turkestan, were written according to the new teaching method, *usuli savtiya*. The first work written in this method was “*Ustodi Avval*”, authored by Saidrasul Aziziy from Tashkent.

The textbook was designed in a pedagogical and literary style, intended for first-grade students. “*Ustoz Avval*” can be conceptually divided into three groups:

1. Stories and poems authored by Saidrasul Aziziy, including: “*Cleanliness,*” “*Respect for Mother,*” “*The Wise Son,*” “*The Fool,*” “*Ignorance,*” “*The Way of the Snake,*” and “*Several Friends Made by Strangers.*”

2. The second group includes stories written using Eastern sources, such as classical Uzbek literature and examples of oral folk creativity: “*School,*” “*Rude,*” “*Beggar,*” “*The Wise Man,*” “*Character and Manners,*” “*Knowledge,*” “*Virtue.*”

3. Translations from classical Russian literature also occupy an important place in the textbook, including: “*The Fox and the Grape,*” “*The Village and Its Child,*” “*The Lying Shepherd,*” and “*Motherland Russia*” [3]. A careful examination of this textbook reveals a remarkable blend of personal creativity, national identity, and relevance to contemporary times.

Another bright figure among the Jadid reformers, a founder of the *usuli jadid* school, teacher, and textbook author, was Abdulqodir Shakuri. His student from Samarkand, Ismatullo Rahmatullo, authored the textbook “*Alifbe Ta’limi*” (Teaching the Alphabet), which consists of 46 pages and is designed for 90 hours of lessons. For many years, this textbook served as a useful and meaningful guide for literacy in Uzbek and Tajik languages written in the Arabic script.

On the cover of the book, the following statements are written in large letters: “*The sin of an ignorant child lies on the parents. Knowledge is light; ignorance is darkness.*” Through their textbooks, the Jadids promoted the idea of educating the people, spreading enlightenment, and seeking paths to progress. They emphasized that one of the parents’ duties is to encourage their child to study and increase literacy.

The textbook begins with easy-to-learn sounds and letters and gradually moves on to more complex texts. The alphabet is divided into three sections. Initially, the forms of letters in the old Uzbek script (based on Arabic script) at the beginning, middle, and end of words are presented. Each letter is supplemented with words and phrases for reinforcement. From page 10 (lesson 26), small sentences are introduced for the students [6].

Moreover, the textbooks being created paid special attention not only to explaining general rules in a simple way but also included short moral-educational poems and stories.

Another key figure in the Jadid school reform movement, who firmly embarked on school reform and is revered as “*the father of Central Asian Jadids*,” was Mahmudxo’ja Behbudiy.

Through his efforts, in 1903 new schools were established around Samarkand in the villages of Halvoyi (S. Siddiqiy) and Rajabamin (A. Shakuriy). The writer (Mahmudxo’ja Behbudiy) began creating textbooks for these schools and subsequently became the author of several works, including “*Risolayi asbobi savod*” (1904), “*Risolayi jug’rofiyayi umroniy*” (1905), “*Risolayi jug’rofiyayi Rusiy*” (1905), “*Kitobatul aftol*” (1908), “*Amaliyoti Islom*” (1908), and “*Tarixi Islom*” (1909) [1].

Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxonov is considered among the early leaders of the Jadid reform movement. He laid the foundation for a two-year *Rushdiya* school, which was considered innovative at the time, and made education in these schools fee-based. Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxonov himself developed curricula and textbooks for the Jadid schools. Among his works were:

- “*Adibi Avval*” – Alphabet textbook (1907)
- “*Adibi Soniy*” (1907) – Reading book
- “*Yer Yuzi*” (1908) – Geography textbook for grades 3-4
- “*Havoyiji Diniya*”, “*Til Saboqlari*” (1925) – language lessons
- “*Tajvid*” – rules for reading the Quran
- “*Sabzavor*” – literary collection

These textbooks were repeatedly published and widely circulated [1]. Between 1901 and 1917, each textbook was published at least two or three times, and some up to nine or ten times separately [5].

However, it is important to note that these achievements were not easily accomplished. At that time, the political climate made such extensive educational initiatives highly challenging and required significant courage. Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxonov and other Jadid

reformers faced opposition from two main sources: first, the colonial Soviet authorities, and second, some religious scholars who resisted modernization and innovation. Regardless of the intensity of these obstacles, the reformers anticipated such challenges in advance and carefully mapped out their strategy for educational and social progress.

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