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CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL SPIRITUALITY AND MORAL EDUCATION IN THE WORKS OF ABDULLA AVLONI

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Abstract:

This article examines the conceptual foundations of national spirituality and moral education in the works of Abdulla Avloni, one of the leading Jadid educators of early 20th-century Turkestan. Drawing on his pedagogical texts such as *Turkiy Guliston yoxud Axloq* (“Turkic Gulistan or Morality”), *Birinchi Muallim* (“First Teacher”) and *Ikkinchi Muallim* (“Second Teacher”), the study analyzes how Avloni integrates national values, religious–ethical principles, and modern knowledge into a unified educational ideal. His views are considered in the broader Jadid movement, which sought to harmonize national and universal values, promote enlightenment, and form a morally upright, patriotic generation. The article argues that Avloni’s synthesis of morality, spirituality, and national consciousness represents a systematic concept of character education grounded in national culture yet open to global civilization. It also highlights the contemporary relevance of these ideas for the moral and spiritual upbringing of youth in “New Uzbekistan,” where the Jadid heritage is seen as a key resource for strengthening national identity and preventing moral and ideological crisis.



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Keywords: Abdulla Avloni, national spirituality, moral education, Jadid pedagogy, national values, youth upbringing, enlightenment, patriotism.

Аннотация:

В статье рассматриваются концептуальные основы национального духовного и нравственного воспитания в трудах Абдуллы Авлони, одного из ведущих джадидских педагогов начала XX века в Туркестане. Опираясь на его педагогические тексты, такие как *Turkiy Guliston yoxud Axloq* («Туркский Гулистан или Нравственность»), *Birinchi Muallim* («Первый Учитель») и *Ikkinchi Muallim* («Второй Учитель»), исследование анализирует, как Авлони интегрирует национальные ценности, религиозно-этические принципы и современные знания в единый образовательный идеал. Его взгляды рассматриваются в контексте более широкого движения джадидов, которое стремилось гармонизировать национальные и универсальные ценности, продвигать просвещение и формировать морально upright поколение с патриотическими убеждениями. В статье утверждается, что синтез Авлони морали, духовности и национального самосознания представляет собой систематическую концепцию воспитания характера, основанную на национальной культуре, но открытой к глобальной цивилизации. Также подчеркивается современная актуальность этих идей для нравственного и духовного воспитания молодежи в «Новой Узбекистане», где наследие джадидов рассматривается как ключевой ресурс для укрепления национальной идентичности и предотвращения морального и идеологического кризиса.



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Ключевые слова: Абдулла Авлони, национальная духовность, нравственное воспитание, джадидская педагогика, национальные ценности, воспитание молодежи, просвещение, патриотизм.

Introduction

National education in Central Asia has historically been formed on the basis of moral values and cultural traditions accumulated over centuries. These values have long served as the foundation for nurturing the younger generation in the spirit of national consciousness, patriotism, and humanism [1][8]. They encompass a wide range of social and ethical norms, including respect for elders, community solidarity, honesty, diligence, and a sense of responsibility toward society. Such values not only foster individual character development but also contribute to the cohesion and continuity of the society as a whole.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadid movement emerged as a driving force for educational modernization, advocating a synthesis of traditional moral education with contemporary knowledge and pedagogical practices. Among the key figures of this movement, Abdulla Avloni played a pivotal role in rethinking national education. He sought to harmonize centuries-old cultural and ethical values with modern schooling, print culture, and the ideals of enlightenment, emphasizing critical thinking, literacy, and moral development as inseparable components of education [1][2][3][4].

Avloni's approach was notable for its holistic conception of education, where intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions were integrated. He believed that a truly educated individual is not only knowledgeable but also morally upright and socially responsible, capable of contributing positively to both the nation and humanity at large. His educational philosophy emphasized the importance of



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cultivating virtues such as integrity, empathy, diligence, and civic consciousness alongside formal knowledge, thereby fostering well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

This article focuses on Avloni's conceptual approach to national spirituality and moral education, examining its principles, historical context, and practical implementation. Furthermore, it explores the enduring significance of his ideas for contemporary educational reforms in Central Asia, particularly initiatives aimed at forming spiritually rich, socially responsible youth who are both rooted in their national heritage and equipped to navigate global challenges [7][3][8]. By revisiting Avloni's legacy, educators and policymakers can draw valuable insights for developing curricula that balance ethical cultivation with intellectual advancement, ensuring the holistic development of future generations.

Abdulla Avloni emphasized that education should not be limited to the mere transmission of knowledge but must also nurture the moral and spiritual development of the individual. According to him, the unity of education, morality, and national spirit forms the core of a truly holistic pedagogical approach. In his view, an educated person is one who possesses intellectual competence, ethical integrity, and a deep sense of belonging to their nation and culture [2][3][4].

Avloni argued that moral education should be intertwined with intellectual training. For instance, lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic were not only means to develop cognitive skills but also opportunities to instill virtues such as honesty, diligence, and respect for others. He believed that the cultivation of character and intellect simultaneously would produce socially responsible individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities [3][7].

Moreover, Avloni stressed the importance of connecting national spirituality with contemporary knowledge. He encouraged the study of literature, history, and the



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arts as expressions of the nation's soul, while also advocating for engagement with modern science and global culture. This dual focus enabled students to appreciate their own heritage while being prepared to navigate and contribute to a rapidly modernizing world [1][2][8].

In essence, Avloni's pedagogical philosophy embodies the principle that education must cultivate both the mind and the heart. National values, spiritual consciousness, and ethical norms serve as the guiding framework, while universal knowledge and scientific literacy provide tools for practical and intellectual empowerment. Such a synthesis, Avloni maintained, was essential for forming well-rounded individuals who are capable of moral reasoning, civic responsibility, and meaningful participation in society [1][3][4][7].

Abdulla Avloni is widely recognized as a poet, playwright, journalist, teacher, and one of the major Jadid educators in Turkestan [2][4][5]. His pedagogical legacy is concentrated in seminal works such as *Turkiy Guliston yoxud Axloq* ("Turkic Gulistan or Morality"), *Birinchi Muallim* ("First Teacher"), *Ikkinchi Muallim* ("Second Teacher"), and *Gulistoni maktab* ("School Gulistan") [2][4]. These texts collectively present a systematic program of moral, intellectual, and national education, reflecting Avloni's vision of a comprehensive and integrated educational process.

Central to Avloni's philosophy is the unity of education and upbringing. He argued that intellectual development alone is insufficient; without moral formation, education remains incomplete. The ultimate aim, he maintained, is to cultivate a "perfect human being" endowed not only with knowledge but also with ethical character and social responsibility [2][3].

Equally important is the centrality of the teacher in this process. Avloni emphasized that a teacher's intellectual breadth, knowledge, and moral integrity



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are crucial in shaping the student’s personality. The teacher, in his view, must embody virtues such as patience, humility, self-discipline, conscientiousness, and love for the homeland, serving as a living exemplar of the values imparted in the classroom [2][3].

Another cornerstone of Avloni’s pedagogical approach is the mother tongue as a carrier of national spirituality. For Jadid reformers, the native language was the primary medium through which the “national spirit and national consciousness enter with the mother’s milk.” Consequently, teaching in one’s mother tongue was not only a practical tool for learning but also a vital mechanism for transmitting ethical norms, cultural identity, and spiritual values, forming the foundation of national education [2][3].

In Turkiy Guliston yoxud Axloq, Avloni systematically explores core virtues such as honesty, diligence, patriotism, and benevolence, offering a structured framework for character formation. This work has been recognized as a “vivid example of Uzbek classical pedagogy,” demonstrating how literary and didactic texts can serve simultaneously as instruments for intellectual development and moral education [4].

Recent research emphasizes that Avloni’s writings provide a rich resource for cultivating high moral qualities in students [3]. Through literary imagery, didactic narratives, and illustrative examples, he systematically promotes key ethical and civic virtues, including:

- Love for knowledge and enlightenment, encouraging students to seek education not merely for personal gain but as a means to contribute to society;
- Responsibility to family, society, and homeland, instilling a sense of duty and civic consciousness;



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- Rejection of ignorance, laziness, and moral degradation, highlighting the dangers of passivity and ethical neglect [3][5].

Avloni's poetry and prose also deliver sharp critiques of traditional pedagogical methods that hinder the acquisition of scientific knowledge. He advocates for modern, rational, and student-centered approaches, emphasizing critical thinking, active engagement, and the practical application of knowledge. For Avloni, "freedom and liberty" are foundational values, and knowledge represents the principal pathway to both national dignity and personal moral fulfillment [5].

In his poetic exhortations, Avloni motivates youth to embody the qualities of legendary figures such as Farhod: if the love for the motherland is firmly rooted in the heart, one must "plunge into the light of knowledge" and dedicate oneself to the enlightenment of the nation [5]. In this framework, moral education transcends abstract instruction, becoming a call to active, socially engaged spirituality, where intellectual development and ethical formation are inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

At the turn of the 20th century, Jadid pedagogues developed a distinctive concept of national education and upbringing, grounded in a synthesis of traditional moral values and modern pedagogical methods. Their approach was based on three core principles:

- Moral values rooted in Islam and Eastern philosophical traditions, providing students with an ethical foundation and a framework for social responsibility;
- Integration of national and universal values, promoting both pride in one's heritage and openness to global knowledge and humanistic ideals;
- Innovative school methods and curricula, emphasizing active learning, rational inquiry, and practical application of knowledge [1][2][3].



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Abdulla Avloni exemplifies this synthesis in both theory and practice. He established new-method schools, personally engaging in teaching and supervising the educational process. He authored influential textbooks, including *First Teacher*, *Second Teacher*, and *Turkic Gulistan or Morality*, which combined intellectual instruction with moral and national education [3][4]. In addition, he published newspapers such as *Taraqqiy*, *Shuhrat*, and *Osiyo* to disseminate enlightenment ideals and stimulate public discourse on education, morality, and national progress [3][4][5].

The schools established by Avloni and other Jadids were characterized by a dual focus: fostering modern scientific knowledge while simultaneously nurturing ethical and national values. This integration was considered essential not only for individual development but also for societal advancement. The Jadids viewed such education as the sole path to rescuing Turkestan from “ignorance and backwardness” and integrating it into broader universal progress, all while preserving and cultivating a distinct national identity [1][2][3].

Through these efforts, Avloni demonstrated that educational reform could serve as a vehicle for both personal moral development and national awakening, establishing a model of schooling that harmonized tradition with modernity and individual growth with collective responsibility.

Contemporary scholarship on moral education rooted in national spiritual values highlights several conceptual principles that strongly resonate with Abdulla Avloni’s pedagogical heritage.

1. Primacy of the spiritual–moral personality. Moral education is considered the central element of the entire educational system. Without cultivating ethical and spiritual values, the pursuit of scientific knowledge or cultural development risks becoming purely technical and devoid of human meaning [8][9][10][11].



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Avloni similarly emphasized that the formation of a morally upright and socially responsible individual is inseparable from intellectual development, reflecting a holistic vision of education where character and cognition advance together.

2. Integration of religious and secular values. Modern scholarship underscores the importance of harmonizing Islamic teachings with universal humanistic values, such as respect, tolerance, and civic responsibility. This integration is seen as crucial for protecting youth from extremism, moral decay, and social alienation [9][12][13]. Avloni's works exemplify this approach, as he grounded moral education in both the ethical tenets of Islam and the universal principles of justice, benevolence, and civic duty, creating a synthesis that encourages both personal virtue and social engagement.

3. National idea and identity. The concept of the national idea functions as a driving force for societal transformation. By linking spiritual reform with the cultivation of renewed national consciousness, it provides a framework for aligning personal development with collective progress [7][14][8]. Avloni's pedagogical vision similarly sought to embed national identity and cultural pride into education, ensuring that students grow as ethically conscious citizens who are also aware of their heritage and responsibilities toward the nation.

Although much of the contemporary research focuses on Kazakh, Azerbaijani, or broader Islamic contexts, the conceptual frameworks advanced in these studies closely parallel Avloni's efforts to ground moral education in a **triple foundation**: religious–ethical tradition, national culture, and rational modernity [3][6][7][9][10]. His legacy demonstrates that moral education need not conflict with scientific advancement or universal values; rather, it can serve as a bridge connecting individual character formation, cultural identity, and societal progress.



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Current research underscores the enduring significance of the Jadid pedagogical and scientific heritage for the spiritual and moral development of youth in contemporary Uzbekistan [7][3]. The reforms introduced by the Jadids at the turn of the 20th century—including the establishment of new-method schools, the creation of modern textbooks, and the active promotion of national consciousness—laid a foundational framework that continues to inform today’s strategies for cultivating spiritually mature, morally upright, and socially responsible young people [7][3]. By emphasizing a balance between intellectual development, ethical formation, and national identity, these reforms anticipated many of the principles now central to modern education in New Uzbekistan.

Integrating Jadid values, particularly the ideas advanced by Abdulla Avloni, into contemporary curricula is regarded as a critical blueprint for achieving multiple educational objectives. First, it strengthens national identity and civic responsibility, fostering students’ awareness of their cultural heritage, historical roots, and duties as citizens. Second, it helps in forming moral immunity against destructive ideologies, equipping youth with ethical frameworks, critical thinking skills, and spiritual resilience to resist moral and social degradation. Third, such integration ensures that educational reforms align with both national culture and global standards, creating an education system that preserves traditional values while preparing students to engage with universal knowledge and contemporary challenges [7][3][8].

Avloni’s pedagogical principles—centered on the unity of education, upbringing, and morality, as well as the central role of the teacher, the mother tongue, and national spirituality—remain highly relevant in this context. They provide concrete methodological guidance for policy-making, curriculum development, and classroom practice. For example, his emphasis on active, student-centered



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learning and the cultivation of ethical and civic virtues can inform the design of programs that integrate cultural heritage studies with modern scientific and technological education. Likewise, the focus on spiritual enrichment and moral reasoning complements contemporary efforts to nurture socially engaged and ethically conscious youth capable of contributing to nation-building and societal advancement.

In conclusion, Avloni’s vision of education as a holistic process—where intellectual growth, moral formation, and national consciousness are inseparable—continues to offer valuable insights for shaping the next generation of citizens in New Uzbekistan. His ideas serve not merely as historical artifacts but as living principles that can guide contemporary educators and policymakers in creating an education system that is both nationally rooted and globally informed, promoting the development of well-rounded, morally responsible, and spiritually aware youth.

Summary Table: Core Elements of Avloni’s Concept

Key Dimensions of Avloni’s Moral–Spiritual Pedagogy

Dimension	Content in Avloni’s Thought	Contemporary Interpretation	Citations
Moral education	Systematic teaching of virtues in Turkic Gulistan or Morality	Character education as core of Islamic and national schooling	[3][4][11]
National spirituality	Mother tongue, culture, religion as carriers of national spirit	Strengthening national identity and values in youth	[1][2][3][8]
Enlightenment & knowledge	Knowledge as path to freedom and dignity; critique of old methods	Modern, value-based, innovative education reforms	[6][1][2][5]
Teacher’s role	Morally exemplary, intellectually broad educator	Value-oriented, spiritually aware teacher training	[3][2][10]
Harmony of values	Unity of national and universal human values	Integration of religious and secular ethics for youth	[1][9][12][3]

Figure 1: Core components of Avloni’s moral–spiritual pedagogy



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Conclusion

Abdulla Avloni's works articulate a coherent and systematic concept of national spirituality and moral education, in which enlightenment, patriotism, and ethical perfection are inseparably intertwined. By grounding education in national values, Islamic moral principles, and modern knowledge, Avloni, along with other Jadid reformers, established a model of schooling aimed at nurturing individuals who are morally upright, intellectually competent, nationally conscious, and socially active [1][2][3][4][5]. His writings demonstrate that the development of the spiritual–moral personality is central to education, and that the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, diligence, patriotism, and civic responsibility is as important as the acquisition of scientific knowledge.

In the contemporary context, where education systems increasingly seek frameworks for value-based and holistic learning, Avloni's pedagogical heritage remains a rich theoretical and practical resource. His principles—unity of education, upbringing, and morality; the central role of the teacher; the importance of the mother tongue; and the integration of national and universal values—provide methodological guidance for modern curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and policy development. Implementing these principles can help cultivate a generation that is not only intellectually prepared but also spiritually mature, morally responsible, and socially engaged, capable of contributing to both national development and global progress.

Ultimately, Avloni's vision affirms that education is most effective when it harmonizes cognitive, ethical, and spiritual growth, fostering individuals who can uphold the cultural heritage of their nation while engaging constructively with the wider world. His legacy continues to inspire contemporary efforts to build an



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education system in Uzbekistan that is rooted in national identity, enriched by universal knowledge, and oriented toward the holistic development of youth.

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