

ON SOME POEMS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF BEHBUDIY

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Annotation: This article analyzes several poems dedicated to the memory of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, a prominent figure in the Jadid movement of the early 20th century. Works such as Abdurauf Fitrat's *I Searched for Behbudi's Tomb*, Sadriddin Ayni's *Dedicated to Behbudi's Spirit*, and Abdulhamid Cho'lpon's *Memory of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi* are examined. The study highlights how dedications served both as literary devices and as means to navigate the strict censorship of the period. These poems reveal feelings of grief, respect, and longing, while emphasizing the social and educational contributions of Behbudi. Special attention is given to the elegiac style, lyrical imagery, and the unique artistic and ideological value of these works.

Keywords: Jadid literature, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, dedication poems, elegy, early 20th century, Uzbek poetry, Fitrat, Sadriddin Ayni, Cho'lpon, literary analysis

At the beginning of the 20th century, works dedicated to a particular person or event began to appear in Jadid literature. For example, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi's drama *Padarkush* can be cited as a work with a dedication. In the preface titled *Karvonboshi* in Behbudi's *Selected Works*, Professor Begali Qosimov writes:

"In short, the drama *Padarkush*, written in 1911, was only published in 1913. The book contains the note: 'Dedicated to the anniversary of the Battle of Borodino and Russia's liberation from the French invasion,' and its publication with the permission of the Tiflis censorship shows that the process was not easy." [Behbudi. *Selected Works*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 1999, pp. 10–11.]

From Russian history, it is known that in 1812 a fierce battle took place near the village of Borodino between the Russians and the French. However, the content of the drama *Padarkush* does not include any details about the Battle of Borodino. This dedication can be interpreted as the author's deliberate strategy to circumvent censorship.

Many poems dedicated to a person or event can be found in the works of Jadid writers. In particular, this can be observed in poems dedicated to the memory of Behbudi. These elegiac poems are imbued with melancholy. In this article, we attempt to analyze works such as Fitrat's *I Searched for Behbudi's Tomb*, Ayni's *Dedicated to Behbudi's Spirit*, and Cho'lpon's *Memory of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi*.

Abdurauf Fitrat stands out in the history of literature with his versatile creative activity. His dramas, journalistic works, prose, and scholarly writings reached a wide readership. [See: Abdurauf Fitrat. Vols. 1–5. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2000–2010. (Preface, commentary, and editorial preparation by Professor Hamidulla Boltaboev).] Fitrat's poetic works were published in the collection *Sayha*. Some of these poems, such as *To the Guiding Star*, *Sharq*, *To the Land of Teachers*, and *Ovunchoq (Dedicated to Mirmuhsin)*, can be considered dedications. These poems convey feelings of empathy, hope, and trust in the future. However, in his poem *I Searched for Behbudi's Tomb*, the dominant emotion is grief:

"The ground above was heavy with pain,
The owl of misery flapped its wings;
From the cloud reddened at sunset
Sorrow poured upon my crushed heart."

The poet's heart is crushed. To express this, he uses the image of the owl, a symbol that never represents joy. The setting sun also does not bring happiness. Through these images, the poet conveys feelings of suffering and grief. The poem continues:

“In the city of injustice, the people reeked of blood
I plucked a leaf from the flower of my grief,
And scattered it into the springless deserts.
The delicate leaf withered, yellowed,
Running around like the poor everywhere.”

Here, the “flower of grief” and the plucked “leaf” naturally symbolize the qualities of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, the inspirer of Jadids.

“O tyrant, in all the oppressions of the oppressed,
In all the sorrows, sufferings, and deaths,
He saw everything, he experienced everything,
Sought and questioned what he had lost.
Finding no trace, he suddenly rose,
Gathering all his strength.
A voice shook the tyrant's throne and cried:
'Where did you hide my father's grave? Speak!'
The filthy crown shuddered from the brave voice,
Trembled, and hid
Without giving any answer.” [Abdurauf Fitrat. True Love. Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Literature and Art Publishing House, 1996, p. 33.]

In this poem, the social spirit dominates the individual. Behbudi's grave is unknown. The oppressed suffer under the tyranny of the cruel, but the tyrant is aware of his injustice. The poet implies that the crown of the tyrant is stained with the blood of innocent people. As B. Qosimov rightly notes, “In poems written in the 1920s, such as *To the Guiding Star*, *Sharq*, and *I Searched for Behbudi's Tomb*, Fitrat recounts the bloody traces of a tragedy historically called ‘revolution.’” [Qosimov B. *National Awakening*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2002, pp. 368–369.]

Sadriddin Ayni's poem *Dedicated to Behbudi's Spirit* contains, in parentheses, the subtitle “Shabi hijron havosig'a,” indicating the dedication element typical of such poems. The poem begins:

“Will Turan ever see you again, or not?
Will Turkestan ever find your likeness, or not?”

Behbudi rendered immense educational service to Turan and Turkestan. Every enlightened person mentions his name with great respect. The poet expresses amazement and doubt, wondering if his master's spirit is watching over his disciples. Ayni continues:

“In the world, the tyrant appears, the world is cruel, the world oppresses,
Will oppression ever disappear from the world?
May paradise and angels favor you,
May God grant you mercy and forgiveness!” [Behbudi. *Selected Works*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 1999, pp. 256–257.]

The poet emphasizes Behbudi's deeds and contributions to the nation, expressing anger at those who killed him. He questions the injustice of tyrants, implying that such cruelty will one day vanish.

Among poems written in memory of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdulhamid Cho'lpon's Memory of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, written in 1920 on the first anniversary of Behbudi's death, occupies a special place. The lyrical hero carries flowers to lay on his master's grave but cannot find it, wandering in confusion:

"The handfuls of flowers in my hands were gathered
To find your resting place and lay them down." [Cho'lpon. Works. Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Literature and Art Publishing House, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 50–51.]

The poet realizes his helplessness before the environment, yet Behbudi's name and memory, shining like a star among the people, give the lyrical hero hope. At the poem's climax, Cho'lpon writes:

"Dear father, you do not know
That the flowers in my hands are mourning flowers.
The flowers of joy have long withered,
You cannot feel it with your pure soul beneath the earth."

In this passage, typical of Cho'lpon's poetic style, the contrast between "mourning" and "joy" is depicted, and the conflict between the living and the spirit of the deceased is highlighted.

In conclusion:

Dedications in the titles of some works of Jadid literature were often chosen to pass censorship.

Poems dedicated to Behbudi emphasize recalling his historical contributions, longing for him, and continuing his work.

The dedication poems of this period, particularly those by Cho'lpon, stand out for their unique individual style and high ideological and artistic value.

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