



EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF FREEDOM IN THE WORKS OF ABDURAUUF FITRAT

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Annotation: Abdurauf Fitrat, a prominent figure in early 20th-century Central Asian literature, is often regarded as a key intellectual and literary force during a time of profound change in the region. Born in 1886, Fitrat was deeply immersed in the socio-political and cultural upheavals of his time, particularly the collapse of the Russian Empire, the rise of new political ideologies, and the subsequent emergence of the Soviet Union. His works are not only a reflection of the cultural renaissance in Central Asia but also a passionate expression of the struggle for freedom—both personal and national. Through his poetry, plays, essays, and political writings, Fitrat sought to convey the importance of intellectual and political liberation for the Uzbek people and the broader Central Asian region.

Key words: Abdurauf Fitrat, freedom, intellectual freedom, national liberation, education, Uzbek literature, Central Asia, youth, self-awareness, political independence, "Yoshlar" (The Youth), cultural transformation, enlightenment,

This article aims to explore the theme of **freedom** in Fitrat's works, focusing on how his literary contributions reflect his vision of personal autonomy, social justice, and national independence. It will analyze his key works, such as his poetry, the play "**Yoshlar**" (The Youth), and his essays, to understand how Fitrat used literature as a vehicle for expressing his ideas about freedom, and how he envisioned the role of education, youth, and intellectual awakening in achieving a free society.

I. Historical and Intellectual Context of Abdurauf Fitrat's Works

To understand the sense of freedom expressed in Abdurauf Fitrat's works, it is essential to first consider the historical and intellectual context in which he wrote. Central Asia at the turn of the 20th century was under the control of the Russian Empire, and the region was experiencing a cultural and political transformation. The imperialistic policies of Russia, combined with the decline of traditional Islamic institutions, led to widespread dissatisfaction and a growing desire for reform. In this environment, Fitrat was influenced by the intellectual movements that were sweeping through the region. Central Asian intellectuals were looking for ways to modernize their societies, balancing traditional values with new ideas of nationalism, modernism, and social justice. Fitrat was deeply engaged with both Islamic reformist thought and

European intellectual currents, especially those associated with nationalism and liberalism. For Fitrat, the pursuit of **freedom** was not just a political endeavor but also a cultural and intellectual one. The idea of freedom in his works was closely tied to his belief in the importance of education, enlightenment, and the liberation of the mind from the shackles of ignorance and superstition. As such, his literary output can be seen as a response to the cultural oppression experienced by the people of Central Asia under foreign rule, as well as a call for internal liberation from outdated traditional practices.

Freedom in Abdurauf Fitrat's Poetry

Fitrat's poetry, which he wrote in Persian and Uzbek, offers a profound exploration of freedom, both in a personal and collective sense. His poems often reflect the tensions between the old world of feudalism and the new world of intellectual and social change. Central to his poetry is the theme of **individual liberation** through education and self-awareness. One of Fitrat's most celebrated poems, "**Ozodlik**" ("Freedom"), directly addresses the theme of freedom. In this poem, Fitrat calls for a rejection of ignorance and oppression, urging the reader to embrace knowledge and enlightenment as pathways to freedom. The poem serves as both a critique of the status quo and a call to action for the individual to seek personal freedom through intellectual and spiritual growth. In his poems, Fitrat frequently criticized the prevailing state of ignorance in his society. He saw this ignorance as a key barrier to achieving personal freedom and societal progress. For him, freedom was not just political; it was deeply intellectual and spiritual. His poetry often emphasized the importance of **self-liberation**, urging individuals to free themselves from the mental chains imposed by outdated traditions, superstitions, and foreign domination. Fitrat's poetry also reflects his belief in the collective struggle for freedom. His works call on the people of Central Asia to unite in their efforts to overcome foreign oppression and internal stagnation. In poems such as "**Ma'rifat**" ("Knowledge"), he emphasizes the power of education as the means by which people can achieve both individual and collective freedom.

"Yoshlar" (The Youth): A Play for Freedom and Reform

One of the most important works in Fitrat's literary career is his play "**Yoshlar**" (The Youth), written in 1913. This play presents a direct commentary on the state of society and the role of youth in the struggle for freedom. The characters in the play represent different facets of society, from the traditional and conservative to the progressive and reformist. At the heart of "**Yoshlar**" is the conflict between the old, conservative order and the new, progressive ideas that call for reform. The young characters in the play are the primary agents of change, embodying the desire for freedom, modernization, and intellectual liberation. Through the characters' dialogues and struggles, Fitrat explores themes of **national independence**, **individual rights**, and the power of **education** as the foundation of a free and just society.

The central message of the play is that freedom is not only a matter of political independence but also an intellectual and social transformation. The youth in "**Yoshlar**" are portrayed as the vanguard of a new era, one where knowledge and education will replace ignorance and superstition, leading to a more just and free society. Fitrat uses the play to challenge traditional structures of authority and to advocate for a new social order based on reason, equality, and justice.

Essays and Political Writings: Freedom and Nationalism

In addition to his poetry and drama, Fitrat was also a prolific essayist and political writer. His essays, many of which were published in newspapers and journals, address a wide range of issues related to the social, political, and cultural struggles of his time. Central to these writings is Fitrat's advocacy for **national freedom** and the establishment of an independent Uzbek state. In his political essays, Fitrat argued that **national liberation** was inextricably linked to cultural and intellectual freedom. He believed that the people of Central Asia needed to break free from both **foreign domination** and the oppressive forces within their own societies, such as feudalism, superstition, and clerical control. Fitrat advocated for the **empowerment of the people** through education and the development of a national consciousness based on the principles of **self-determination** and **freedom**. His political writings also reflect his desire for a **secular state**, free from the dominance of religious institutions. He believed that religion should not interfere in the political and social life of the people and that **freedom of thought** was essential for the development of a modern, progressive society. This view, which was considered radical at the time, was part of his broader vision for a free and just society that was based on reason, science, and education rather than superstition and dogma.

Freedom and the Role of Youth and Education

One of the recurring themes in Fitrat's works is the central role of **youth** and **education** in the struggle for freedom. For Fitrat, youth represented the future of the nation, and education was the key to achieving both personal and national freedom. His belief in the transformative power of education is evident not only in his plays but also in his political writings. Fitrat saw **education** as the primary means of breaking the chains of ignorance and oppression. He believed that an educated populace would be better equipped to resist foreign domination, challenge oppressive social structures, and work towards the creation of a free society. In his works, he frequently called for the establishment of modern schools, where students could learn about science, philosophy, and politics, as well as the cultural heritage of their own people. In the play "**Yoshlar**", the theme of education is portrayed as the foundation for the youth's freedom and empowerment. The young characters in the play are passionate about acquiring knowledge and using it to challenge the existing order. Through their actions, Fitrat emphasizes the idea that **intellectual freedom** and **political freedom** are inseparable.

Fitrat's Legacy and the Relevance of His Ideas Today

Abdurauf Fitrat's ideas about freedom, intellectual independence, and national liberation continue to resonate today, particularly in post-Soviet Central Asia. His works serve as a reminder of the importance of education, cultural preservation, and political autonomy in the struggle for freedom. Fitrat's emphasis on the importance of **intellectual freedom** remains particularly relevant in today's world, where many societies continue to grapple with issues of censorship, intellectual repression, and the control of information. His call for an enlightened citizenry that can think critically and independently is a message that remains vital for the development of any free and just society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Abdurauf Fitrat's works offer a profound exploration of the idea of freedom. His writings reflect his belief that true freedom is not just political but intellectual, social, and cultural. Through his poetry, drama, and essays, Fitrat emphasized the importance of education, self-awareness, and national independence as the cornerstones of freedom. His vision for a free society, where individuals are empowered through knowledge and enlightenment, remains a powerful message that continues to inspire generations of readers and thinkers. Fitrat's sense of freedom was not limited to the individual but extended to the entire nation. He believed that for Central Asia to achieve its full potential, it must free itself from both external oppression and internal ignorance. His works remain an important contribution to the literary and intellectual heritage of the region and continue to be a source of inspiration for those who seek freedom, justice, and progress.

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