

# Abai Kunanbaev



Kazakh writer, poet, lyricist, social philosopher. Born in Kazakhstan in Semey province, Abai Kunanbaev was educated at home and then sent to a *medressa* where he learned Arabic and Persian and became acquainted with Eastern literature and poetry. In Semey he actively participated in the city's intellectual life, studied Russian and Western classics by Pushkin, Goethe, and Byron and translated many of them for the first time into Kazakh.

1845 – 1904

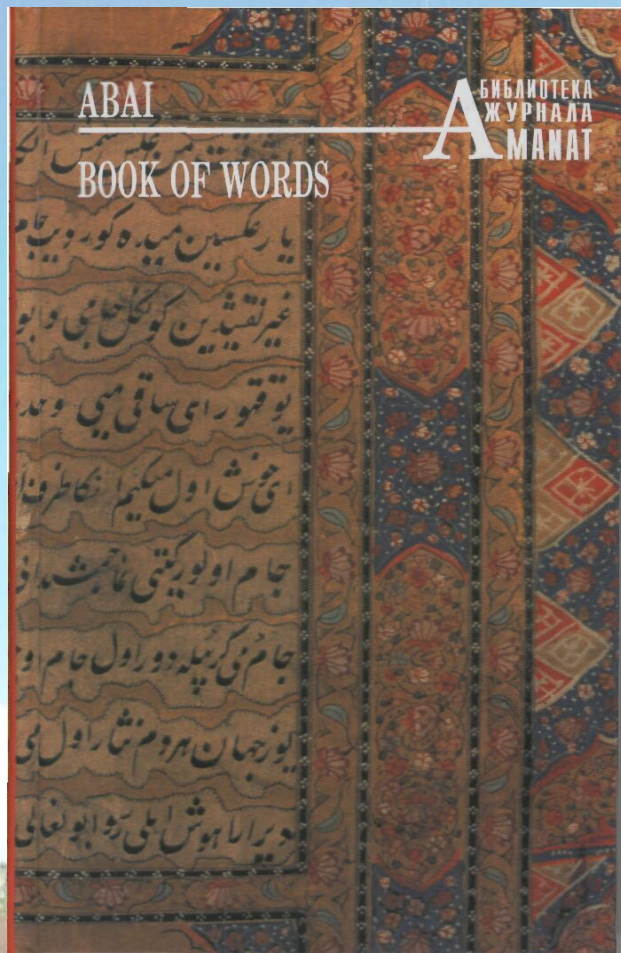
# Writings



Abai devoted many of his works to the **violence** of Kazakh labour rights e.g. "Oh my Kazakh! My poor people!". Number of works were devoted to youth: "Our children", "Only youth - happy flower of life". And a real **treasure** is his poems expressing his feelings and love to the nature of his land: "Autumn", "Winter", "Fall" and etc.

As a gifted interpreter Abai gave Kazakh people to enjoy the **pearls** of russian classic literature. During 15 years he translated more than 50 works of russian writers like Pushkin, Lermontov, Krylov etc. Abai's literary legacy also includes a number of ballads dedicated to eastern and western themes. Among these fictional pieces like "Mas'ud" (1887) and "Alexander,"

Violence – насилие, treasure – сокровище, pearl – жемчужина,  
legacy - грамотность



Kunanbaev's works were influenced by his belief in human reason. He was attracted to Western **Enlightenment** thinking and wove criticism of Kazakh culture into his works, most notably in his collection of poems called *Qarasozder* (often translated as the Book of Words).

Despite the fact that many years have passed, several **generations** have changed since Abai times, "Book of Words" is actual today as never before, it is our reference point in life. This book includes different topics – Kazakhstan history, love for fatherland, culture, people's psychology and philosophy of life.

Enlightenment – просвещение, образование, generation - поколение



In his amazing Book of Words the poet expressed his reflections over a period of years, his searching and discoveries, **anxiety** and despair, sorrows and joy of **revelations**, anger and **humility**. His Book of Words is a deeply meaningful way to truth. The poet tirelessly reminds that humans have the greatest value in the world, and that they should be beautiful and harmoniously perfect. Their souls should also be beautiful, as should their mind, body and feelings. Understanding of the real world and the personal responsibility of everyone in the world – this is what the great poet worked for his art and life. Abai explains that the world is **eternal**, united and harmonious. Discord, anguish, even death cannot destroy the harmony, for they are natural.

**Anxiety**-беспокойство, тревога, **revelation** – откровение, **humility** – скромность  
**Eternal** – бесконечный, **discord** – разногласие,

## Word thirty-eight

## Слово Тридцать Седьмое

**While you are seeking happiness, everybody wishes you well;  
But once you have attained it, your only well-wisher is yourself**

**Пока ты добиваешься счастья, добра тебе желают все,  
но как только ты достигаешь цели, твой  
доброжелатель — лишь ты сам.**

**Who among us have not known trouble? Only the weak lose hope.  
Nothing in this world is immutable, and misfortune cannot last for ever.  
Does not the bountiful and blossoming spring follow the harsh winter?**

**Кому из нас не приходилось бывать в беде? Теряет надежду  
только слабый. Верно, что в мире нет ничего неизменного, но  
ведь и зло не вечно. Разве после суровой зимы, не приходит  
полноводная цветущая весна?**

## Word Fifteen

If you wish to be counted among the intelligent, then ask yourself once a day, once a week, or at least once a month: "How do I live?" Have I done anything to improve my learning, my worldly life or my life hereafter? Will I have to swallow the bitter dregs of regret later on?

## Слово Пятнадцатое

Желаешь быть в числе умных людей, спрашивай себя раз в день, раз в неделю, или хотя бы раз в месяц: как ты живешь? Сделал ли ты что-нибудь полезное для своего образования, для земной или потусторонней жизни, не придется ли тебе потом испытать горечь сожаления? Или же ты и сам не заметил, не помнишь, как и чем жил?

## Word Nineteen

A child is not born a reasonable being. It is only by listening and watching, examining everything by touching and tasting, that it learns what is good and what is bad. The more a child sees and hears, the more it knows.

## Слово Девятнадцатое

Дитя человеческое не рождается на свет разумным. Только слушая, созерцая, пробуя все на ощупь и на вкус, оно начинает познавать разницу между хорошим и плохим. Чем больше видит и слышит дитя, тем больше узнает.

## Word Four

Only the weak in spirit will withdraw into themselves abandon themselves to bitter thoughts, without finding the least consolation

## Слово Четвертое

Только слабые духом могут затвориться в себе, предаваясь горьким раздумьям, не находя утешения.

## Word Thirty three

If you want to be rich, learn a trade. Wealth diminishes with time, but a skill does not.

## Слово Тридцать Третье

Хочешь быть богатым — учись ремеслу. Богатство со временем иссякает, а умение — нет.





Абай мен Шәкерім кесенелерінің амфитеатрымен қоса бір қырынан түсірілгендегі көрінісі.

**The great poet of the steppe, not understood by his own people, remained alone, face to face with God. All his powers were dedicated to the enlightenment of his people, but the people only appreciated the enchanting melodies of his songs, and did not comprehend the deep essence of his thoughts, did not follow his wise advice.**

**That was the beginning and the end of the tragedy of Abai. He is buried near his wintering in Zhidebai valley, not far from Chingiz mountains.**



*He is beautiful and great in his eternal yearning for the truth*

*Goethe*