



IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Ilhom Fayzullayev

Independent Researcher at the Institute of Social and Spiritual Studies

Annotation. In this article, his views on the ideological foundations of spiritual growth in society are analyzed from a scientific perspective. The article also scientifically illuminates that spiritual growth is often closely linked to national and religious values, spiritual heritage, universal values, and patriotism, and these processes serve as the foundation for the formation of a new spiritual space.

Keywords. Society, strategy, spiritual space, ideology, state, new worldview, citizenship, human dignity.

Introduction.

Today, the 21st century is rapidly changing under the influence of various processes, including globalization, “mass culture,” democratic freedoms, the unrestricted satisfaction of human desires, geopolitical conflicts, and the revolution in information and communication technologies. Scholars and specialists in different fields describe its essence and character in various ways. “Some call it the era of high technology, others the age of thought, and yet others describe it as a period of mass information... However, in the minds of many, this period leaves the impression of being an era of globalization” [1]. Although these reflections were made at the beginning of the 21st century, today we clearly observe the accelerating intensity of these processes.

Globalization is a worldwide human phenomenon arising from human consciousness, intellect, and reasoning, and, if one may say, it represents another complex test for humanity. Historical evidence shows that in ancient times, people, striving for goodness, built gardens, cities, and magnificent architectural monuments, and sought to overcome evil paths with barriers like the walls of Alexander. Throughout history, the unified world became divided into different climates, regions, continents, and states. However, by the 21st century, the accelerating globalization process – disregarding borders, territorial systems, and regulations – has caused serious concern among the world’s population. Many diverse opinions and perspectives have been expressed on this issue from different parts of the globe.

It is in this context that achieving spiritual advancement is crucial: it allows society and the nation to withstand negative events and threats occurring globally and regionally and ensures the development of the country. Essentially, the ultimate goal of raising spirituality is to cultivate highly moral individuals, societies, and states. Every effort aimed at enhancing spirituality is founded on this objective. Historically, the Uzbek people, striving to elevate their spirituality, have always considered immorality alien. Therefore, along with intellectuals, every citizen bears responsibility for discovering new methods and approaches to develop high moral standards.

Literature Review And Methodology.

Spiritual advancement should become such a pressing issue that every individual considers it a daily responsibility. On this matter, the President emphasizes: “In my view, the



Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 11 November 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

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great illuminator of humanity is the light of spirituality. What distinguishes this light from others is that it illuminates the human mind and intellect, awakens the heart and conscience, and strengthens the sense of dedication. As we embark on creating a new era of awakening in Uzbekistan, the light of such spirituality must shine in the heart and mind of every citizen, inspiring them to perform noble deeds and live with a heightened sense of responsibility”[2]. Indeed, spirituality and moral development are inherently human qualities. As we begin building New Uzbekistan and a new spiritual space, these qualities must exist in every individual.

It should be noted that spiritual advancement is not a new pursuit. From the earliest days of Uzbekistan’s independence, efforts have been directed toward it. The First President, Islam Karimov, highlighted this, stating: “The path of renewal and development of Uzbekistan is based on four fundamental principles:

adherence to universal human values;
strengthening and developing the spiritual heritage of our people;
the free manifestation of human potential;
– patriotism”[3].

The four fundamental principles guiding Uzbekistan’s path of renewal and development – adherence to universal human values, strengthening spiritual heritage, free expression of human potential, and patriotism – serve as a solid foundation for the country’s future progress. These principles complement one another and contribute to both the spiritual and material advancement of society. Universal values such as justice, equality, and humanitarianism help secure Uzbekistan’s place in the global community while preserving national identity.

Discussion And Results.

Our spiritual heritage – the scientific and creative legacy of our great ancestors, traditional arts, and ancient customs – instills national pride in the youth. At the same time, adapting this heritage to contemporary conditions enhances its influence. The free expression of human potential allows individuals to realize their dreams, generate new ideas, and contribute to the advancement of society and the economy. Patriotism manifests as love for the homeland, the preservation of its history and nature, and contributing to national prosperity through daily actions. Together, these principles provide a balanced guide for Uzbekistan’s bright future.

Thus, for us, spiritual development is the process of cultivating the inner world of a person and transforming oneself, others, and society positively based on moral and ethical values. This concept includes self-awareness, adherence to ethical principles, the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment, love for the homeland, compassion for others, and contributing to society[4].

On a national scale, spiritual development is closely linked with national and religious values, spiritual heritage, universal human values, and patriotism. This process motivates individuals to act not only for personal benefit but also for the general welfare and the development of society. For example, spiritual development may be expressed through the free realization of one’s potential, acquiring knowledge, ethical upbringing, and respect for the country’s history. The manifestation of these qualities in individuals contributes to the creation of a new spiritual space.

The general laws of social development also influence spiritual advancement, though they operate in a distinctive way within the spiritual sphere. The renowned Uzbek philosopher



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A. Erkaev highlights several specific laws of spiritual development:

1. The law of continuous growth of spiritual needs in the process of social development;
2. The law linking the development of spirituality to the level of civilizational (universal cultural) progress;
3. The law linking the forms of social consciousness in spiritual development to the degree of societal development[5].

The fundamental measure of spiritual development is, perhaps, reflected in the continuous growth of human freedom. Indeed, compared to primitive societies, agrarian societies provided broader opportunities for freedom through alternative socio-economic relations, while industrial societies introduced more complex and institutionalized forms of liberty. Industrial societies established new levels of freedom by ensuring equality before the law, abolishing social privileges, and promoting social mobility. In post-industrial and postmodern societies, human freedom expanded further due to the development of information technologies, global communications, and means of individual expression. Unfortunately, in some cases, this freedom has evolved into absolute individualism, increasing tendencies to disregard ethical norms and social responsibility.

Other important indicators of spiritual development include the growth of social relations based on humanistic principles, the strengthening of intellectual and ideological diversity, the stabilization of society through democratic institutions, the primacy of human rights over state sovereignty and the rule of law, and the optimal alignment of individual and societal interests. These indicators reflect the multifaceted nature of spiritual development; however, they are primarily linked to the evolution of human freedom within institutional and moral contexts.

Furthermore, as a practical expression of spiritual advancement, it is necessary to note the qualitative improvement of the education system, the expansion of scientific and intellectual activities, and the consolidation of cultural pluralism. These indicators serve as key markers for charting the trajectory of a society's spiritual development, but their ultimate source and integrative foundation lie in the progressive expansion of human freedom.

At the core of any advancement lies the drive toward education and personal growth. In particular, moral education forms the foundation of spiritual development. Immanuel Kant associated moral education with adherence to ethical laws and the respect for human dignity. In his work *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant emphasized that moral education teaches a person to self-govern according to the "categorical imperative" (a universal moral law). He stressed the importance of teaching children independent thinking and responsible decision-making[6].

Friedrich Nietzsche linked moral education with individual development and "self-creation." In his work *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra), he critiqued traditional moral norms and encouraged individuals to create their own values and achieve spiritual independence. Nietzsche considered it essential to teach young people to think independently and find their own path[7].

The historical roots of Uzbekistan's spiritual development can be traced to the ancient inscriptions, legends, myths, stories, and epics of our land—that is, to the rich oral heritage of the people. For instance, in the narratives and epics of Alpamis, G'oroghli, Tomaris, and Shiroq, the spirit of patriotism, courage, friendship, loyalty, fidelity, and self-sacrifice for the freedom of the people and homeland is artistically depicted.



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Periodizing spiritual development in Uzbekistan is a highly relevant task, which requires taking into account the historical, socio-political, and cultural evolution of the region. Analyzing these processes from scientific and philosophical perspectives, it is appropriate to classify the main stages of spiritual development in Uzbek history as follows. These stages are shaped based on Uzbekistan's historical development, national-spiritual values, and the influence of state policy on morality:

Spiritual development in ancient and medieval times (9th–16th centuries). During this period, particularly in Central Asia, the emergence of religious doctrines and their direct influence on societal development was observed. Initially, the establishment of Zoroastrianism, with its prescribed rules and moral guidelines, influenced human self-awareness and ethical perspectives, contributing to spiritual growth. Later, the arrival of Islam in the region and the adoption of this faith, along with the development of science, literature, and the arts, marked a significant stage of spiritual advancement. Prominent scholars such as Ahmad Yasawi, Imam Bukhari, Imam Termizi, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, and Alisher Navoi played a major role in shaping national-spiritual values.

Under the guidance of Islamic education, moral and spiritual values developed, scientific centers and madrasahs were established in cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva, and national identity was strengthened in literature and the arts (for example, Navoi's *Khamsa* and miniature painting). During this period, spiritual development was closely linked to moral and intellectual maturity, the pursuit of knowledge, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Spiritual development under the Russian Empire and the Soviet period (late 19th – early 20th centuries). Under the influence of the Russian Empire, and later the Soviet regime, national-spiritual values were undermined. For decades, the ethical and morally uplifting aspects of Islam were suppressed. However, a new form of spiritual advancement emerged through the Jadid movement. Thinkers such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulla Avloni sought, through their works and practical activities, to strengthen education, enlightenment, and national identity.

The Jadid movement facilitated the awakening of national consciousness, the introduction of a modern education system through Jadid schools, and the development of national literature and the press. In this period, the rise of public literacy and the popularization of education were closely linked to social and cultural reforms. Figures such as Sharof Rashidov, Gafur Ghulam, and Uyghun contributed to the development of national literature and the arts. Although Soviet ideology often conflicted with national identity and mentality, spiritual development continued through the preservation of national culture and the expansion of human capital via education.

Spiritual development during the period of independence (1991–present). With the attainment of independence, Uzbekistan's spiritual development focused on strengthening national statehood, enlightenment, and cultural identity. In state policy, special attention was given to morality and education, embodied in the idea of "From national revival to national advancement."

The restoration and promotion of national-spiritual values included reviving the scientific and spiritual heritage of figures such as Alisher Navoi, Amir Timur, and many other ancestors. The national holiday Nowruz was restored as a pan-people celebration. The establishment of the Republican Centers for Spirituality and Enlightenment and the Institute



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for Socio-Spiritual Research under its auspices, along with the introduction of the “Servant of Spirituality” chest badge, marked significant steps in this process. Between 2017 and 2024, around 20 Presidential decrees and Cabinet of Ministers’ resolutions were adopted to advance spiritual and educational work.

In particular, the Presidential Decree No. PQ-4307 of May 3, 2019, “On Additional Measures to Improve the Effectiveness of Spiritual and Enlightenment Activities,” aimed at systematically organizing spiritual and educational work, enhancing the intellectual potential of the population, and strengthening ideological immunity. Furthermore, the Presidential Decree No. PQ-5040 of March 26, 2021, “On the Comprehensive Improvement of the System of Spiritual and Enlightenment Activities,” outlined priority areas for spiritual and educational work and emphasized the promotion of the idea “From national revival to national advancement.”

Conclusion.

In conclusion, programs aimed at cultivating national pride, patriotism, and moral-spiritual virtues among youth contribute to the preservation of national spirituality and the strengthening of ideological immunity in the context of globalization. In Uzbekistan, spiritual development is implemented as a priority area of state policy through numerous programs, which serve as a foundation for creating a new spiritual space and ensuring a bright future for the country.

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