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CIVILIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRADITIONS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article examines the interrelationship between civilizational development and national traditions in Uzbekistan from a socio-philosophical perspective. The study explores the role of spirituality in social progress, the formation of national identity, and the development of civilization, highlighting its significance within the context of democratic reforms and the development strategy of New Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the conceptual relationship between spirituality and civilization through the philosophical traditions of both Eastern and Western thought and substantiates the theoretical and practical importance of preserving national values while educating the younger generation in the spirit of moral maturity and patriotism. The findings demonstrate that the harmonious integration of spirituality and national traditions constitutes one of the fundamental factors ensuring sustainable civilizational development in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Civilization, spirituality, national traditions, New Uzbekistan, spiritual values, democratic reforms, national heritage, philosophical thought, youth education, cultural development.

Introduction

Implementing profound democratic reforms, establishing market relations, enhancing the spiritual life of the people, and widely promoting the advanced achievements of Western civilization—particularly democratic values—have become among the major challenges facing the social sciences and humanities in Uzbekistan. These processes have also necessitated a scientific investigation into the essence of religious values and their role in the development of civilization. The important conclusions and recommendations expressed in a

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number of works and speeches by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, serve as a methodological foundation for the systematic and comprehensive study of these issues.

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized:

“If the economy is the body of society, spirituality is its soul and spirit. As we have decided to build a New Uzbekistan, we rely on two strong pillars. The first is a strong economy based on market principles. The second is strong spirituality founded on the rich heritage of our ancestors and our national values.”

Unfortunately, in later periods the concept of spirituality was often underestimated and even discredited. It was frequently regarded as something secondary or unnecessary. Today, the minds of many young people are influenced by consumerism, indifference to the fate of the Motherland, and the spread of so-called “mass culture.” Addressing this issue, President Mirziyoyev asked:

“Can a person who neither respects nor is able to protect the history, spiritual heritage, and religious values of his people become a true patriot or a leader?”

The President has repeatedly stressed that special attention should be paid to the upbringing of young people, stating:

“Our foremost task is to educate a generation possessing high spirituality, modern knowledge and skills, independent thinking, and loyalty to both national and universal values.”

Achieving this goal requires relying on the rich spiritual heritage and centuries-old national traditions inherited from our ancestors.

During the years of Uzbekistan’s independence, numerous monographs, textbooks, manuals, doctoral dissertations, and scholarly studies devoted to spirituality, spiritual revival, and spiritual values have been published. Various theoretical concepts and methodological approaches concerning spirituality have also been developed.

However, despite the considerable amount of research conducted in this field, insufficient attention has been paid to the role of spirituality in the formation and development of civilization. In other words, a civilization-based approach to understanding spirituality appears to be more effective and promising, as it

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enables researchers to reveal the genetic and conceptual relationship between the notions of spirituality and civilization.

Indeed, providing scientific precision to concepts and penetrating deeply into their essence has always been regarded as one of the objective laws governing the development of science.

The concept of spirituality represents the inner world of the individual and encompasses those qualities that distinguish human beings from other living creatures, including consciousness, intellect, self-awareness, emotions, willpower, and moral values. It functions as an internal force that shapes human behavior and social development.

As is well known, the issue of spirituality occupies a central place in the history of world philosophy. Significant achievements in understanding this complex phenomenon were made particularly by the outstanding representatives of German classical philosophy, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whose works profoundly influenced subsequent philosophical interpretations of spirituality.

The opportunity to comprehensively study and critically evaluate the works of prominent representatives of Western philosophy—such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Erich Fromm, Arnold J. Toynbee, and Oswald Spengler—became possible only after Uzbekistan gained national independence. Their philosophical heritage has significantly contributed to the development of contemporary approaches to the study of spirituality and civilization.

Among these thinkers, Hegel was the first philosopher to introduce a systematic scientific approach to the study of spiritual phenomena. Building creatively upon Plato's philosophical legacy, Hegel devoted his work *Philosophy of Spirit* to the comprehensive analysis of spirituality as a broad philosophical category. In this work, he attempted to clarify the scientific meaning of spirituality by distinguishing between the concepts of the Absolute Spirit, the Objective Spirit, and the Subjective Spirit. Furthermore, he sought to explain the developmental laws governing both the Objective and Subjective Spirit as manifestations of the self-alienation and self-realization of the Absolute Spirit.

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Like all phenomena existing in the universe, philosophical concepts possess their own opposites and complementary counterparts. Concepts such as being and non-being, beauty and ugliness, and spirituality and ignorance become more comprehensible when analyzed through comparison and dialectical interaction. Consequently, the true nature of spirituality can only be understood through its relationship with its opposite—spiritual decline, ignorance, and moral degradation.

According to the Uzbek scholar D. Jo‘rayev, although different civilizations may share similar perceptions of the universe, the Eastern worldview is distinguished by its profound philosophical understanding of the harmony between the Universe and humanity, Heaven and Earth, society and the individual. This harmonious perception has historically shaped the intellectual and spiritual outlook of Eastern peoples, including the Uzbek nation, and constitutes one of the essential characteristics of Eastern civilization.

From Hegel's perspective, the source of spirituality is the Absolute Spirit, while its concrete manifestation appears in the Subjective Spirit. He associated the genesis of the Subjective Spirit with the human soul and described sensation, perception, imagination, memory, and rational thought as successive stages in the development of human consciousness.

Inherited instincts, transmitted biologically from generation to generation, stand in contrast to the spiritual essence of humanity. Whenever spirituality weakens, primitive instincts become dominant. In societies where consciousness, morality, law, and culture remain underdeveloped, human beings tend to satisfy their basic needs—such as food, security, reproduction, and property—through instinctive and uncivilized means rather than through moral and rational behavior.

From this perspective, spirituality should be regarded not merely as an individual moral quality but as one of the principal driving forces behind the emergence and development of civilization. It shapes human consciousness, regulates social relations, strengthens ethical values, and creates favorable conditions for sustainable cultural and civilizational progress. Consequently, the study of spirituality within the framework of civilization theory offers new

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methodological opportunities for understanding both historical development and the future prospects of society.

In conclusion, spirituality constitutes one of the fundamental factors determining social development, human perfection, and the advancement of civilization. In the context of the democratic reforms and market-oriented transformations currently being implemented in Uzbekistan, the preservation, enrichment, and transmission of spiritual values remain among the country's most significant strategic priorities. As emphasized by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, alongside a strong economy, a strong spiritual foundation serves as one of the principal pillars of the development of the New Uzbekistan.

The education of the younger generation in the spirit of national and universal values, together with fostering respect for the country's historical, cultural, and spiritual heritage, is an essential prerequisite for sustainable national development. In this regard, strengthening historical memory, preserving cultural continuity, and promoting moral responsibility contribute significantly to the formation of an enlightened, patriotic, and socially active society.

Furthermore, comprehensive scholarly research on the role of spirituality in the emergence and development of civilizations represents one of the most important tasks of contemporary social philosophy. A civilization-based approach makes it possible to reveal the intrinsic relationship between spirituality and civilization, demonstrating that spiritual values function not merely as cultural phenomena but also as essential mechanisms of social stability, human progress, and historical continuity.

Spirituality protects individuals from ignorance, extremism, and moral degradation while directing them toward intellectual maturity, patriotism, creativity, and constructive social activity. Consequently, strengthening spirituality should be regarded not only as a cultural or educational objective but also as a strategic factor ensuring sustainable development, national identity, and the long-term progress of society. Therefore, preserving the rich spiritual heritage of the Uzbek people while harmoniously integrating it with universal human values constitutes one of the most important conditions for the successful development of New Uzbekistan in the twenty-first century.

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