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FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF SOCIAL SPIRITUAL STABILITY AND IMPROVING THE RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

Abstract: This article is devoted to further strengthening spiritual stability in society and improving the religious environment. The relevance of spiritual education and education, especially among young people, is of high priority in the modern world. Globalization and technological progress, despite their advantages, also bring new threats, including the loss of national and spiritual values. To solve complex economic and social problems, it is necessary to develop spirituality and education, as they are the foundation of progress and stability. The desire for spiritual education and literary development of young people plays a key role in this process. Such efforts also contribute to the reintegration of children and women, which contributes to strengthening society and reducing poverty.

Key words: globalization, values, education, peace, youth, literary development, society.

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Introduction

Any state, any nation is powerful with intellectual potential, high morale.

Sh.M.Mirziyoev

As the head of our state said, today it is more important than ever for the public to wake up and become active in the reform process. Why is this so? It's no secret that in the current era of globalization, humanity faces significant challenges. While we reap the benefits of modern science and technology, negative influences seep into our families and consciousness, creating confusion. This threat impacts many, especially our youth. In such a scenario, one way to counter this global threat is through enlightenment. Raising our children with a strong spiritual foundation isn't just the responsibility of schools, neighborhoods, or families; it's a universal task.

Materials and Methods

In recent years, several decisions aimed at the further development of spirituality and enlightenment

have been made in our country [1]. Consistent reforms aim to create a new chapter in Uzbekistan's history. This shift has elevated the importance of spiritual and educational work in our state's politics. However, as global competition intensifies and conflicts of interest escalate, globalization also brings unforeseen challenges alongside its many opportunities. Threats against national identity and spiritual values are on the rise. In this precarious situation, it's crucial to foster spirituality in young people, encourage them to read books, and support the growth of Mutola culture among the youth. Books play an unparalleled role in nurturing a balanced generation, as Mutola imparts knowledge and enriches one's spiritual realm.

Given this, there's an urgent need to publish literature that enhances the intellectual potential of the youth across various genres. We must also rejuvenate our libraries, increasing the repertoire of socially significant literary works and elevating their quality.

Challenges in the economic and socio-political spheres can be addressed through the advancement of spirituality. A nation's progress and the power of the state are significantly influenced by its spiritual depth.

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In countries with a strong spiritual foundation, negative traits like ignorance, jealousy, negligence, selfishness, laziness, gossip, and betrayal find no foothold.

Why do some families today lack kindness and harmony, with increasing disinterest in maintaining relationships? Why are some parents indifferent to their children's upbringing? The future of our homeland is intrinsically linked to how we raise our children. Traditionally, fathers have been seen as the pillars of families, embodying wisdom and righteousness. However, today, in some families, the pivotal role and wisdom of fathers are absent. The growing instances of family discord, divorces, crimes, and property disputes are concerning [2].

To address this, we must foster kindness and harmony within families and communities, curtail vices, prevent family breakdowns, and bolster collaboration between state and public organizations on pressing issues. An individual's character is shaped by qualities like purity, generosity, sincerity, benevolence, honesty, faithfulness, respect for parents, and loyalty to family. Similarly, one's national identity is built on pride, patriotism, responsibility for the nation's destiny, respect for the national language, history, literature, arts, customs, traditions, and adherence to the state's laws and systems. Being proficient in one's profession and being socially aware and supportive are also paramount.

Luminaries from our past, such as Farghani, Khwarazmi, Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ulughbek, Bukhari, Termiziy, Marghilani, Motrudi, Zamakhshari, and others, not only excelled in science but also disseminated it. They widely promoted Enlightenment, taught, and mentored disciples. The Turkestan School of Enlightenment boasts a rich history and vast heritage. Figures like Mahmudhaja Behbudi, Munavwar Qori Abdurashid Khan's son, Ashurali Zahiri, Saidrasul Saidaziziy, Ishaq Khan Ibrat, Ahmad Donish, and others believed that Enlightenment was the key to freeing the country and its people from national oppression and ignorance. Abdullah Avloni, one of the shining beacons of the Enlightenment movement, famously asserted, "Science is the mentor, life, leader, and salvation of men." This sentiment became a cornerstone of the Enlightenment Movement's ideology.

An enlightened individual is well-informed. Knowledge elevates a person's virtue. Being educated and enlightened is vital for overcoming challenges, both financial and spiritual. A person lacking knowledge and education is vulnerable. Broadly speaking, enlightenment imparts knowledge, skills, and competencies. It shapes spirituality, enhancing society's creative capacity. Thus, enlightenment is a multifaceted concept that fulfills society's educational needs. Spirituality and knowledge, intrinsically linked, thrive in harmony. Achieving this balance

ensures our youth develop into spiritually grounded, patriotic, humane, and genuine individuals.

Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazzali once remarked on the importance of acting upon one's knowledge, cautioning against mere theoretical understanding devoid of practical application. Many luminaries from our land showcased an exalted blend of spirituality and enlightenment, serving as beacons of knowledge and wisdom. Thanks to their elevated spirituality and enlightenment, their legacies shine brightly. It underscores that, in today's era, the path to national enlightenment is through spiritual and educational growth. For a prosperous future, our people need spirituality and enlightenment as much as they need water and air. Education and upbringing must proceed hand in hand, for the journey to the human soul begins with education.

Mahmudhaja Behbudi, in the early 20th century, emphasized the importance of education for progress, asserting that "to make a mark in the world, worldly science and knowledge are essential." The rapid advancements in today's technological age underscore the veracity of his statement. Balancing both secular and religious values is crucial as they enrich and complement one another. A society bereft of spiritual and educational wealth will never realize economic and socio-political progress. In today's fast-paced era of globalization, spiritual education holds paramount importance. Issues in one domain often have their roots in shortcomings in another.

Without a solid foundation in spiritual education, challenges across socio-political, economic, and environmental domains remain insurmountable. Scientific advancements can be misdirected when devoid of ethical considerations. It's disheartening to note that some of today's brightest minds, instead of addressing global issues like healthcare and environmental conservation, are contributing to the creation of advanced weaponry. Regrettably, the vast expanse of the internet, a testament to human ingenuity, is riddled with content promoting vice and harm.

A spiritually grounded individual, even with modest means, is content and considerate of others. It becomes evident that our world's salvation lies in spirituality and education, not just in power, wealth, or weaponry. When analyzing global complexities, it's vital to view them through the lens of spirituality, understanding foreign influences and assessing their impact.

It's worth noting that we're committed to building a secular state, a principle enshrined in our Constitution. A secular state ensures equal rights for all religions, guarantees education for its citizens, and upholds the freedom of creative expression in science and cultural realms. Education in a secular state shapes its society's identity, fostering informed and active citizens who support the state, propelling society forward.

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The experience of most countries, especially developed ones, indicates that religion can not only coexist with a secular state system but also effectively collaborate with it towards national upliftment [4]. Democratic states don't just respect the religious beliefs of the majority but also ensure equal regard for minority religions and those who choose not to follow any faith. The Quran underscores this spirit with the profound phrase, "There is no coercion in religion."

In the evolving social fabric of Uzbekistan, the role of religion has been primarily defined by its constitutional status. The Constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees freedom of conscience for all citizens. Every individual has the right to follow any religion or none at all. It establishes the separation of religious organizations from the state and ensures their equality before the law.

However, what do we witness in our society, particularly on social networks? Regrettably, many, including the revered "qori" brothers and the youth, publicly and knowingly interfere in state affairs. They mislead the public with claims that certain activities aren't in line with Sharia, thus creating confusion and misguidance.

Another concerning issue arises from recent statistics that indicate a decline in legally registered marriages in Uzbekistan during the pandemic. This drop, coupled with a reported surge in divorces and births, could be attributed to problematic religious propaganda. Online platforms and series glamorize the idea of polygamous marriages over legally recognized unions, contributing to societal complications. As a consequence, we see an alarming number of cases involving unpaid alimonies, suggesting that many children are financially unsupported.

The decline in legal marriages, rise in Sharia marriages, and the increase in orphans can largely be attributed to a lack of legal awareness, especially among women. When will we address these concerns? How long will we allow false teachings to prevail? Misconceptions, like discouraging women from seeking education and pushing them towards domestic roles, only hinder our progress. Our nation, soon to have a population of 40 million, can't be held back by such regressive beliefs. We must resist the views of radicals and fanatics.

Progress can only be achieved through secular education. Our youth must delve deep into subjects like chemistry, physics, mathematics, history, and geography. The ultimate goal of educators should be to ignite critical thinking in students. After all, thought shapes an individual's inner essence. Where there's a lack of critical thinking, ignorance prevails.

It's lamentable that the offspring of those who refuse to think for themselves often inherit this mindset. One of the significant flaws in the Uzbek educational system is the emergence of young people lacking independent opinions. A society that

encourages diverse thoughts thrives, while stagnation in thinking leads to both economic and spiritual decline. Before Europe's ascent, it embraced diverse thoughts and ideas, including economic, technical, and scientific insights, paving the way for progress. We must reflect on our own history and evolution, drawing from the wisdom of our ancestors.

In our journey towards building a secular society in Uzbekistan, it's paramount to ensure that the relationship between the state and religion is based on mutual respect. The state acknowledges the positive potential of religion in shaping its citizens but strictly prohibits its use for ulterior motives, like power grabs or political gains. Our president, in a meeting discussing the referendum results, unequivocally stated, "Uzbekistan is a secular state, and it will remain so. That is the will, the firm choice of our people expressed by the referendum!" [5]. Going forward, every citizen, regardless of nationality, language, or religious belief, is guaranteed freedom of conscience. The policy of fostering harmony between various ethnicities and religions will be consistently pursued. Radicalization or the exploitation of religion for political ends will never be tolerated.

It's evident from the statements that the concept of a secular state in our societal renewal program does not negate the role of religion in socio-cultural life. It's also apparent that the secular state system staunchly opposes any attempts, cloaked in religious claims, that threaten societal harmony, interethnic and interreligious unity, and political and social stability, especially when they have no genuine connection with impartial religious faith.

We reside in a secular state, and while this is paramount, we must also emphasize the other side of the coin. Forces that oppose constitutional rights and freedoms and aim to forcefully alter the constitutional system threatening the sovereignty, integrity, and security of the Republic cannot be tolerated.

Today, it's no exaggeration to say that combating violent extremism and radicalism is among the top priorities not just for individual nations but for the global community. The world is in a state of flux, transitioning from the old world order to a new one, amidst significant tension. In such times, it's crucial to correctly analyze and impartially assess the political, legal, and economic global events.

Given the current global scenario, the challenge of countering fanaticism and extremism remains urgent. Uzbekistan is no exception. Historically, Uzbekistan has been a peaceful abode for diverse nationalities and religions. Historical records laud our ancestors for their respectful treatment of representatives from other religions and their united efforts towards nation-building.

Survey and Findings

Today, over 94% of Uzbekistan's population practices Islam. The country is home to more than 130

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nationalities, 2,241 religious organizations spanning 16 religious denominations, and notable institutions like the Imam Bukhari International Center, Imam Termiziy International Research Center, and Tashkent Islamic Institute named after Imam Bukhari, among others. Moreover, the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan is gaining global renown [6].

Several majestic mosques and religious complexes across Uzbekistan stand as testament to our rich religious heritage. Places like “Minor,” “Islamic father,” “Hazrati Imam,” “Imam Bukhari,” “Bahauddin Naqshbandi,” and “Imam Termiziy,” among others, have undergone significant renovations. The emerging Center of Islamic Civilization in Tashkent evokes admiration [7].

Throughout our years of independence, consistent efforts have been made to develop a system of religious education. Recently, there’s been a surge in initiatives aimed at highlighting the humanitarian essence of the Islamic religion, combatting ignorance with knowledge, instilling humanistic ideals in the youth, and delving deeper into the teachings of great thinkers. All these endeavors are geared towards ensuring peace, tranquility, and fostering interconfessional dialogue.

The legislation of the Independent Republic of Uzbekistan aligns with international law norms. During our years of independence, over 60,000 Uzbekistani citizens undertook the Hajj pilgrimage, and more than 1,000 citizens visited sacred Christian and Jewish sites. The state offers considerable support to pilgrims. Notably, religious texts like the Quran, Old Testament, and New Testament have been translated into Uzbek and published. Today, numerous religious institutions operate across the Republic of Uzbekistan, exemplifying our deep-rooted tradition of religious tolerance.

Uzbekistan has historically been a harmonious homeland for diverse nationalities and religions. This enduring legacy persists, and religious tolerance remains robust.

Unfortunately, the global landscape today is fraught with challenges as malevolent forces and destructive ideologies threaten the stability of nations. President Shavkat Mirziyoev, in his 2017 conference speech, emphasized that “Islam champions a radiant life, science, and benevolence. It never advocates treason, murder, or violence.” Upholding this belief, the Committee on Religious Affairs collaborates with various organizations to counter religious extremism in society through diverse media initiatives. The focus remains on educating the youth, guiding them away from extremist ideologies, and ensuring the general populace is actively involved in this mission.

Of particular note is our efforts to rehabilitate citizens swayed by misguided ideologies. By providing them with guidance and support, we aim to reintegrate them into society, helping them lead constructive lives.

Independence ushered in a process of renewal across all spheres of social life, including the spiritual domain, marking a period of fundamental change. The stance on religion underwent a radical shift: the atheistic aggression towards religion from the former Soviet system ceased, and freedom of conscience became enshrined in law.

The main peculiarity of the state’s relation to religion lies in ensuring that religion remains separate from politics. After all, every religion primarily emphasizes spiritual and moral ascension. It has been emphasized that cultivating a culture of tolerance in the youth is crucial in the ideological battle against religious extremism and intolerance. For without peace, there can be no progress or democracy, and without tolerance, there can be no peace.

On July 1, 2021, the Presidential decree “On Approval of the National Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Fight Against Extremism and Terrorism for 2021-2026” was adopted [9]. The “roadmap” accompanying the decree and the “National Strategy” outline the following priorities and goals:

- Promoting patriotism, traditional values, and tolerance to counteract extremist and terrorist ideologies;
- Preventing the spread of extremist and terrorist ideas among minors and young adults;
- Empowering women and amplifying their role in counteracting extremism and terrorism;
- Safeguarding long-term overseas residents from extremist and terrorist influences;
- Countering the misuse of the internet for extremist and terrorist purposes;
- Actively involving civil society institutions and media in the fight against extremism and terrorism;
- Enhancing legal sanctions against those involved in extremist and terrorist activities and their financing;
- Refining the legislative framework to combat extremism and terrorism;
- Bolstering international and regional cooperation in this domain.

The document ensures continued comprehensive support for individuals who were once influenced by divisive ideologies for religious reasons. It also underscores the importance of elevating the legal and educational literacy of the populace. An emphasis is placed on training experts in both religious and secular domains who can foster resilience against religious extremism and on harnessing the media’s influence to combat extremism and terrorism.

Furthermore, the “New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026” prioritizes addressing universal challenges through a lens of national interest. Notably, the 82nd goal, titled “The Formation of Effective Mechanisms for the Fight Against Extremism and Terrorism,” carries special

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significance. As part of this development strategy, efforts include:

- Enhancing preventive mechanisms against extremism and terrorism while refining the socio-spiritual environment;
- Cultivating strong resilience against extremist ideologies, especially among the younger generation;
- Broadening the international legal framework for countering extremism and terrorism, and enhancing collaboration with foreign countries and international entities;
- Strengthening personnel and resources for entities engaged with citizens traveling or residing abroad for long durations;
- Promoting information exchange and collaboration with international organizations focused on combating extremism and terrorism;
- Enhancing Uzbekistan's participation in international initiatives centered on information sharing and collaboration in Central Asia's fight against extremism and terrorism;
- Taking a proactive role in global efforts to ensure peace in Afghanistan and integrating the country into regional cooperation initiatives, including those targeting extremism and terrorism.

Uzbekistan has supported the UN's global counterterrorism strategy and has ratified 14 international conventions and protocols to combat terrorism and religious extremism. Furthermore, in this context, Uzbekistan has adopted laws titled "On Combating Extremism," "On Combating Terrorism," and "On Combating the Legalization of Income from Criminal Activity, Financing Terrorism, and Financing the Distribution of Weapons of Mass Destruction," among other regulatory legal acts.

It's worth noting that, during the 47th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, representatives of Uzbekistan participated in an online event organized on July 5, 2021, on the topic "Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children Returned from Syria and Iraq." During this seminar, there was significant concern regarding the nearly 70,000 individuals primarily women and children who are citizens of 57 countries being held in precarious conditions in the "Al-Hol" and "Roj" camps situated in northeastern Syria.

Moreover, Uzbekistan has conducted five operations since 2019, focused on the return of women and children from conflict zones in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In total, 531 individuals were repatriated from these areas.

Conclusion

The global community has lauded Uzbekistan's endeavors to repatriate and reintegrate its citizens from conflict zones, including Iraq and Syria. Few countries have been as proactive in these efforts as Uzbekistan. According to international experts, these efforts are of immense significance. They underscore the recognition of children as victims and emphasize the imperative to safeguard their individual interests via community-level reintegration programs that consider gender-specific issues for both women and children.

The reintegration of repatriated children, women, and families into society serves a dual purpose: it terminates their social isolation and concurrently bolsters peace and stability by mitigating societal poverty.

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