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CONOMIC STABILITY AND THE ESSENCE OF SPIRITUAL SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the issues of spiritual security and economic stability, which remain under-researched compared to other subjects. However, historical evidence suggests that when economic reforms are implemented alongside spiritual processes, they significantly contribute to the development of both the state and society. This research highlights the importance of integrating economic and spiritual dimensions in addressing contemporary challenges. The study also underscores the necessity of developing new perspectives and objectives for scholars, researchers, and experts in this field. Consequently, the article presents insights into organizing economic and spiritual processes as a unified system to find solutions to emerging socio-economic issues.

KEYWORDS: *Economy, Sustainable Development, Spiritual Security, Spiritual Processes, Socio-Spiritual Sector, Individual Spirituality, National Spirituality.*

As globalization progresses, various geostrategic and geopolitical influences are increasingly shaping societies, significantly affecting the worldviews and lives of the youth. Through external and internal forces, political actors and states engage in both overt and covert actions that influence not only economic affairs but also socio-spiritual domains. It is no secret that these activities create various forms of threats and risks within societies. Consequently, extensive research is being conducted to develop protective mechanisms to safeguard societal progress and the dignity and well-being of individuals against potential harm. It is well known that economic principles function as objective laws that cannot be disregarded. Failing to acknowledge these laws results not only in economic shortcomings but also in spiritual impoverishment. At the same time, economic relations include spiritual and ideological aspects, which, if ignored, can lead to economic decline in the long run. If moral values and ethical norms are not sufficiently considered in economic relations and technocratic thinking dominates, economic growth may continue, but moral and social relations will deteriorate, leading to increased distrust within society.

The factor of spiritual security plays a crucial role in ensuring state stability and prosperity. This concept consists of two interrelated categories, and understanding their essence is key to comprehending spiritual security. In other countries, the term “spirituality” may not hold the same meaning as it does in Uzbekistan, where it signifies a social phenomenon inseparable from material life, forming an integral part of human, national, and societal existence, as well as a scientific-philosophical concept [2].

Islamic scholars and reformers Wasil ibn Ata and Amr ibn Ubayd defined the word “ma’ni” as “essence”, emphasizing that “meaning” is the essence of all things, events, and processes in nature and society [2]. The concept of spirituality has been defined in numerous ways in both scientific and public discourse. These definitions differ in content and essence, reflecting the evolution of the concept over time and its broad semantic scope. Additionally, scholars interpret spirituality based on their own philosophical perspectives, personal beliefs, intellectual approaches, and worldviews. As a result, various definitions of spirituality appear in academic literature and media, each differing from the other.

Uzbekistan’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev provides the following definition of spirituality: “For me, spirituality represents mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among people. It embodies the noble aspirations of building a shared future between the state and its citizens. In essence, spirituality is the foundation that defines the quality and essence of all socio-political relations within society. The stronger this foundation, the stronger both the nation and the state become” [3]. This definition serves as a methodological basis for understanding spiritual security and its connection to economic stability.

Uzbekistan’s First President, Islam Karimov, provided a concise and comprehensible definition of spirituality in his book “High Spirituality – An Invincible Force”. He described spirituality as: “Spirituality is an incomparable force that calls a person to inner purification and moral growth, strengthens one’s willpower, perfects one’s faith and beliefs, awakens conscience, and serves as a measure for all perspectives” [4]. This concept fully embodies ideological, philosophical, educational, cultural, religious, and moral views within society.

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One of Uzbekistan's prominent spiritual scholars, A.Erkayev, defines spirituality as: "Spirituality is the degree of humanization in an individual and society, meaning the ability to evaluate and influence events based on humanistic principles" [5].

Thus, spirituality can be understood in three key aspects: As a set of beliefs, values, and ideals ingrained in an individual and society. As a reflection of cultural heritage and traditions within societal norms. As an expression of creative consciousness, an unwavering pursuit of noble aspirations and higher goals. The significance of spirituality and its necessity for the state is eloquently articulated in the "Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language", which states: "Spirituality is the strength of an individual, a nation, society, and the state. Where there is no spirituality, there can never be happiness and prosperity" [6]. Spirituality is an indispensable force; without it, a nation or state cannot achieve true prosperity. It is the source of strength and power for both individuals and the nation as a whole. Spirituality embodies a tendency toward goodness and virtue, a resistance to evil, a pursuit of beauty and truth, honesty and integrity, and adherence to ethical, legal, and cultural principles within society [7].

Each nation has its own unique guiding force that unites and inspires its people. This force varies among different ethnic groups and civilizations. According to M.Imomnazarov, the three fundamental forces that shape Uzbek national identity are national ideology, philosophy, and spirituality. He emphasizes that: "Spirituality is just one aspect of this triad. While crucial, it alone cannot fully resolve economic or political challenges. Likewise, economic and political affairs cannot be delayed in favor of spiritual development. These areas must advance simultaneously and in a balanced manner" [8].

As time progresses, both individuals and society evolve, leading to shifts in perspectives related to spirituality. Various factors influence these changes, including interpersonal relationships, scientific and technological advancements, intercultural interactions, as well as economic and political transformations. Taking these influencing factors into account, F.Fayziyeva, one of Uzbekistan's scholars, categorizes spirituality into four groups: personal spirituality; national spirituality; regional spirituality; universal spirituality [9].

Personal Spirituality – pertains to each individual, encompassing their inner psychological state, behavior, relationships, and other personal attributes.

National Spirituality – represents the unique spiritual wealth and values specific to a particular ethnic group or nation, inherited from their ancestors.

Regional Spirituality – refers to the common spiritual heritage shared by ethnic groups within a specific geographical region. For example, the spirituality of Central Asian peoples or Slavic nations, or on a broader scale, the shared values and similarities between Eastern and Western spirituality.

In regional spirituality, the common identity, cultural proximity, lifestyle, and socio-economic conditions of different ethnic groups manifest as shared spiritual characteristics.

Universal Spirituality – encompasses the spiritual and moral values that belong to all humanity and are recognized globally.

Today, we are pushing spirituality into crisis ourselves, failing to create conditions for its stability and continuity. If we consider the various negative influences on spirituality as "threats", they can be categorized into four main types: threats directed at individuals, threats directed at nations, regional threats, and universal threats. These threats are increasing and intensifying as a result of globalization. Among them, the most dangerous are those that target people's psychological state, aiming to undermine national values and disrupt traditional lifestyles, particularly in the realms of ethics, family structures, and social harmony.

Western philosopher A.Schweitzer emphasized the fundamental role of spirituality, stating: "Among the forces shaping reality, the foremost is spirituality and morality. Everything else is, to some extent, secondary" [10]. Different interpretations of the term "threat" exist in academic circles and literature. The Arabic origin of the word "tahdid" means "intimidation" or "fear-inducing actions", referring to threats, warnings, or the possibility of a dangerous event occurring [11]. This definition suggests that a threat is inherently linked to action. Wherever threats arise, protection mechanisms and security measures become a top priority. Security is a fundamental condition for the existence of human society. The President of Uzbekistan has emphasized:

"We will continue to implement Uzbekistan's policy of strengthening peace and security, built on the fundamental idea that "the Uzbek people need peace and stability". In today's highly unstable and complex world, safeguarding our invaluable asset—peace and tranquility—remains our most significant and primary task. We must further strengthen interethnic and interfaith harmony, mutual respect, and solidarity within our society" [12].

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Thus, security has always been a primary concern for every state and society. Defining security as a core value, V.N.Panin describes it as: "Security is the state of being protected from threats to fundamental values" [13].

Indeed, for any object or entity to exist continuously, its primary need is security and peace. The term "security" originally emerged in military contexts, and in traditional security studies, the phrase "strategic studies" or "traditional security research" became widely used. Scholars first began discussing security as a concept primarily related to military aspects in the 1950s, emphasizing the need for a state's defense mechanisms [14].

Following World War II, the world saw the dominance of two major powers, marking the so-called "golden age" of strategic security studies. During this period, military security research became a priority discipline, and armed forces were considered the only effective means of ensuring national security. Consequently, security policies focused on defining "enemy images" and identifying military threats as the primary elements of national defense.

In the global landscape, where the battle for human consciousness and values is intensifying, the concept of spiritual security is emerging as a top priority. Spiritual security represents a system of protection aimed at safeguarding individuals, nations, and societies from ideological threats and cultural intrusions. It is an integral component of national security, ensuring the preservation of national identity and moral stability in the face of external influences. As a strategic necessity, spiritual security encompasses a continuous process dedicated to sustaining the ideological, psychological, and ethical well-being of a society. This framework is designed to protect and strengthen national values, ensuring their resilience and development against various geopolitical and socio-cultural challenges [15]. Additionally, spiritual security plays a crucial role in harmonizing the psychological, moral, and ethical foundations of a nation, thereby fostering social unity, ideological stability, and long-term cultural sustainability.

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