

## THE HISTORICAL STAGES OF NATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IN UZBEKISTAN DURING THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the historical stages of milliy-ma'naviy tiklanish (national and spiritual revival) in Uzbekistan during the years following independence. Using historical and qualitative analysis, it identifies three main stages: the foundation years of the 1990s, the development and modernization period of the 2000s, and the current "New Renaissance" era. The study shows how cultural, educational, and moral changes helped rebuild the nation's identity and strengthen its values. It concludes that independence in Uzbekistan was not only a political event but also a deep moral and cultural awakening.

**Keywords:** Uzbekistan, independence, national revival, spirituality, cultural identity, modernization, Renaissance.

### **Introduction**

When Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, it began a new stage of development marked by major political, economic, and cultural changes. One of the most important parts of this transformation was milliy-ma'naviy tiklanish, or national and spiritual revival. This process meant rediscovering the country's cultural roots, values, and traditions that define the Uzbek nation. Scholars note that this movement became one of the most influential forces in shaping post-Soviet Central Asia [3,7]. This paper examines the main stages of this revival, its key ideas, and how it helped form the identity of modern Uzbekistan.

### **Stage I (1991–2000): Building the Foundations of National Identity**

The first decade of independence focused on creating the main symbols and ideas of the new state. The adoption of the national flag, anthem, and Coat of Arms showed Uzbekistan's clear effort to restore national pride [2]. The country also began to honor great historical figures such as Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Mirzo Ulugbek, whose names and legacies were once restricted during Soviet times [1]. Religion also played an important role in this revival. Mosques and madrasas reopened, and people could once again freely practice their faith. Islam regained a respected place in public life, and the government encouraged a moderate and peaceful understanding of it. Language reform was another major step. The Law on the State Language, first adopted in 1989 and amended in 1995, confirmed Uzbek as the state language. The decision to move from the Cyrillic to the Latin script in 1993 further strengthened the country's cultural independence. Education became a national priority. The National Program for Personnel Training of 1997 marked a turning point by focusing on creating a new generation of educated and morally strong citizens. This program aimed to connect national values with modern education. Overall, the 1990s laid the groundwork for an independent and value-based national identity.

### **Stage II (2000–2016): Strengthening and Modernizing National Values**

In the 2000s, Uzbekistan worked on deepening the national and spiritual values built during the first decade. The government promoted the idea of *milliy g'oya* (national idea) to unite citizens and protect cultural traditions from foreign influence [4]. During this period, many cultural projects were carried out. The restoration of ancient cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva — later recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites — helped connect people with their history [8]. National holidays, such as Independence Day and Navruz, became major symbols of unity. Education and media played a strong role in promoting patriotism, family values, and moral behavior. Classical works by Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Babur were republished in modern Uzbek, allowing the youth to

reconnect with their heritage. By the mid-2010s, institutions such as Ma'naviyat va Ma'rifat became central to promoting social ethics and civic responsibility. This period helped form a society based on moral strength, education, and national pride.

### **Stage III (2016–Present): The New Renaissance and Modern Reforms**

The presidency of Shavkat Mirziyoyev in 2016 opened a new chapter in Uzbekistan's spiritual and cultural life. His New Uzbekistan (Yangi O'zbekiston) policy aimed to make governance more open, people-centered, and reform-oriented. The idea of the "Third Renaissance" (Uchinchi Uyg'onish Davri) called for combining historical heritage with science, innovation, and technology [5]. Major educational reforms, international cooperation, and youth programs became the foundation of this stage. New universities and cultural initiatives encouraged students to be active, creative, and globally minded. Religious tolerance, freedom of belief, and interfaith dialogue were supported, strengthening Uzbekistan's image as a peaceful and inclusive country. As President Mirziyoyev noted, the development of the nation now depends on "education, innovation, and human dignity" [6]. This new phase connects modern progress with national traditions — showing that modernization and identity can grow together.

### **Conclusion**

Uzbekistan's national and spiritual revival since independence can be seen in three main stages: the foundation of national identity in the 1990s, the strengthening of values in the 2000s, and the new renaissance in recent years. Each stage built on the one before it, shaping both the state and the mindset of its people. This long process shows that independence is not only about political freedom — it is also about rediscovering the soul of a nation. Uzbekistan's experience demonstrates how a country can modernize while keeping its traditions and values alive. The idea of ma'naviyat (spirituality) and milliy g'urur (national pride) continues to guide the country's development and inspire future generations.

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