

# The Cultural and Enlightenment Trends in Southern Regions of Uzbekistan: State, Guardian of the Nation's Moral Principles and Traditions

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## Abstract

In this paper, I study the rise of spiritual and cultural traditions as a political tool for controlling society. I then go on to address its probable disappearance: the Uzbek leadership seems to have begun to move away from this ideological construct inherited from the late “father of the nation.”

**Key words:** culture, enlightenment, Abu Muin Nasafi, Isa at Termizi, Maqom festival

## Introduction

Uzbekistan has been at the forefront of this movement: it began structuring its ideology of national independence around the doctrine of “spirituality and enlightenment” (*Ma'naviyat va Ma'rifat*) in the 1990s. The goal of *Ma'naviyat* is to offer a secular ideology that occupies the space left by the disappearance of Marxism-Leninism, and thus to prevent competing ideational projects—chiefly the Islamic project—from taking root in Uzbek society. In the early 1990s, Uzbekistan wavered in terms of its ideology. Moreover, the Uzbek leadership was concerned about Turkey's attempts to replace Russia in playing an “older brother” role toward Central Asia, and therefore sought to avoid promoting themes of Turkic unity too openly. In the second half of the 1990s, the country progressively withdrew in isolationism, rejecting almost all regional cooperation, and consolidated an authoritarian regime.

The consolidation of rule went hand by hand with the structuring of a new ideology, according to which the state is the primary guardian of the moral principles and traditions of the nation. Therefore, it was determined that the regime should fight against external influences and threats. Some were clearly identified: Western values, deemed decadent; Western foreign influences (the US, Great Britain, Europe at large, all those promoting “color revolutions,” the George Soros Foundation, and sometimes even the Aga Khan Foundation); and radical Islam, seen as a path that “good Muslims” should avoid. In order to protect our people from various ideological threats, to inculcate in society an ideological immunity, it is necessary to arm it with an authentically humanist ideology, comprising in itself a powerful impulse toward the spiritual uplifting of the nation.

In response to these risks, *Ma'naviyat*' advances moral principles such as state paternalism and traditional values: national traditions, patriotism, respect for elders, the celebration of labor, and mahalla as Uzbek civil society. It insists on gender roles: men should remain the breadwinners, and while women can work, they should focus on family issues and occupy a secondary role in household decision-making. *Ma'naviyat*' also promotes a conservative dress code – modest for girls (but no hijab), neat and formal for men (no beard or long hair).

The mission of *Ma'naviyat va Ma'rifat* can be divided into four main areas:

- Promoting Uzbekistan's special path;
- Ensuring loyalty to and support for the regime;
- Protecting Uzbek society from Western values; and
- Preventing young people from having access to mass culture.

Censorship and Banning in the Name of Ma'naviyat. To a greater extent even than in Russia or Belarus, special service workers and representatives of spiritual education centers have penetrated all Uzbekistan's state institutions. Since 2017, a wide network of spiritual centers under the umbrella of the Republican Center for Spiritual Propaganda, a kind of Ministry of Ideology, have taken control over the country's cultural life.

The state agency O'zbekkoncert, for instance, is responsible for controlling the public life of pop stars, including monitoring their speech and enforcing a dress code. In 2014, pop-singer Lola was banned from Uzbek TV and media for wearing a red dress considered too provocative during the concert of Rayhona, another popular singer. According to O'zbekkoncert, her dress "conflicts with the national mentality." The agency went on to comment, "It is a great shame for an Uzbek woman to wear such kind of dress, because they manipulate young people and destroy their spirituality."

Ma'naviyat also plays a pivotal role in structuring Uzbekistan's youth policy. The Communist youth movement, the Komsomol, disappeared with the Marxist-Leninist ideology upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the Uzbek government quickly became concerned about the politicization of youth. I interviewed two young pro-Ma'naviyat activists: Alisher Sadykov, a Youth movement leader from Andijon, and Mirjalol Mirzakhidov, Lead Coordinator at the Young Leaders' Development Project in Tashkent. According to them, youth is the most vulnerable age group, since young people are susceptible to dangerous ideologies. For Alisher Sadykov, Ma'naviyat is the only way to protect the Uzbek people from mass culture and same-sex marriage. "Sometimes our spirituality is more important than economic growth and Western-type modernization," he explained.

The decision of the Cabinet of Ministers "on the establishment of the Directorate for the management and improvement of the Nasafi complex of Abu Muin in Karshi district of Kashkadarya region" was adopted. According to the decision, within the Department of culture of Kashkadarya region in the form of a state institution, the Directorate of Management and improvement of the Abu Muin Nasafi complex in the status of a legal entity is established. The buildings and structures located in Abu Muin Nasafi complex in Karshi district "Qovchin" neighborhood citizens assembly area are provided to the Directorate freely on the basis of operational management rights. The right to free use of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan in the building of the "Aqida" science school in Kashkadarya region is granted.

The following are the main functions of the Directorate:

- ✓ study and wide promotion of the scientific heritage of Abu Muin Nasafi, who made an invaluable contribution to the development of Islamic Science, in particular, the science of aqida;
- ✓ publication of folk and popular treatises on the life and scientific heritage of our great scientists;
- ✓ Timely and qualitative Organization of storage and use of areas, streets, parades, fountains and other external landscaping works in accordance with urban norms and rules, sanitary rules of the complex;
- ✓ the use of architectural structures, the organization of their current and excellent repair work, as well as the maintenance of the handling condition;
- ✓ to carry out measures to preserve valuable species of coniferous and ornamental plants, organize

timely and qualitative implementation of their care, placement and conservation works, to store green lawns, to combat their pests and diseases, to carry out agrotechnical measures, to further landscaping and landscaping of the serviced area;

- ✓ maintenance and use of external lighting networks, artificial irrigation and Fountain systems with the introduction of modern equipment and technologies.

In the year 2021, Special Vehicles and equipment necessary for the management and improvement of the Nasafi complex of Abu Muin will be delivered.

The authorities of Kashkadarya region are entrusted with the task of providing the directorate with qualified technical engineers and production personnel, allocating and placing the necessary administrative and production buildings in the Directorate.

Landscaping work is carried out with strict observance of urban norms and rules, sanitary norms and rules, as well as modern requirements for water management and its appearance. Director of the Directorate is appointed and dismissed by the minister of culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the recommendation of the khokimiyat of Kashkadarya region.

In the city of Shakhrisabz of Kashkadarya region "*Yangi O'zbekiston yoshlari, birlashaylik!*" there was a festival. On June 13-15 in cooperation with regional, city and district authorities, Youth Affairs Agency, Culture, Tourism and sports department, Youth Union and a number of organizations "we are descendants of Amir Temur, we will follow him!" within the framework of five important initiatives, cultural and educational events, meetings with historians, reading, readings, competitions, various contests, youth shows, entertainment performances and sports competitions were organized in the framework of the youth festival. At the end of the festival held in a high mood, a gala concert was held for young people, winners of the contest, young people with disabilities, athletes, journalists and bloggers were awarded with cash prizes.

The President's decree "On measures to prepare for the II international status art conference" was adopted. On February 26, 2019, the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan received the decree "on measures to prepare for the II international status art conference". The Ministry of culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Union of composers and composers of Uzbekistan and the governor of Kashkadarya region approved the proposal on holding the international status art conference for the second time in the first half of September 2020. Also, in accordance with the decree, starting from April 1, 2019, the Republican and global conference will be organized. Within the framework of the promotion, the terms of the competition and the theme of the scientific-practical conference will be announced.

Until June 1, 2020 in the regions of the Republic there will be held Republican competitions on such nominations as concert programs of status ensembles, "Young status performers", "The best work created in status" among composers, as well as creative meetings and master classes with participation of well-known status scientists, experienced status performers. Until August 1, 2020, within the framework of the conference, an international scientific and practical conference program on the theme "Prospects for the development of the status art" was developed.

Also, the list of foreign and local musicians and status scientists, well-known artists, mature specialists, honorary guests participating in the conference will be formed. The status Museum in the city of Shakhrisabz is enriched with historical, scientific and creative resources on this art, ancient and modern musical instruments and other new exhibits. The international status art conference is scheduled to be held every two years in the city of Shahrissabz by the decree of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures for the further development of the art of the national status of Uzbekistan" on November 17, 2017.

On the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, two years ago the ISA Termiziy mausoleum in Sherabad district was landscaped. On the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, two years ago the Isa Termizi mausoleum in Sherabad district was landscaped. On February 14, 2017, the decision of the head of our state to establish the International Scientific Research Center Imam Termizi was adopted. Based on this decision, the International Research Center of Imam Termiziy was built in the city of Termez. It deeply examines the religion of Islam, including the science of hadiths, the heritage of Isa Termizi and Termizis. Textbooks and manuals, popular publications, scientific and practical recommendations aimed at religious education, use in spiritual and moral educational work are prepared.

The great muhaddis gave recommendations on in-depth study of the life and works of Imam Termizi, bringing them to the younger generation, publishing books in a language understandable to our people. It was noted that it is necessary to create conditions for conducting scientific research here, to expand the participation of scientists in international scientific conferences. According to the decree of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to establish the International Scientific Research Center Imam Termizi” on February 14, 2017, a scientific research center named after Imam at-Termizi, a mosque for 2500 seats, a hotel for 138 seats and a tea room for fathers, as well as 5 two-storey residential areas for imams and several Abu Isa Muhammad at-Termizi was born in 824 in Sherabad District of the Surkhandarya region. Having devoted his life to the study and study of the teachings of Ma’rifat, in particular, the Islamic religion, the scientist gained fame to the whole world as the author of the book “Sunani Termizi”, which consists of the most reliable hadiths. This work is still recognized as one of the six most reliable Hadith books of “Kutubi sitta”, which is the source after the Holy Quran Karim.

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