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## THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF VALUES AND THEIR ROLE IN YOUTH SPIRITUALITY

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the essence of the concepts of "value" (*qadr*) and "values" (*qadriyat*) and their significance in human life. The types of values—material and spiritual, personal, national, and universal—are discussed. Particular attention is paid to the role and importance of universal values in shaping the spiritual outlook of youth. The article also examines the views of various scholars on values and the classifications found in the science of axiology. Furthermore, issues related to the crisis of values and its negative impact on the moral and spiritual development of the younger generation are highlighted.

**Keywords:** Concept of value and values, value crisis, axiology, material values, spiritual values, personal values, universal values, national values, classification of scholars' views on values.

### Introduction

Any phenomenon or entity that holds significance in human life and society is expressed through the concept of "values." Values are a generalized concept used to determine the importance of human, societal, material, and spiritual wealth. The system of values is a coherent set of perspectives and attitudes a person forms toward various objects and phenomena in nature and society. This system plays a crucial role in shaping a person's worldview and spiritual-moral orientation.

The roots of the concept of values and their formation trace back to the distant past of human history. Since ancient times, human beings have assessed and categorized events and objects in their environment, shaping essential directions in their lives through such distinctions. In Western countries, the issue of values is studied through a specific scientific field called *axiology*. The formation of this science dates back to the second half of the 20th century, with its initial theoretical



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foundations developed by the German philosopher Nicolai Hartmann and the French scholar Paul Lapie. Axiology, meaning “the science of values,” derives from the Greek words “axios” (value) and “logos” (science, teaching), and it has developed into an independent discipline that analyzes values from a theoretical perspective.

### **Main Part:**

In both Eastern and Western philosophy, values have been a subject of serious interest for great thinkers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and Hegel. These philosophers placed the issue of values at the center of Western philosophical thought. Likewise, the subject is not new to Eastern thinking. On the contrary, Eastern civilization, which possesses a rich spiritual heritage—particularly scholars from the territory of modern-day Uzbekistan—has addressed the concept of values in depth in their works.

Eastern philosophers like Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Bahauddin Naqshband, Ahmad Yugnaki, Imam al-Bukhari, Alisher Navoi, Abdurahman Jami, Mashrab, Avloni, and Behbudi deeply explored the themes of human values, ethics, spiritual growth, and social welfare. With such a profound legacy, it is crucial to analyze the essence of values not only from the Western philosophical lens but also through the rich insights of Eastern thought. The main task today is to rediscover these ideas, reinterpret them in line with the demands of the time and current socio-ethical conditions, and promote their development. Values are considered one of the fundamental categories of national ideology. They encompass ethical norms and standards, ideals, goals, and criteria for evaluating social relations. Humanism, justice, honesty, patriotism, love, peace, the pursuit of freedom, responsibility, conscience, and dignity are central components of the value system. By their nature, values have a socio-historical character and evolve and develop in accordance with the progress of society.

Thus, doctrines about values are constantly developing and gaining new meaning in each historical stage. In philosophical heritage, the role and importance of values in social life have always been a focus of attention. Values are considered one of the core indicators of a society’s spiritual maturity. Human activity, his relationship with the material and spiritual world, and his life needs and



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conditions contribute to the emergence of new values and the development of existing ones. This process, in turn, serves as a foundation for expanding a society's political, economic, and spiritual development opportunities.

In the development of society, a phenomenon is recognized as a value not only because it had positive significance in the past, but also due to its potential for creating future opportunities. Values are the ideological and spiritual foundation through which humans understand the world and engage in purposeful transformation. The essence of each value is determined by its potential to summarize knowledge about society, individuals, and spiritual life, to foster understanding, and to influence social progress. The diversity and expansion of values reflect the ongoing refinement of human cognitive abilities and practical activity.

New values emerge through the intergenerational transmission of scientific, philosophical, and moral knowledge. They also reflect the spirit, demands, and needs of a given era. Every value is shaped by its historical environment, conditions, and social necessities, which are the objective factors influencing their formation. It is impossible to fully and impartially assess values without considering the historical context in which they arose. Just as it is erroneous to judge past events by today's standards, it is equally important to analyze values in alignment with the demands and realities of their time.

Values develop within the framework of environment, natural conditions, professional activity, style of life, social relations, and belief systems. In essence, values are a combination of material and spiritual wealth that has been shaped through a society's historical development and ingrained into human consciousness, capable of exerting positive influence in past, present, and future social life. The values of our people also stem from a profound and rich history. The criteria of honor formed by our ancestors have been transmitted orally through legends, stories, and epics across generations. In tales and works about heroes like Spitamen, Muqanna, Jaloliddin Manguberdi, Tomaris, and Shiroq, universal values such as patriotism, freedom, courage, and humanism are vividly expressed. Moreover, in the sacred Zoroastrian scripture *Avesta*, ancient spiritual values, norms of dignity, and early national ideas of our people are extensively detailed. During the Islamic civilization period (8th–12th centuries),



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philosophical reflections on values further solidified, and divine values presented in the Qur'an and Hadith occupied a central place in the spiritual lives of people. However, it is also noteworthy that during the spread of Islam, Abu Rayhan Beruni lamented in his work *Memories of Ancient Peoples* the loss of certain national values. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the Eastern Islamic civilization enriched our people's values. In this period—characterized by the integration of universal and Islamic values—luminaries such as Abu Hanifa, Imam Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Yassawi, Naqshband, Kibro and others made unparalleled contributions to the development of Islamic philosophy and ethical-cultural thought. They advanced not only religious doctrine but also cultural, scholarly, and moral values on an academic basis, thereby strengthening Islam's standing within global civilization.

At the same time, great thinkers like Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Farabi, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Al-Fargani, Ulugbek, Navoi, Babur, and Lutfi conveyed their philosophical and social perspectives on values, making a substantial contribution to the global heritage of values discourse.

Unfortunately, during the Soviet era, universal values remained abstract and actual axiology did not develop as an independent scientific discipline. Although some scholars began discussing values from the 1960s, the topic was not taught independently in philosophy textbooks until the 1990s. No textbooks or manuals on axiology were published, and students in philosophy, history, or sociology received little to no formal instruction on the subject. Meanwhile, axiology evolved in the West as a distinct field of study, serving as a theoretical foundation for principles such as human dignity, rights, and freedom.

Despite the political fragmentation of Turkestan into emirates and khanates in the second half of the 19th century, the region was eventually conquered by Tsarist Russia and turned into a colonial territory. This historical event caused profound changes not only politically but also ideologically and morally. The colonizers forcibly imposed their values and norms on the consciousness of the local population, contributing to the erosion of national values.

The Jadid Movement at the Beginning of the 20th Century, Manifested as a Spiritual Awakening of the Nation, Emerged as a Reaction to This Crisis. Mahmoudkhoja Behbudi, Abdulla Avloni, Abdurauf Fitrat, Muhammad Cholpon,



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and other Jadids advanced rich philosophical and educational ideas about national consciousness, identity, language, history, and spiritual values through their works. The richness of the philosophical language they used, its harmony with literature, and the depth of their social thought can still serve as an example today. Unfortunately, the spiritual revival initiated by these figures was halted due to political repression under the Soviet regime; the Jadids were persecuted, and their intellectual legacy was banned for many years.

Only after gaining independence did it become possible to approach values from a completely different perspective—based on universal and national principles. During the years of independence, state-level attention has been paid to issues such as the spiritual development of society, the role of values in the upbringing of the younger generation, freedom of thought, and social maturity, creating a solid foundation for scientific research in this area. Most importantly, independence itself became a fundamental condition for forming an independent system of values.

In a colonized society, local values are not dominant; instead, the ideological models of external forces prevail. Only a free and independent state can build a society that is fully formed on national, cultural, and spiritual values and participate equally in the global community. From this perspective, independence put on the agenda the necessity of restoring ancient Eastern values and adapting them to modern social conditions. This process took place through the recognition of national identity and a reassessment of history, language, culture, and values.

In the new era, the system of values being formed has begun to play a central role in the education and upbringing of youth. This has become not only a state policy priority but also a distinct direction in scientific and philosophical research. The re-evaluation of values, their formation based on new realities, and the effective application of these standards in education and upbringing to instill modern spirituality in the consciousness of the younger generation have become among the most important tasks of today.

**In conclusion**, today values serve as crucial criteria that form the spiritual foundation of society and define the spiritual mindset, lifestyle, and social relationships of generations. Through values, an organic connection between the past, present, and future of a nation is ensured. Indeed, every nation lives,



develops, and contributes to global processes through its values. Therefore, studying values and understanding their historical and social essence is of utmost importance, especially in the upbringing of the younger generation. This knowledge and worldview play a decisive role in shaping young people not only as knowledgeable but also as spiritually mature, socially responsible individuals who understand their identity, are patriotic, humanistic, and respect human rights. In today's world, where the flow of information and ideological struggles are intensifying, one of the key tasks facing the state and society is to strengthen the worldview of youth based on their national and universal values and to provide them with spiritual immunity against ideological threats. This requires a deep, systematic, and scientific approach to the issue of values in the education system. From this point of view, introducing knowledge about values into curricula, expanding research in the field of axiology, and properly integrating this knowledge into practical educational processes are of great importance in educating youth as spiritually mature individuals. To sum up, studying values is not only about remembering the past but also about understanding the future and shaping a stable spiritual foundation in the minds of the younger generation. In this process, the most effective path is to act in harmony with both national and universal values.

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