# PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUE OF YOUTH SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION

**Burkhanov Takhir Makhammatjonovich**
Professor, Department of the University of Military Security and Defense of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences (DSc); Professor.
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**Abstract:** This article provides a pedagogical analysis of the spiritual, cultural, and moral education of young people. It examines how, in the context of an increasingly globalized world, the moral upbringing of youth and their positive attitude toward national values serve as key determinants of societal development and sustainable progress.

**Keywords:** youth education, national values, globalization, localization, faith, civilization, mass culture.

It is well known that approximately 30 percent of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of young people between the ages of 14 and 30. Modern conditions and ample opportunities have been created to ensure that they receive quality education and acquire professional skills. At the same time, organizing young people's leisure time in a meaningful and productive manner remains an important priority. The broad opportunities provided for the younger generation in our country are aimed at enhancing their socio-political engagement, fostering moral maturity, broadening their worldview, and cultivating high spiritual values. As emphasized by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: “Educating our children as independently thinking individuals who possess modern knowledge and professional skills, have a strong outlook on life, and are true patriots has always been, and will remain, one of our most important priorities” [1,189].

Therefore, the following factors play a significant role in shaping the younger generation into individuals with high spirituality and strong moral character. These include “the religious beliefs, educational traditions, and upbringing cultivated by our people over several millennia, as well as the cultural heritage encompassing outstanding scholars who made invaluable contributions to the development of all branches of science and learning, together with their works and the rich legacy of folk creativity”. They also include “the traditions, customs, rituals, festivals, and other factors associated with the lifestyle of our people” [5,285].

Great thinkers have expressed diverse yet mutually complementary views on the concept of morality. In particular, according to A. Avloniy, “Morality is a science that calls people to goodness and restrains them from evil” [3, p. 34]. Furthermore, “Morality constitutes the foundation of spirituality; without it, an individual cannot develop as a social person” [6,98].

The declaration of 2008 as the “Year of Youth” in Uzbekistan reflected the country's strong commitment not only to protecting the rights and interests of the younger generation but also to enhancing their competitiveness. To achieve these objectives, the State Program “Year of Youth” was adopted. Likewise, it was no coincidence that 2010 was designated the “Year of the Harmoniously Developed Generation,” as spiritual and moral education is a gradual, integrated, and continuous process.

It is well recognized that adolescence and youth are characterized by diverse perceptions of life, uncertainty, hesitation, and the absence of clearly defined attitudes and positions. During this critical period, the formation of young people's worldview and the determination of their future life path are

profoundly influenced by external factors. In particular, the family, educational institutions, and society as a whole play a decisive role in shaping their values, beliefs, and personal development.

The family, as the primary institution of education and upbringing, is a sacred foundation of society that ensures the continuity of every nation and people. It gives rise to a new generation, preserves and promotes national values, and nurtures children to become spiritually, morally, and physically well-rounded individuals. The family serves as the principal environment and the most influential means for a child's intellectual, moral, aesthetic, physical, spiritual, and material development. Therefore, one of the primary objectives of family education is to develop and implement effective organizational approaches, as well as modern pedagogical methods and tools, grounded in the rich national, cultural, and historical traditions, customs, and values of our people, alongside universal human values, in order to foster the spiritual and moral development of the younger generation. It also aims to ensure the priority of comprehensive personality development, cultivate tolerance and well-roundedness, enhance the general and pedagogical culture of parents and society, and improve educational and enlightenment activities among the citizens of our country.

History demonstrates that humanity has witnessed various ideological and philosophical struggles throughout different periods. In some cases, the forces of goodness and constructive values prevailed, while in others, destructive ideologies gained dominance. The complex and turbulent realities of today's world are likewise rooted in such ongoing ideological processes. In this context, the national idea, which embodies the unique mentality, worldview, and values of the Uzbek people, is becoming one of our principal means of ideological resilience and a vital source of national strength. Therefore, it is essential to consistently instill in young people the fundamental characteristics of the Uzbek national character through educational discussions and awareness-raising activities conducted within families, neighborhoods (mahallas), educational institutions, organizations, and public institutions. These values include honesty and integrity, respect for the past and reverence for historical heritage, respect for the Uzbek language, strong religious faith, appreciation of national traditions and ceremonies, devotion to the Motherland, recognition of the sacredness of the native land, loyalty to parental guidance, respect for a mother's care and sacrifice, a sense of responsibility toward the rich cultural and historical legacy inherited from our ancestors, respect for elders, kindness and consideration toward younger generations, and other enduring moral values. The continuous promotion of these principles contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the younger generation.

Taking rightful pride in one's homeland, the history of one's people, cultural heritage, national customs, traditions, values, and, above all, one's ancestors is a characteristic inherent to every nation. The strength and vitality of a nation are not determined by the size of its population but by its political maturity, the level of its national consciousness, its sense of national identity, social cohesion, and spiritual development. At the same time, the modern world is confronted with numerous threats, including religious extremism and missionary activities, drug trafficking, corruption, and individuals driven by selfish interests who seek to enrich themselves through the labor of others. Such people are willing to violate the principles of social justice, deceive, and exploit others for personal gain. Unfortunately, many young people do not yet fully recognize the necessity of uniting with the state and society to counter these challenges. This is largely because they have not yet acquired sufficient life experience, political awareness, or a well-developed sense of responsibility for preserving the historical and cultural heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors.

Today, one of the foremost challenges is protecting young people from the negative influence of mass culture. In response, Uzbekistan has chosen a path centered on revitalizing national culture, educational traditions, and spiritual heritage. Uzbekistan was the first among the CIS countries to introduce Fundamentals of Religious Studies as a subject in schools, colleges, and higher educational

institutions. The positive outcomes of this educational initiative were soon recognized by several other leading CIS countries. For example, in many higher education institutions in Russia, disciplines such as ethics, aesthetics, and national ideology have not been established as independent subjects but are instead taught as components of philosophy.Practical experience, lessons drawn from real life, and the experiences—including the shortcomings—of other countries demonstrate that the higher the level of independent thinking, intellectual capacity, competitiveness, and critical reasoning among individuals, the less influence mass culture exerts on society. People possessing these qualities are generally not attracted to superficial, shallow, or low-quality cultural and artistic products offered to them.

The second stage consists of the cultural and spiritual outlook, moral values, traditions, and religious and spiritual sentiments that are instilled in an individual from an early age. At this stage, a person develops a sense of belonging to their family, relatives, local community (mahalla), nation, and homeland, recognizing themselves as an integral part of these social and cultural communities. As a result, feelings of national pride and patriotism gradually take root in both the mind and the heart. It is through this process that an individual develops a genuine sense of citizenship and civic responsibility.

The third stage is characterized by knowledge, creative inquiry, wisdom, and intellectual discernment. At this level, spirituality is manifested in human thinking through enlightenment, scholarship, and secular intellectual development. The greatness of our distinguished scholars and thinkers lay precisely in their ability to cultivate this secular spirituality in close harmony with religious knowledge and spiritual values. By integrating intellectual inquiry with moral and religious principles, they achieved outstanding levels of personal and scholarly excellence.

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that, as our spirituality and the future of our society continue to face threats from various destructive ideologies and movements, the methodological foundation of our educational efforts should be built upon the conscious acceptance of progressive experiences and innovations, adherence to national values and the spiritual legacy of our ancestors, and the cultivation of a creative approach to innovation. Such an approach will strengthen the spiritual and moral resilience of the younger generation while enabling them to embrace positive developments without losing their national identity and cultural heritage.

o ensure that our young people grow into free-thinking, deeply reflective, faithful, intelligent, strong-willed, and wise individuals who are capable of forming independent judgments in the face of the vast flow of information, the process of education must begin in early childhood. As they mature, it is essential to instill in their minds and hearts a profound understanding of the history of our homeland, our national values, and the invaluable scientific and spiritual heritage bequeathed to us by our great ancestors. These enduring values should become an inseparable part of their character, serving as a moral compass that guides them throughout their lives.

The lives of the characters in the short story "Ciao, Bambino" by the Georgian writer Nodar Dumbadze serve as a profound lesson for people around the world. Their blind imitation of the Western way of life ultimately leads to the ruin of their future. In the end, all of them experience moral and spiritual decline. Indeed, “To prevent any disease, the human body must first develop immunity against it. Likewise, if we wish to raise our children in the spirit of love for the Motherland, respect for our rich history, and devotion to the sacred religion of our forefathers, we must, figuratively speaking, first strengthen their ideological immunity by cultivating it in their hearts and minds” [4, p. 119].

Today, it is encouraging to observe that the Youth Union of Uzbekistan is implementing exemplary projects in this field. At the heart of these initiatives is the goal of helping young people make informed life choices and encouraging them to contribute their talents, abilities, and potential to the prosperous future of their Motherland. Youth forums and conferences place particular emphasis on protecting young people from the adverse effects of contemporary globalization, fostering the values of religious tolerance, and promoting the study and appreciation of our national traditions and rich

spiritual heritage. These activities play a significant role in strengthening the moral, intellectual, and civic development of the younger generation.

The peoples of the East have historically possessed their own distinctive system of values. Our way of life differs fundamentally from that of the West. Within this cultural tradition, relationships between parents and children, as well as between elders and the younger generation, have long been regulated by principles of wisdom, mutual respect, and justice. Under the influence of globalization, however, the policies of some countries increasingly reflect aspirations to expand their sphere of influence and attain global leadership. In this context, it should be emphasized that the enormous capabilities of modern information technologies have transformed information itself into one of the most powerful instruments of geopolitical influence.

The spiritual and moral character of young people, as members of our society, is profoundly influenced by the policies pursued by the state, as well as by the traditions, customs, and religious beliefs of the nation and its people. In the contemporary era, it is essential not only to make effective use of the progressive ideas and innovations of modern higher education but also to draw upon the values that have evolved over centuries of our nation's history. Harmonizing certain aspects of secular education with religious and moral upbringing contributes to the formation of individuals who possess strong faith, firm convictions, and high moral integrity.

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has rightly emphasized: “However, if we honestly acknowledge the realities of today, we can see the intense struggle taking place throughout the world to win the minds and hearts of people, especially young people. Considering the growing threats posed by religious extremism, terrorism, drug addiction, and ‘mass culture,’ we must never allow our efforts in the upbringing of our children and in the sphere of spiritual and educational development to weaken. On the contrary, we must elevate these efforts to a new level” [1,17]. This statement underscores the urgent need to strengthen the spiritual, moral, and educational development of the younger generation in the face of contemporary global challenges.

In such a challenging environment, our foremost task is to enrich the younger generation with moral virtues, enlighten their hearts and minds, and prepare them to become the true custodians of our nation's future and its spiritual and material heritage. Above all, it is essential to nurture young people who think independently, possess a profound sense of national pride and dignity, remain faithful to their civic duty and responsibility, value hard work, demonstrate determination and initiative, uphold integrity, and embody high standards of spiritual and moral culture. Achieving this objective requires the establishment of a healthy spiritual and moral environment in society, where young people attain a high level of cultural, legal, and intellectual maturity and are provided with opportunities for a secure, meaningful, and prosperous future. In particular, we all share the responsibility of ensuring that moral excellence is reflected in every sphere of young people's lives and activities, since their spiritual and moral maturity is a vital necessity for the sustainable development of society. Indeed, as emphasized by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: “We will mobilize all the resources and capabilities of our state and society to ensure that our young people grow into independently thinking individuals with high intellectual and spiritual potential, capable of competing successfully with their peers in every field at the global level, and living happy and fulfilling lives” [2,14].

Therefore, the spiritual and moral education of individuals is of paramount importance in building a great future and a prosperous society. Competent and dedicated educators play an indispensable role in instilling the nation's spiritual heritage in the minds and hearts of young people. They should be sincere, humane, highly knowledgeable, and professionally competent, capable of establishing effective communication with schoolchildren and university students. At the same time, they should serve as promoters of the national idea and as role models in fostering patriotism, moral integrity, and civic responsibility.

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