

## BELLETRISTIC LITERATURE - A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL UPBRINGING

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20653715>

**Bazarbayeva Mexribanu Raximnazarovna**

*1st year of Master's degree*

*Nukus state pedagogical institute named after Ajiniyaz*

*(Republic of Karakalpakstan, Nukus)*

### **Abstract**

Literature is a fundamental part of humanities education: it provides an aesthetic understanding of the world, fosters a connection between generations, and transmits spiritual and moral values. Through literary images and aesthetic ideals, an individual's emotional and moral character is formed, and their capacity for reflection and making moral choices is stimulated. The stable formation of a spiritually rich, harmoniously developed personality requires a deliberate selection of texts, the moral example of the educator, and the coordinated interaction of family, school, and society to preserve national identity.

### **Keywords**

Spiritual and moral education, literature as a tool for character development, the artistic image, aesthetic ideals, self-awareness, the role of the teacher, and intergenerational dialogue.

Currently, spiritual and moral education is considered one of the most important and fundamental tasks of the education system. Spirituality and morality are regarded as the sole foundation that ensures the transmission and development of culture, including educational practices, from one generation to the next.

The educational process is aimed at cultivating in the younger generation such virtues as charity, trust, responsibility, a strong civic position, patriotism, patience and endurance, mercy and compassion, the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and a readiness to serve people and the Motherland. Goodness, decency, honesty, and sincerity – these are the seeds that must be sown in the minds of students.

The responsibility of the family, school, and society as a whole is to raise a child in such a way that their moral actions become a stable trait of their character. The sources of students' spiritual and moral formation are art, science, and religion. In school, special attention should be given, first and foremost, to the art of the word – a resource actively utilized in literature lessons.

Literature is a cultural phenomenon; its uniqueness is manifested in the aesthetic mastery of the world and in the artistic representation of the richness and multifaceted nature of human life through a system of images. Russian artistic prose and poetry reflect the totality of the nation's intellectual life; a powerful force is concentrated within them that strongly influences the reader, helping young people to master spiritual and aesthetic values common to the nation and all of humanity, and guiding their emotional and moral sphere.

The issues of spiritual and moral education through the mediums of literature and native language have been researched in the scholarly works of D.S. Likhachyov, Yu.G. Kruglov, T.V. Efimova, V.Yu. Troickiy, and others. In the works of G.V. Volkov, M.S. Jirova, M.A. Nikitina, M.Yu. Novickiy, N.M. Sokolnikova, T.Ya. Shpikalova, and others, spiritual and moral education is examined from the perspective of folk pedagogy. Researchers such as N.A. Belkanov, B.V. Emelyanov, V.P. Kuzovlev, V.N. Mezinov, T.I. Petrakova, T.A. Petrunina, A.N. Strijev, E.A. Chursina, and A.V. Motorin have specifically focused on the problem of spiritual and moral development, linking it to the revival of Orthodox education in Russia. The works of Orthodox thinkers – John Chrysostom, Saint Theophan the Recluse, Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, the righteous John of Kronstadt, and others, as well as the works of Orthodox scholars and educators like V.V. Zenkovskiy, B.A. Nichiporov, S.S. Kolomzina, and others, play a significant role in fulfilling this task.

Literature is one of the leading academic subjects in secondary school, shaping the spiritual image and moral compass of students. This concerns the preservation of the core essence of national identity, namely, the ability to remain a people, retaining its character, traditions, and uniqueness, without losing historical continuity and intergenerational bonds.

A book ensures a conversation between generations; it reflects the spiritual testament, advice, and accumulated experience of countless lives left by the older generation for the younger. The unique spiritual and moral impact of literature lessons lies in the fact that the young adolescent reader gets the opportunity to compare their life perspectives with the authoritative opinions of writers, to comprehend their relationship to the world and humanity, and to advance in the process of self-discovery by learning from the experiences of others.

Second-generation normative documents emphasize that literature is one of the foundations of humanities education in secondary school, defining a student's intellectual and emotional-moral development, cultural level, and their mastery of their native language, speech, and thinking skills. Studying literature provides not only the skills to understand it, establish one's ethical and aesthetic position, and demonstrate creative ability, but also knowledge about the development of the

literary language, along with the capacity to use it as the most important tool of consciousness.

Literary education contributes to the formation of a holistic worldview and national consciousness in students, without which the stable spiritual development of the entire society is impossible.

Quality literature cultivates the ability to independently ask questions, seek well-founded answers, and reflect on important issues; thus, it prompts the formation of an individual in accordance with the author's moral principles. In many works of Russian literature, the issue of moral choice holds a central place; here, the pedagogical task is to develop in students the ability to strive for good and resist evil, and to cultivate in young people core spiritual virtues such as benevolence, empathy, compassion, and mercy.

The formation of a spiritually rich, harmoniously developed individual, possessing high spiritual-moral ideals and aesthetic standards, requires the purposeful selection of literary texts, as well as the personal example of the teacher as a bearer of spiritual-moral guidance. Only the combination of meaningful literary material and the teacher's moral authority ensures an effective educational impact.

Literature, as a secondary school academic subject, possesses unique opportunities for the comprehensive personal development of students. The purpose of literature lessons is to awaken and stimulate students' desire for knowledge and their moral initiative. The concept of "upbringing" is interpreted as the growth of a person through spiritual "nourishment": growth is not limited to saturating the body with material wealth; it is primarily achieved through spiritual food, which is first and foremost the word.

The development of the personality of the rising generation does not occur only within the confines of literature lessons or during reading at home; the entire educational process itself is oriented toward this task. The distinguishing feature of literature is its impact on human consciousness through the power of artistic images. The image, as a spiritual tool, reflects the potential of the ideal; the image, especially when realized in a literary text, appears as a meaningful form of the spiritual world.

For the high school student, fiction can serve as a methodological guide and a moral compass, helping them find answers to important existential questions about human nature.

Firstly, in the process of reading classical works, an adolescent's emotional and sensory sphere develops; by sympathizing with the ideals in the text and aesthetically visualizing them, the "humanity within a person" awakens. Aesthetic

ideals – the highest examples of beauty, goodness, and truth expressed in words – contribute to the moral transformation of the individual. The creators of each era strive for their own ideal, which is defined by social and cultural contexts.

Secondly, literature stimulates self-discovery by posing fundamental questions such as "How to live a worthy life?," "What is more important – to be or to have?," "To be or not to be?," and by encouraging deep reflection upon them. These problematic motifs have been repeatedly explored in world classics, as well as in philosophical, artistic, and religious discourses. Art, in its broadest sense, helps one to understand the "dialectic of the soul" (L.N. Tolstoy) and "human breadth" (F.M. Dostoevsky), and it prompts reflection on one's own destiny. As André Maurois noted, significant books do not leave a person the same after they have been read.

Thirdly, literature creates a space for readers to express themselves and unlock their creative potential, which is an important condition for their spiritual, moral, and personal formation.

Different literary works affect the reader in various ways, depending on their reading perspective and how they perceive the text.

- To understand the author's intention is to comprehend the author's artistic idea and creative purpose.

- To perceive the emotional content is to sense the emotional-expressive layers of a work.

- An empathetic connection is sharing in the fate and feelings of the work's characters.

- Critical-analytical reflection involves evaluating, critically discussing, and interpreting the text, while supplementing the author's position with one's own thoughts.

In a literature lesson, different educators may focus on various aspects: one might emphasize aesthetic issues, another the poetic features of the text, and a third might concentrate on the historical-receptive context and how the work is perceived by students. Most importantly, the work should awaken the students' curiosity, and the teacher must demonstrate a genuine interest in the material being studied.

If a person has the desire to read, has developed the skills to comprehend a text, and is prepared to emotionally perceive its artistic content, then literature can be the key to their spiritual and moral development. Literature fully realizes its educational potential only when the reader's inner motivation, ability to interpret the text, and openness to aesthetic feelings are combined.

**Conclusion:** Literature is a primary instrument of spiritual and moral education, ensuring the aesthetic mastery of the world, the connection between

generations, and the transmission of spiritual and moral principles. Through artistic images and aesthetic ideals, an individual's sphere of emotional and moral receptivity is formed, and their capacity for self-awareness and ethical choice is developed. Reading classical works cultivates empathy, critical thinking, and creative self-expression. The effectiveness of literature's educational impact depends on the deliberate selection of literary works, the teacher's professional and ethical principles, and the coordinated efforts of the family, school, and society. Only when meaningful literary material, the teacher's personal example, and the students' inner motivation converge can literature realize its educational potential, helping to preserve historical continuity and national identity.

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