

FORMATION OF MORAL CULTURE AND SPIRITUAL ORIENTATIONS OF YOUTH

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Abstract

The article examines current issues of forming moral culture and spiritual orientations of youth in the contemporary context of social development. It analyzes the role of the family, educational institutions, and society in the upbringing of the younger generation capable of independent thinking, social responsibility, and active participation in public life. Special attention is given to spiritual and moral values as the foundation of the harmonious development of personality.

Keywords

spirituality, morality, ethics, education, independent thinking, independence, responsibility, active public activity, educational and upbringing activities.

INTRODUCTION

Modern society places high demands on the personality of young people. In the context of globalization, rapid development of information technologies, and expanding intercultural interactions, the formation of moral culture and spiritual orientations of youth is acquiring particular importance. The level of spiritual and moral development of the younger generation largely determines the future of the state, the stability of social relations, and the preservation of national traditions.

As noted by the Head of our state, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, one of the most important issues that constantly concerns us is the moral image of our youth and their worldview. Today, time is changing rapidly. Who feels these changes and transformations most strongly? Of course, it is the youth. Undoubtedly, young people should move in step with the times and meet its requirements. However, at the same time, they must not lose their national identity. The idea of who we are and whose great ancestors we are should always resonate in their hearts and encourage them to remain committed to national self-awareness. How can we achieve this? Only through education, education, and education. These tasks place great responsibility on the school, family, mahalla, and society as a whole. The

ongoing work in our country to improve all levels of the education and upbringing system – preschool, school, secondary specialized, and higher education, as well as the construction of new and reconstruction of existing educational institutions – will contribute to the formation of a harmoniously developed younger generation [1].

The education of youth should be aimed not only at acquiring knowledge and professional competencies, but also at developing moral qualities, a sense of responsibility, respect for universal human values, and national cultural heritage [11, p. 15].

MAIN PART

In order to ensure the implementation of the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-4307 dated May 3, 2019, “On Approval of the Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education and Measures for Its Implementation,” as well as to educate young people as active citizens with a broad outlook capable of independent living, extensive efforts are being carried out throughout the country.

The purpose of this Concept is to gradually teach and develop, in accordance with age-specific stages, the social qualities and life skills necessary for the younger generation to lead an independent and happy life. Education cannot be separated from upbringing, nor can upbringing be separated from education. Only when these two processes are organized in a harmonious and continuous manner can they foster patriotic young people who possess good manners, moral values, and high spirituality, while at the same time being educated, cultured, intellectually and physically healthy, broad-minded, critical thinkers, and qualified professionals equipped for the modern world.

Today, one of the primary goals of our state is to educate young people – the foundation of the future – as a spiritually, culturally, morally, politically, legally, economically, and socially mature generation capable of independent thinking.

The First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, emphasized: “The spiritual foundation of our home and the pillars of our state’s future are very ancient and very strong. No one can deny this. Our history has roots that stretch back thousands of years.” When studying history, it is important to remember that it is the “memory of the people” and therefore deserves careful and respectful treatment. People who lack historical memory become mankurts – individuals without a homeland, moral values, or a sense of civic responsibility. Knowledge of history not only helps people understand their past but also enables them to navigate contemporary challenges, choose their path in life, and determine the direction of the future. The study of the rich and truly unique past of our people

through the prism of major historical facts, events, phenomena, and processes; the contribution of our great ancestors to the treasury of world civilization; the activities of the broad masses of people and their struggle for the progress and prosperity of the Motherland, as well as for freedom and independence; and the analysis of the socio-political, economic, and cultural aspects of the historical development of our region from ancient times to the present day, in close connection with world history, constitute the main objective of this course. Presenting the history of Uzbekistan to the younger generation in all its complexity—with its achievements and challenges, its diverse socio-political, economic, and cultural ties, its prospects for social development, the intensity of human passions, the conflicts of personalities, and all its contradictions and difficulties—helps enhance the political culture of young people and shape their social values. This is especially vital in a new pluralistic society characterized by diverse viewpoints, multiple approaches, and a multi-party system. Such understanding forms the foundation for nurturing high spirituality and strong moral values among the younger generation. Interest in our origins and in understanding how we achieved today's accomplishments has not diminished; on the contrary, it continues to grow stronger year after year [3].

The problem of moral education occupies an important place in pedagogical science. According to V. A. Sukhomlinsky, “morality begins with respect for a person” [9, p. 48]. This statement emphasizes the need to cultivate in young people a respectful attitude toward others, as well as a willingness to cooperate and provide mutual assistance.

K. D. Ushinsky noted that “education, if it wishes happiness for a person, should not educate him for happiness, but prepare him for the work of life” [10, p. 63]. This idea highlights the importance of developing diligence, responsibility, and independence as key qualities of an individual.

Spirituality is one of the most important components of human culture. It is manifested in a person's aspiration to seek truth, goodness, and beauty, as well as in the ability to evaluate one's actions from the perspective of moral norms and ideals.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi emphasized that human perfection is achieved through education and moral upbringing [4, p. 27]. According to his teachings, a harmoniously developed individual should combine intellectual growth with high moral qualities.

Particular importance in spiritual and moral education is attached to such values as honesty, justice, compassion, respect for elders, love for one's homeland,

and responsibility for one's actions. These qualities shape the civic position of young people and contribute to their successful socialization.

Moral culture is a set of moral principles, beliefs, rules of conduct, and personal qualities that determine how an individual interacts with other people, society, the state, family members, and oneself. It is formed under the influence of society and is the result of a long process of education and upbringing.

One of the key tasks of modern society is the education of young people aimed at the development of a well-rounded personality. The spiritual enrichment of an individual and the overcoming of alienation from one's own nature do not occur automatically. They require purposeful efforts directed both toward creating favorable material and social conditions and toward utilizing new opportunities for moral growth that emerge at each stage of historical development. In this comprehensive process, personal development is supported by all the material and spiritual resources available within society.

However, the existence of objective sociocultural and institutional prerequisites alone does not guarantee the formation of an integrated and harmoniously developed personality. In this regard, a purposefully organized, systematic, and scientifically grounded educational process becomes fundamentally important. Such a process is based on the identification and consideration of the patterns and regularities of youth personal development and is viewed as a necessary, universal, and institutionally determined form of human growth.

The development of a free, humanistically oriented, autonomous, and socially responsible individual is directly and functionally connected with the system of moral and spiritual values. Spirituality and morality conceptually imply transcending egocentric attitudes, overcoming the pragmatic and utilitarian orientation of behavior, and embracing the universal values of human culture and the moral experience of civilization.

In this context, the goals, values, and meaning-oriented attitudes of a spiritually and morally mature individual, rooted in a system of supra-individual and axiologically significant foundations, perform the function of the highest normative and value-based criterion guiding a person's orientation within the sociocultural environment. They also serve as the fundamental basis for processes of personal self-determination and the value-meaning construction of an individual's life strategy.

What should be understood by spirituality and morality?

Morality is a system of views, beliefs, norms, and value judgments that regulate human behavior. It also encompasses actual human conduct, including motives for actions,

the results of activities, feelings, and opinions expressed in interpersonal relationships. Morality represents the sphere of an individual's subjective understanding of good and evil.

Ethics (or moral conduct) is the practical manifestation of morality that is reflected in people's behavior. It is the ability to perform good deeds not under compulsion, but through inner conviction and conscious choice, based on the principle of voluntariness.

According to Ozhegov's Dictionary, "Spirituality is a quality of the soul characterized by the predominance of spiritual, moral, and intellectual interests over material ones" [8].

Spirituality is sometimes regarded as the comprehensive development of the individual and the formation of a highly moral and aesthetically developed personality capable of creating and building relationships according to the principles of beauty. At other times, it is interpreted as an inner quality of the individual and one of the fundamental components of human consciousness.

It is the aspiration of an individual toward chosen goals and ideals, serving as a value-based characteristic of consciousness. Spirituality defines the human way of life and is expressed through the desire to understand the world and, above all, oneself.

The problem of spiritual and moral education of the individual has always been one of the most significant issues in pedagogy and social development, and under contemporary conditions it has acquired particular importance. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stated: "In our country, all reforms, transformations, and large-scale programs are united by a common purpose. This purpose is to raise our children to become mature and competent individuals in every respect" [2, p. 412].

The family is the first and most significant institution of an individual's socialization. It is within the family that the earliest notions of good and evil are formed, along with behavioral norms and the foundations of a moral worldview.

Educational institutions continue the process of an individual's moral development. The modern education system should ensure not only the transmission of knowledge but also the formation of students' spiritual and moral qualities. This objective is achieved through educational and extracurricular activities, thematic discussions, cultural and educational projects, volunteer initiatives, and the active participation of young people in community life.

Particular importance is attached to the development of critical and independent thinking. Young people should be able to analyze information, make informed decisions, and assume responsibility for the outcomes of their actions and activities [12, p. 41].

One of the principal aspects of educational and upbringing activities in higher education institutions is the cultivation of students through national traditions,

while the task of spiritual and moral education remains one of the highest priorities. The teaching staff strives to develop the following qualities in students:

- Moral feelings (duty, faith, conscience, responsibility, patriotism, and citizenship);
- Moral character (compassion, tolerance, and benevolence);
- Moral position (the ability to distinguish between good and evil and to demonstrate selfless love and devotion);
- Moral behavior (readiness to serve people and contribute to the welfare of one's homeland).

Modern youth represent the most important resource for the socio-economic and cultural development of the state. Their participation in public initiatives, volunteer movements, scientific research, and educational projects contributes to the strengthening of civil society and the development of social institutions.

The formation of an active civic position is impossible without a high level of moral culture. Responsibility, patriotism, respect for the rule of law, and a commitment to the common good are among the key values that should guide the education and upbringing of the younger generation.

A. S. Makarenko emphasized: "To educate a person means to cultivate in them prospective paths for the future" [6, p. 112]. These words reflect the need to form life goals based on spiritual and moral values.

In the educational process, methods such as persuasion, personal example, stimulation, and encouragement can be used. It is advisable to organize thematic evenings, discussions, and special events, such as museum visits, as well as to introduce students to and involve them in volunteer activities. Role-playing games, dramatizations, theatrical performances, and screenings of documentary and feature films addressing ethical issues may also be conducted. It is important to engage parents and the family in this work as well.

A special place is occupied by forms and methods of work that introduce young people to the world of art and music, where humanistic values are embodied, and where traditional educational methods are combined with students' own artistic activities.

The ultimate result of applying both active and passive educational methods should be the development of moral feelings, convictions, and relationships, which reflect an individual's spiritual level and their assimilation of moral and spiritual values and ideals.

One can speak of a person's morality only when they behave morally out of an inner motivation or need, and when their own views and convictions serve as the

controlling factor. The formation of such views, convictions, and corresponding habits of behavior constitutes the essence of moral education.

A person's morality is usually judged by their behavior. However, behavior is a very broad concept that encompasses all aspects of an individual's life activity. Therefore, to reveal its moral essence, it is necessary to identify the smallest unit that still retains the properties of the whole. Such a minimal unit of behavior can be considered an act (or deed).

The moral orientation of a personality is revealed not in individual actions, but in its overall activity, which is assessed primarily through the individual's ability to actively express a life position. The moral value of a person lies in their readiness to uphold the ethical ideals of society in their chosen field of activity. The described approaches to the concepts of spirituality and morality, despite their diversity, make it possible to identify a certain invariant core present in all the definitions of these phenomena discussed above.

In our view, the spiritual and moral education of young people is the process of explaining to them the content of moral norms in society, in order to show the importance of these norms in public life, where national and cultural processes aim at searching for the content of high human qualities based on their significance, developing skills for establishing positive relationships, and self-development as a personality. It is a process of defining the content of competencies:

- involving students in the study of the spiritual-educational and historical values of national heritage, the way of thinking, traditions, and customs of our people, which form the basis of national values;
- improving the rational use of national values in "spirituality hours" and "days of spirituality" held in higher education institutions;
- maintaining fidelity to national values, preserving them, enriching them, and passing them on to future generations so that they become integrated into the consciousness of each student;
- fostering in each student a sense of responsibility, awareness of duty to ancestors, living for the benefit of the nation, contributing to the development of the homeland, enhancing the nation's prestige, and engaging in selfless, honest labor and the struggle for the glory of the people and the prosperity of the country;
- in the process of teaching subjects in higher education institutions, using national values to prepare individuals with deep knowledge, willpower, faith, courage, initiative, diligence, perseverance, the ability to defend their point of view, and dignity;

- showing students that each value contributes to the formation of human personality, especially youth, shaping their sense of duty, responsibility, pride, and status as citizens;
- presenting to students the role of national values in socio-economic, spiritual-cultural, and political life;
- widely promoting national values among students and making extensive use of forms, methods, and tools that have emerged in the process of social renewal and the development of creative thinking.

All of this should contribute to the overall spiritual and moral revival of society and its successful development. It should also have a positive impact on progress and the formation of social well-being, as well as on overcoming crisis and negative phenomena in the socio-cultural life of our country.

In addition, the educational and upbringing process in higher education institutions provides students with the opportunity to learn state-oriented thinking and approaches to pressing issues of modern times, to develop high moral and ethical standards in relation to politics, and to realistically understand the capabilities, achievements, and shortcomings of people in the formation and development of a lawful social state and civil society.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the formation of moral culture and spiritual values among young people is one of the most important tasks of modern society. An effective solution to this task is possible only through the comprehensive cooperation of families, educational institutions, and governmental and public organizations.

The development of spirituality, morality, independent thinking, responsibility, and civic engagement contributes to the upbringing of a harmoniously developed personality, capable of successfully adapting to modern conditions and making a meaningful contribution to the development of society and the state.

The formation of a citizen of a free, just, democratic, and independent society requires purposeful education and the development of a set of necessary competencies and personal qualities. Among these qualities are communicative competence, analytical thinking, tolerance towards others, independence, entrepreneurship, initiative, and other socially significant abilities.

In this regard, one of the key tasks of the academic teaching staff in higher education institutions is to develop in students a system of universal human values that give meaning and direction to their life activities in a multidimensional social reality.

The practical significance of studying social and humanitarian disciplines lies in the formation of civic and patriotic consciousness, the expansion of young people's worldview regarding the historical development of the region, as well as a deeper understanding of the processes of state independence formation and the building of a democratic society.

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