ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL IMMUNITY IN THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A REQUIREMENT OF THE TIMES

Toshpulat Nazarov
teacher, Department of Educational Management
Jizzakh State Pedagogical University
E-mail: toshpolatnazarov@gmail.com
orcid ID:0000-0001-9234-9629

Abstract: This article discusses the growing need for spiritual immunity and its significance in an era of increasing access to social networks. It examines the role of education in strengthening spiritual immunity, the importance of cooperation between parents and teachers in improving the effectiveness of upbringing, and the essential role of exemplary role-model–based education.

Keywords: education as a "source," Internet, Internet users, spirituality, spiritual immunity, educational environment, integrated approach to child upbringing, status of spirituality, "mass culture," humanism, compassion, justice, conscientiousness.

In today's rapidly developing world, issues of education and upbringing require heightened awareness and responsibility. If we look back at our recent history, teachers and books—once the primary "sources" of education—held extremely high value. Teachers were regarded as guides and representatives of the most enlightened segment of society. Whenever a person felt the need for knowledge, the teacher was considered the sole source of guidance and support.

Today, however, when the need for knowledge arises, the Internet—often referred to as the most advanced "teacher" of the globalization era—can instantly provide answers. Through the Internet, it has become possible to access libraries located on the other side of the world.

According to statistical data, the number of Internet users has exceeded 55 million in the United States and China, and more than 8 million in Japan. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany follow closely, while the Russian Federation is approaching the million-user threshold. In Uzbekistan, access to the international Internet network is provided across almost all regions through international channels operated by the state company UzPAK. Nearly 50 Internet service providers are registered in the country. The number of Internet users in Uzbekistan exceeds 300,000, and more than 300 national websites were operating on the Internet as of 2002.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), data on "Internet users per 100 inhabitants between 1997 and 2017" indicate that as time progresses, society's relationship with the Internet continues to evolve. Today, more than half of the world's population uses the Internet.

As the number of Internet users continues to grow in our country, the influence of online information on our national value system requires heightened vigilance. The Internet is not an infinite ocean; it also has boundaries. According to calculations by the British company Netcraft, by 2012 there were nearly 600 million websites worldwide. This number continued to increase dramatically, reaching over one billion sites by 2015. Meanwhile, by the end of 2011, the number of Internet users exceeded two billion, with Asia accounting for the largest share due to its large population.

As of 2019, approximately 59 percent of the world's population had Internet access, amounting to 4.57 billion active users—an increase of nearly 3 percent compared to the previous year. Of these, 4.2 billion were mobile users, and 3.81 billion actively used social networks (Data Center Report, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly expanded access to remote work. Before quarantine measures, approximately 15 percent of Americans worked from home, whereas this figure later increased to nearly 50 percent. Platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Duo, Skype,

WhatsApp, and Facebook experienced unprecedented growth in usage, demonstrating the Internet's increasing role in professional and social life.

Based on these studies and statistics, it can be concluded that in the coming years the scale of the Internet and the number of websites may approach the size of the world's population. The Internet is becoming a comprehensive space for work, education, and entertainment. Consequently, the expansion of the Internet's boundaries depends directly on how it is used.

As noted above, the Internet has, in many ways, become today's "teacher." As its influence grows, the importance of spiritual immunity increases accordingly. Before discussing spiritual immunity, it is necessary to define the concept of spirituality and its essence.

Spirituality reflects a person's inner intellectual and emotional world. It encompasses philosophical, legal, scientific, artistic, ethical, and religious views. The term "spirituality" originates from the concept of "meaning." While a person has an external appearance and behavior, their inner world consists of life goals, thoughts, aspirations, emotions, and values. This inner world constitutes spirituality. Spirituality provides individuals with moral strength and psychological support and is closely connected to enlightenment and culture. It does not emerge spontaneously but is formed through continuous learning, experience, and self-development. The richer a society's spirituality, the more developed that society becomes.

Education and upbringing in families and educational institutions must be organized in a way that protects young people from harmful and alien ideas. To achieve this, strong cooperation between families and educational institutions must be established. When inconsistencies arise between these environments, a child's worldview may develop in conflicting ways. Therefore, educational institutions must work closely with parents to eliminate such inconsistencies.

At the next stage, parents and teachers should jointly develop unified approaches to shaping children's character traits and behavior and implement effective educational methods in practice.

In this regard, attention should be drawn to the videoconference meeting on the education system chaired by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on August 23, 2019. During the meeting, the President emphasized the declining status of the concept of "spirituality" and warned against neglecting moral education in the face of consumerism and mass culture.

In general, many forms of negative mass influence can be countered through proper upbringing. Education is the primary factor that strengthens spiritual immunity. In an era of rapidly developing information and communication technologies, the need for spiritual immunity has become increasingly evident. Information disseminated through social networks—whether textual, visual, audio, or video—can influence users in various ways, making it essential to cultivate critical thinking and moral resilience.

As the great scholar and founder of medicine Abu Ali ibn Sina once stated:

"It is better to prevent a disease than to treat it."

This idea serves as the fundamental basis of our argument. Spiritual immunity can provide solutions to future challenges. We must not allow the Internet—often called the most advanced "teacher" of the globalization era—to replace the role of teachers and parents. Spiritual immunity cannot be formed through knowledge alone; it must be nurtured through human qualities such as compassion, conscience, justice, and humanity.

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