



## PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OF FORMING SPIRITUAL IMMUNITY IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Bakhriddin Umarov

International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan,  
Professor of the Department of "Psychology of Religion and Pedagogy",  
Doctor of Psychological Sciences  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21159885>

**Abstract.** This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of the psychological mechanisms involved in forming spiritual immunity in young people. Spiritual immunity is interpreted as an internal psychological defense system that protects the individual against negative ideas, destructive information, moral crises, and socio-psychological threats. The article highlights the role of the value system, critical thinking, emotional stability, social responsibility, national and religious-spiritual identity, family, and the educational environment in developing young people's spiritual immunity. It also presents psychological and pedagogical recommendations for strengthening spiritual immunity among young people.

**Keywords:** spiritual immunity, youth psychology, values, psychological defense, critical thinking, spiritual education, social influence, emotional stability.

### Introduction

In today's conditions of globalization, the rapid growth of digital information flows, and diverse ideological influences, the healthy formation of young people's consciousness, worldview, and behavior has become one of the most urgent tasks. In particular, the Internet, social networks, mass culture, false religious-ideological ideas, and destructive information directly affect the psychology of young people. From this point of view, the formation of spiritual immunity among young people is not merely an educational or ideological task, but also an important mechanism that ensures psychological stability, personal security, and social adaptation.

In Uzbekistan, the systematic organization of spiritual and educational work, the enhancement of young people's intellectual potential, consciousness, thinking, and worldview, as well as the strengthening of their ideological immunity, are among the important areas defined at the level of state policy. In particular, the resolution "On Additional Measures to Improve the Effectiveness of Spiritual and Educational Work" pays special attention to raising the worldview of the population, especially young people, and strengthening their ideological immunity. In addition, the "Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education" defines the tasks of implementing spiritual education step by step within the family, preschool education, general secondary education, specialized secondary education, and higher education systems.

### Relevance of the Topic

Youth is an important stage in which a person's worldview, value system, social position, professional goals, and life ideals are formed. During this period, a person is highly sensitive to external influences, strongly oriented toward novelty, and actively engaged in the process of self-awareness. Therefore, it is of great importance to form an internal psychological defense system in young people against negative information, radical ideas, social pressure, the influence of mass culture, and moral instability.

According to UNICEF, more than one in seven children and adolescents aged 10–19 lives with a diagnosed mental health condition; furthermore, more than half of mental health conditions begin in childhood. This information shows that work with young people should not be limited to providing knowledge alone; it is also necessary to strengthen psychological support, value formation, emotional stability, and social protection factors.

### **The Psychological Meaning of the Concept of Spiritual Immunity**

Spiritual immunity is the individual's inner stability and capacity for choice in relation to negative ideas, moral deviations, spiritual emptiness, destructive information, and socio-psychological pressures. It may be compared to medical immunity: just as biological immunity protects the organism from harmful external influences, spiritual immunity protects the individual from psychological, moral, and ideological dangers.

From a psychological point of view, spiritual immunity consists of the following components:

1. A value system — determines what is important, what is right, and what is acceptable for a person.
2. Critical thinking — the ability to analyze information and distinguish false information from reliable information.
3. Internal locus of control — the individual's sense of responsibility for his or her own decisions and actions.
4. Emotional stability — the ability to manage oneself under conditions of stress, pressure, and negative influences.
5. Social responsibility — awareness of one's duty to the family, society, nation, and humanity.
6. Spiritual identity — the individual's awareness of his or her national, cultural, and religious-spiritual roots.

### **Psychological Mechanisms That Form Spiritual Immunity in Young People**

1. The mechanism of internalizing values. Values are internal psychological criteria that regulate a person's behavior. A young person assimilates certain moral norms in the family, in educational institutions, and in the social environment. This process takes place through the transition from external control to internal control. In other words, the young person moves from the level of "I must not do this because I will be punished" to the level of "I must not do this because it contradicts my values."

From this point of view, the main condition for spiritual immunity is to instill values in the minds of young people not through coercion, but through explanation, discussion, life examples, and personal example.

2. The mechanism of critical thinking. In the information age, one of the most important psychological foundations of spiritual immunity is critical thinking. Young people who possess critical thinking do not immediately accept every piece of information; rather, they analyze its source, purpose, evidence, and consequences. This is especially an important protection against false religious ideas, radical appeals, the influence of mass culture, and manipulative content on social networks.

To develop critical thinking, it is advisable to use discussion, case analysis, question-and-answer activities, problem situations, comparison of information, and evidence-based reasoning methods in the educational process.

3. The mechanism of emotional stability. Young people may fall under the influence of negative ideas or unhealthy groups not only because of lack of knowledge, but also as a result of emotional emptiness, loneliness, depression, a sense of injustice, or feeling unnecessary. For this reason, emotional stability plays an important role in the formation of spiritual immunity.

An emotionally stable young person understands his or her feelings, manages stress, does not lose self-control in the face of negative influences, and is able to make healthy decisions in difficult situations. In this process, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, empathy, patience, forgiveness, and positive coping strategies are of great importance.

Research on religious and spiritual coping shows that religious faith and spiritual values can, in certain cases, help people overcome stress, find meaning, and maintain hope. However, "negative religious coping," that is, avoiding problem solving, blaming oneself, or simply leaving everything to fate, may intensify psychological problems. Therefore, spiritual immunity must be formed in connection with a healthy, conscious, and active life position.

4. The mechanism of social identity. A young person seeks answers to questions such as "Who am I?", "Which values do I belong to?", and "What is my place in society?" National, cultural, and spiritual identity provides internal support for answering these questions. Young people who know their history, language, culture, and national and religious-spiritual heritage develop a stronger sense of self-awareness.

However, for identity to be formed in a healthy way, it must develop not on the basis of rejecting others or intolerance, but in harmony with tolerance, respect, a culture of communication, and universal human values.

5. The mechanism of the family environment. The family is the first psychological school of spiritual immunity. Parents' style of communication, moral example, attitude toward the child, and the atmosphere of kindness, justice, responsibility, and religious-spiritual values in the family form the child's internal value system.

Studies have noted that parents' religious-spiritual views, family communication, and harmony between parents are associated with a child's psychological adaptation and social competence. At the same time, it has also been shown that religious conflicts or strong pressure may lead to negative outcomes. Therefore, spiritual education in the family should be organized on the basis of love, explanation, personal example, and consideration of the child's age-related characteristics.

6. The mechanism of the educational and community environment. Schools, lyceums, colleges, and higher education institutions are important socio-psychological environments in shaping young people's spiritual immunity. In these environments, young people acquire knowledge, make friends, express themselves, master social roles, and learn independent thinking.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, the development of a child and adolescent is determined not only by individual characteristics, but also by the interaction of the family, school, peers, culture, and the broader social environment. Therefore, cooperation among the family, educational institution, neighborhood community, mass media, and public organizations is necessary in forming spiritual immunity.

### **Recommendations for Developing Spiritual Immunity in Young People**

First, spiritual education should be conducted not only in the form of lectures or moral advice, but also through interactive lessons, trainings, case studies, and analysis of real-life situations.

Second, it is necessary to develop critical thinking and media literacy among young people. They should learn to verify information sources, recognize manipulation, and protect themselves from fake news and radical ideas.

Third, open communication with children in the family, a trustworthy emotional environment, and personal example should serve as the main means of upbringing.

Fourth, it is advisable to organize spiritual and psychological prevention programs in educational institutions through cooperation among psychologists, teachers, group leaders, and parents.

Fifth, spiritual emptiness can be prevented by developing young people's social activity, volunteering, sports, art, reading, scientific inquiry, and professional goals.

### **Conclusion**

The formation of spiritual immunity in young people is one of the most important socio-psychological tasks in the present era, when globalization, digital information flows, and various ideological influences are becoming increasingly intense. Spiritual immunity is not merely a person's ability to resist external negative influences; it is a complex psychological mechanism that reflects the individual's internal value system, capacity for independent thinking, emotional stability, moral responsibility, and life position.

The analysis shows that the formation of spiritual immunity in young people should not be carried out through one-sided educational influence, but through the cooperation of the family, educational institution, neighborhood community, peer environment, mass media, and the wider public. This is because the worldview, beliefs, behavior, and values of a young person are formed under the influence of several socio-psychological environments. Therefore, the process of developing spiritual immunity must be continuous, systematic, and adapted to the individual psychological characteristics of young people.

As discussed in the article, the internalization of values, the development of critical thinking, the strengthening of emotional stability, the formation of social responsibility, the awareness of national and religious-spiritual identity, and the creation of a positive social environment are of great importance as the main psychological mechanisms of spiritual immunity. In particular, critical thinking and media literacy are important psychological tools for protecting young people from false information, radical ideas, manipulative influences, and destructive movements.

At the same time, emotional intelligence and psychological stability play a special role in the formation of spiritual immunity. Young people who can understand their emotions, manage stress, control their behavior, and adopt a healthy attitude toward life difficulties are more resilient to negative influences. Thus, spiritual immunity is not limited to knowing moral concepts; it is also closely connected with the individual's psychological maturity, inner confidence, volitional qualities, and culture of social relations.

The role of the family in strengthening the spiritual immunity of young people is invaluable. Parents' personal example, open and sincere communication with the child, an upbringing style based on kindness, fair demandingness, and respect for the child's personal opinion create the first foundation of spiritual stability. Educational institutions, in turn, should

continue this process through scientific knowledge, social activity, critical thinking, teamwork, and spiritual-educational activities.

In conclusion, forming spiritual immunity in young people does not mean subordinating them to ready-made rules; rather, it means educating them as independent-thinking, self-aware, tolerant, responsible, and psychologically stable individuals who are loyal to national and universal human values. Such young people do not lose their life position in the face of various negative ideas, spiritual threats, and social pressures; on the contrary, they act on the basis of healthy thinking, moral choice, and social responsibility.

For this reason, strengthening the activities of psychological services, introducing spiritual and psychological prevention programs in educational institutions, organizing educational and psychological seminars for parents, developing media literacy and critical thinking among young people, and explaining national, religious-spiritual, and universal values through real-life examples are among the important practical tasks in developing spiritual immunity among young people. Young people with strong spiritual immunity become an important form of human capital that ensures the intellectual, moral, and social development of society.

### References:

1. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4307. "On Additional Measures to Improve the Effectiveness of Spiritual and Educational Work."
2. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 1059. "On Approving the Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education and Measures for Its Implementation."
3. Bronfenbrenner, U. *The Ecology of Human Development*. Harvard University Press.
4. Pargament, K. I. *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice*.
5. King, P. E. *Religion, spirituality, positive youth development, and thriving*.
6. UNICEF. #OnMyMind: Better mental health for every child.
7. Bartkowski, J., Xu, X., & Bartkowski, S. *Mixed Blessing: The Beneficial and Detrimental Effects of Religion on Child Development among Third-Graders*.
8. Hardy, S. A., Dollahite, D. C., & Baldwin, C. *Parenting, Religion, and Moral Development*.

