



Global Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation

Hosted Online from Berlin, Germany

Date: 2nd May, 2026

Website: <https://econferencia.com>

WAYS OF FORMING THE SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEWS OF YOUTH IN NEW UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract:

This article examines the ways of forming secular and religious worldviews among youth in the context of New Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the role of spiritual and moral education, national values, tolerance, and enlightenment in shaping the ideological consciousness of young people. Particular attention is given to the interaction between secular principles and religious values in the educational process, as well as the importance of protecting youth from destructive ideologies through intellectual and cultural development. The research also highlights the role of educational institutions, family, and social environment in fostering a balanced worldview among the younger generation.

Keywords: New Uzbekistan, youth worldview, secular education, religious values, spirituality, tolerance, ideological consciousness, moral education, national values, enlightenment.

Today, nearly 60 percent of our country's population — approximately 21 million people — consists of young people, who are regarded as the “golden fund” of our nation. In the near future, they will emerge within the new “spiritual environment” as intellectually capable, entrepreneurial, and socially active individuals possessing the physical and moral-spiritual strength necessary for building New



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Uzbekistan, shaping the image of the future society, and laying the foundation of the Third Renaissance. Therefore, influencing the consciousness of young people and shaping and developing their worldview in accordance with particular interests has become not only one of our own urgent tasks, but also a priority objective for many other nations.

This tendency is becoming increasingly evident under the conditions of globalization. On the one hand, secular knowledge is expanding at an unprecedented pace and is being rapidly implemented into everyday life within a short period of time. On the other hand, interest in religious sciences is steadily increasing, while ideas promoted in the sphere of religious enlightenment are being perceived by young people as ideological concepts and gradually transformed into firm convictions. Furthermore, distorted dogmatic conclusions derived either from scientific discoveries based on secular knowledge or from the misinterpretation of religious teachings are being used as ideological “banners” to justify violence, sacrifice innocent lives, destroy material and spiritual values created by humanity, and initiate aggressive wars aimed at achieving domination and victory at any cost. Accordingly, it appears appropriate to formulate a section of general provisions reflecting the necessity of developing this concept, together with its objective and subjective factors, as well as the essence and content of its principal notions.

Today, Uzbekistan has entered a new stage of development based on the principle: “Human interests are above all else. The state exists for the people.” The slogan “Let us live freely and prosperously in New Uzbekistan!” has become the unified aspiration of our people. Achieving this goal increasingly requires young individuals whose secular and religious worldviews are harmoniously developed. Since a secular worldview represents a mode of thinking formed on the basis of natural-scientific, socio-economic, political, and legal knowledge concerning events, phenomena, and processes occurring in everyday life, it belongs to the



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system of philosophical forms of thinking that are shaped and developed under the influence of both objective and subjective factors.

In our country, the objective and subjective factors contributing to the formation and development of young people's secular worldview may be clearly observed, for example, within the educational institutions operating under the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These include 10,153 schools, 219 "Barkamol Avlod" schools, and 3 orphanages, where approximately 6.4 million students are acquiring social and natural-scientific knowledge under the guidance of 527,737 teachers and mentors¹.

These factors are manifested in the systematic teaching of exact and natural sciences such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, informatics, history, literature, foreign languages, and spirituality studies within educational institutions. On the one hand, these disciplines provide the scientific and practical foundation for preparing more than one hundred categories of specialists in fields such as engineering, information technologies, genetic engineering, medicine, philosophy, entrepreneurship, pedagogy, psychology, law, politics, and economics. On the other hand, through mastering these disciplines, students and young people are directly influenced by unprecedented scientific and technological transformations taking place in contemporary science, thereby ensuring the continuous and systematic implementation of philosophical educational activities aimed at shaping and developing their secular worldview.

Therefore, as Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized, "New Uzbekistan begins from the threshold of the school. A school is not merely an institution providing education; it must become a cradle of high spirituality for all of us and a center where children are introduced to professions from an early age." Likewise, the progressive scholar,

¹ Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Information Bulletin. August 12, 2025. Available at: <https://www.uzedu.uz/y3#>



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poet, and translator Elbek rightly stated that “The salvation of the nation lies in the school and the teacher².” Consequently, the school serves as the primary institution for providing philosophical education and upbringing aimed at forming and developing the scientific and secular worldview of students and young people.

Under the conditions of a renewing Uzbekistan, the religious-spiritual-enlightenment worldview may be understood as a system of firm faith in God-Allah as the Creator and Governor of existence, together with the perceptions, attitudes, customs, and rituals associated with such belief. In this regard, the objective and subjective factors contributing to the formation and development of the religious-spiritual-enlightenment worldview of young people include the activities of 2,276 religious organizations and 16 religious confessions operating in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Among them are 2,093 Muslim organizations, 166 Christian organizations, 8 Jewish communities, 6 Bahá’í societies, 1 Krishna consciousness society, and 1 Buddhist temple, as well as the Interconfessional Bible Society of Uzbekistan.

In addition, institutions such as the Center for Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan, International Research Center of Imam Bukhari, International Research Center of Imam Termizi, and International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan play an important role in strengthening religious and spiritual enlightenment. Likewise, under the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan operate the “Waqf” Public Charity Foundation, the Tashkent Islamic University, the “Mir Arab” Higher Madrasa, the School of Hadith Studies, and nine madrasas, including two specialized educational institutions for women. Alongside them function the Tashkent Orthodox Seminary and the Tashkent Christian Seminary, all of which serve as

² Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Revised Second Edition. Tashkent: “O‘zbekiston” Publishing House, 2022. pp. 224–225, 227.



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religious-educational institutions contributing to the spiritual upbringing of youth³. Importantly, these institutions teach not only religious sciences, but also natural and social sciences.

According to Shavkat Mirziyoyev: “During the last five years, three laws, four presidential decrees, and numerous resolutions concerning the religious and educational sphere have been adopted. In particular, more than 100 mosques have been built and 555 have been renovated in order to improve conditions for Muslims in our country. A legal procedure for allocating land for the construction of religious organizations has been introduced. The Hajj quota has been doubled compared to previous years. Over the last seven years, more than 60,000 of our compatriots have performed the Hajj pilgrimage. The organization of Umrah pilgrimages has also been legally regulated. Special attention is being paid to the issues of qualification and knowledge in this sphere. The International Centers of Imam Bukhari, Imam Termizi, and Imam Moturidi, as well as the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, are creating a strong foundation for scientific research. Qualified specialists are being trained at the Tashkent Islamic Institute, the Mir Arab Higher Madrasa, the School of Hadith Studies, and the Imam Termizi Secondary Specialized Educational Institution. Furthermore, 30,000 citizens have completed courses on the Qur’an and Tajwid.”

The improvement and maintenance of cemeteries and sacred sites is regarded as a virtuous and socially significant activity. In recent years, memorial complexes dedicated to Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi, Abu Muin Nasafi, Sultan Uvays Qarani, and Suzuk Ota have been renovated and beautified. Construction and restoration works are also continuing at the memorial complex of Imam Bukhari and at the Center for Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan. In addition, the “Waqf” Public Charity Foundation has restored and improved 90 pilgrimage sites and shrines. In order to

³ Religious Tolerance in Uzbekistan. Information Bulletin. Available at: <https://strategy.uz/index.php?news=1014>



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further disseminate the enlightenment ideals of Islam and promote the exchange of experience, international cooperation in the religious and educational sphere is also being expanded. In particular, international scientific-practical conferences entitled “Islam – the Religion of Goodness and Peace” and “The Role of Imam Termizi’s Scientific Heritage in Islamic Civilization,” as well as a Week of Tolerance, were organized in our country this year⁴. The efforts of the leadership of our state aimed at transforming and enriching the worldview of believers deserve high recognition. As a result, representatives of religious communities, acting within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law “On Freedom of Conscience,” and other normative-legal documents related to the development of religious and educational activities, are making a worthy contribution to the formation and development of the religious-spiritual-enlightenment worldview of young people living in our country.

In today’s world, certain influential groups possessing enormous financial resources are exploiting the achievements of modern science, technology, and information technologies in order to appropriate large amounts of financial capital. For this purpose, they disseminate through internet networks materials promoting symbols of evil created by themselves, including artificial intelligence-generated “robotic humans,” manifestations of immorality such as prostitution and sexual deviance, as well as cybercrime and hacking, which symbolize theft in the digital sphere. Such materials increasingly attract young people whose secular and religious-spiritual-enlightenment worldviews have not yet been fully formed. As a consequence, in many cases it is no longer parents, preschool institutions, schools, or universities that educate young people, but rather the mobile phone in their hands. Unfortunately, this small device has ceased to be merely a means of communication and has increasingly turned into a powerful instrument for

⁴ Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Available at: <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/7735>. Accessed: November 28, 2024.



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spreading alien ideologies and disseminating the “viruses” of violence and evil. Therefore, all these developments should serve as a serious warning signal for society⁵. As Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “Today, threats and dangers in cyberspace are intensifying. Radical ideas are penetrating through internet networks that recognize neither borders nor laws. As a result, socially vulnerable groups, especially young people, are unfortunately falling under the influence of various illegal organizations. The entire public must remain vigilant, while religious scholars and respected elders should guide people toward the right path⁶.” Islam, which today is practiced by approximately 2.8 billion people worldwide, is, in its true essence, one of the religions that regards peace, unity, harmony, friendship, and doing good to others as the foundation of human existence. It continuously calls people toward the pursuit of knowledge and promotes enlightenment among society in order to cultivate high moral and spiritual values. However, in contemporary conditions, there are also numerous so-called “pseudo-Islamists” who deliberately distort authentic Islamic sources by extracting individual passages from their original context and interpreting them according to their own interests in an attempt to create instability within society. Through such manipulative interpretations, they poison the minds of young people and encourage them, under the false slogan of attaining the “rank of martyrdom,” to betray their homeland and their people. Furthermore, it is no secret that certain self-proclaimed religious instructors illegally provide religious education to young people in unauthorized “hujras” (informal religious circles). All these circumstances demonstrate the urgent necessity of providing young people with sufficient religious and educational instruction in order to systematically shape and develop

⁵ Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Revised Second Edition. Tashkent: “O‘zbekiston” Publishing House, 2022. p. 284.

⁶ Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Available at: <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/7735>. Accessed: November 28, 2024.



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their religious-enlightenment worldview. In short, overcoming religious illiteracy among youth is increasingly becoming a vital social necessity.

As Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “Another important issue is that certain tendencies are being observed in social life that lead to the devaluation of universal and national values, ancient traditions, and customs which possess strong educational potential and have served for centuries to strengthen the spirituality of our people, while also helping to maintain a healthy balance between secular and religious factors in society. The influence of the ideological educational mechanism aimed at forming broad-minded and spiritually mature individuals appears to be weakening. In particular, insufficient attention paid to subjects related to the national idea within the system of continuous education necessitates increasing the effectiveness of efforts directed toward strengthening ideological immunity in the hearts and minds of the younger generation⁷.”

As a result of concepts such as worldview, science, religion, morality, culture, spirituality, and enlightenment being introduced into the consciousness of school and university students merely as abstract theoretical notions, secular and religious worldviews have increasingly come to be interpreted as mutually contradictory concepts. This situation has created obstacles to young people’s harmonious acquisition of both secular and religious-enlightenment knowledge and has even led to the division of individuals into categories such as “atheists (infidels)” and “religious believers (dogmatists).” In combating such divisions, it is essential to adhere strictly to the principles established in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In particular, Article 33 states that: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, speech, and belief,” while Article 35 guarantees that: “Freedom of conscience shall be guaranteed to all. Everyone shall have the right

⁷ Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Revised Second Edition. Tashkent: “O‘zbekiston” Publishing House, 2022. p. 282.



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to profess or not to profess any religion. The forced imposition of religious views shall not be permitted⁸.” These constitutional principles provide a legitimate legal foundation for shaping and developing the religious-spiritual-enlightenment worldview of school and university students in accordance with the demands of the modern era.

Due to the weakness of consciousness observed among some school and university students, negative qualities such as laziness, dependency, arrogance, and excessive reliance on others often prevail over important personal virtues such as willpower, perseverance, diligence, and continuous self-improvement in acquiring both secular and religious knowledge. Naturally, such tendencies adversely affect the quality and effectiveness of philosophical and religious educational efforts aimed at the harmonious formation of their secular and religious worldviews.

In conclusion, the insufficient availability of educational and methodological manuals designed to support the professional activities of teachers and mentors engaged in philosophical and religious educational work significantly hinders effective efforts aimed at the harmonious formation and development of the secular and religious worldviews of young people.

In order to prevent such shortcomings, it is necessary to develop and implement the “Concept for the Harmonious Formation and Development of the Secular and Religious Worldviews of Youth in New Uzbekistan.” The implementation of this concept would, in turn, become an important structural component of the “Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education⁹” and would occupy a special place as a significant system for the development and realization of normative-legal documents and strategic programs such as the “Strategy for the Spiritual

⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Yuridik Adabiyotlar Publish, 2023. pp. 21, 23.

⁹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Approval of the Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education and Measures for Its Implementation.” National Database of Legislation, 03.01.2020, No. 09/20/1059/4265; 19.06.2020, No. 09/20/391/0777; 10.08.2022, No. 09/22/438/0726.



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Development of Uzbekistan and Its Implementation Program¹⁰,” the “Program of Spiritual and Moral Education¹¹,” the “Strategy for the Humanization of the System of Continuous Education and Upbringing in the Republic of Uzbekistan¹²,” as well as the law “On the Procedure and Principles of Teaching Social Sciences in the Continuous Education System¹³.”

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¹⁰ Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Revised Second Edition. Tashkent: “O‘zbekiston” Publishing House, 2022. p. 263.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 274.

¹² Ibid., p. 234.

¹³ Ibid., p. 234.