



Shashmaqom And Spiritual Immunity: The Role Of Music In Youth Education

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the comprehensive education of youth in the age of globalization and rapid information exchange. Particular attention is given to the role of musical art—especially *maqom* music—in fostering aesthetic and spiritual development. The paper examines the theoretical, practical, and philosophical-religious foundations of the *maqom* tradition and analyzes its influence on the worldview and moral potential of young people. Furthermore, it substantiates the idea that through exposure to *maqom* music, youth can develop genuine musical taste, cultural awareness, and a strong sense of spiritual immunity against the superficial effects of mass culture.

Keywords:

Musical art, *maqom*, aesthetic education, spiritual upbringing, youth morality, national values, musical taste, cultural immunity, mass culture, Shashmaqom.

Introduction

In the current era of globalization, rapid scientific and technological progress, and the growing demand for innovative societies, young people are presented with numerous opportunities to learn, create, and succeed. At the same time, they face serious challenges that require them to make quick and responsible decisions, develop innovative thinking, enhance their intellectual capacity, and, most importantly, remain committed to both national and universal human values.

In a world undergoing swift and dynamic change, preparing young learners for successful participation in social life has become a priority task. This process demands the cultivation of key moral and civic qualities such as responsibility, discipline, legal awareness, cultural literacy, critical worldview, healthy beliefs, enlightenment, interfaith and interethnic tolerance, and spiritual maturity. These traits together form the foundation of an individual's capacity to adapt to the modern world while preserving cultural identity and moral stability.

As noted in contemporary pedagogical and social discourse, youth education must aim to develop the ability to correctly evaluate complex ideological processes taking place globally, to make sound decisions in resolving social problems, and to set clear life goals that help each individual find their rightful place in society. The outcome of such education is the strengthening of family and community relationships, the prevention of alienation and moral indifference, and protection against the negative influences of certain manifestations of “mass culture” [1].

In Uzbekistan, the moral, intellectual, and cultural upbringing of youth has been elevated to the level of state policy, thanks to the direct initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. A recent confirmation of this is the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, issued in July, titled “*On the phased implementation of the subject ‘Tarbiya’ (Education and Upbringing) in general secondary schools.*” This initiative represents a major step toward establishing a systematic,

value-based educational framework across the country.

Education, in its comprehensive sense, seeks to nurture a well-rounded individual who embodies moral purity, spiritual richness, and physical excellence. Among the essential components of this process is the cultivation of aesthetic taste and emotional sensitivity, both of which play a decisive role in shaping an individual's moral worldview and spiritual well-being. In this regard, musical art—and particularly the *maqom* tradition—serves as an effective tool for developing the aesthetic and moral dimensions of youth consciousness, helping to build what may be called *spiritual immunity* against the negative effects of superficial cultural influences.

Materials and Methods

In the system of aesthetic education, art holds a leading position. Throughout history, the content and functions of aesthetic education have been interpreted in various ways. Many scholars and educators have considered aesthetic upbringing as a system of methods, forms, and tools aimed at developing artistic perception, taste, and cultural needs. This approach has long dominated youth education practices.

However, such a one-sided approach to nurturing young people may lead to undesirable results. As noted by educational theorists, *"In the narrow sense of the word, we risk cultivating mere aesthetes — individuals who understand artistic form and external beauty, yet remain spiritually impoverished, unable to perceive or interpret the moral dimensions of art, or to distinguish between true beauty and ugliness"* [2, p. 67]. Hence, shaping aesthetic taste alone is not sufficient. It is essential to help young people discern between what is beneficial and harmful among the influences that directly affect their moral and spiritual development.

For this reason, it is especially important today to form a correct understanding of musical art and to cultivate musical taste among youth. Music, at every stage of social development, has served as one of the most effective means of moral formation and spiritual enrichment. In the modern era—

characterized by technological abundance, accelerated lifestyles, and overwhelming information flow—while intellectual capacity may expand, emotional sensitivity can become impoverished. To prevent such imbalance, comprehensive measures must be implemented to ensure the all-round development of personality, in which music plays a pivotal role.

Moreover, one cannot ignore the growing influence of mass culture, particularly the influx of foreign light-entertainment music, which directly affects young people's mindset, behavior, fashion, and communication styles. Combating these negative effects requires the development of both musical taste and musical (or cultural) immunity—the capacity to resist superficial and spiritually empty artistic influences.

Young listeners must learn to recognize why constantly consuming simple, easily digestible, and cheerful music can have a negative impact on moral and intellectual formation. As the renowned music educator D. Kabalewski noted:

"True art does not deteriorate under the influence of fashion. It lives through centuries, enriching the spiritual world of humankind and never becoming obsolete.

In contrast, popular music usually obeys the unstable laws of fleeting trends. Even the most successful pop songs last for a year, a few months, or only a few weeks. Entertaining works quickly lose their charm and are replaced by the search for something newer and more exciting—an endless and empty cycle." [3, p. 29]

This understanding underpins the methodological framework of the present study: aesthetic and moral education through music must move beyond passive enjoyment toward critical listening, value discernment, and cultural resistance—with *Shashmaqom* serving as a vital medium for fostering deep spiritual awareness and moral resilience among youth.

Results and Discussion

Music is not merely a source of entertainment or leisure; it is a powerful means of awakening refined emotions,

conveying noble ideas, and leading the human soul toward higher moral and spiritual goals. When authentic musical works are listened to attentively and with understanding, they can serve as a profound form of moral education—nourishing those depths of the human heart where words cannot reach. Such music, which has enriched humanity's spiritual world for centuries without losing its timeless essence, is represented most vividly in the *maqom* tradition.

There are compelling reasons why the *maqom* genre has earned such recognition and reverence. Each *maqom* is based on a perfect system of modal scales and melodic patterns, reflecting a highly structured and harmonious synthesis of sound and meaning. This deep theoretical and aesthetic foundation was explored and documented by some of the greatest scholars and philosophers of the Islamic Golden Age, including Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Safi al-Din al-Urmawi, Abd al-Rahman Jami, Khwaja Abd al-Qadir Maraghi, Darvish Ali Changgi, and Alisher Navoi. Their treatises demonstrate that the *maqom* tradition rests upon a comprehensive framework—theoretical, scientific, and deeply religious-philosophical in nature.

Moreover, the lyrical texts embedded within *maqom* compositions are drawn from the masterpieces of classical poetry, composed by eminent thinkers and poets. The poetic dimension of *maqom* performance thus elevates it beyond mere music, transforming it into a medium for the expression of profound philosophical and ethical ideas.

In particular, the *Shashmaqom*—a monumental six-part cycle that crystallized in Bukhara in the mid-18th century—embodies this synthesis of art, intellect, and spirituality. The song texts performed in *Shashmaqom* are based on the ghazals of great classical poets such as Lutfiy, Atoiy, Sakkokiy, Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, and Fuzuli. These poetic sources reveal the lofty intellectual and moral aspirations that underlie the tradition. The *Shashmaqom* repertoire was thus not designed for mass entertainment but

for refined audiences—the learned, the contemplative, and the spiritually inclined.

Listening to and understanding *maqom* music therefore contributes to the formation of an enlightened personality. It encourages depth of thought, sensitivity of feeling, and awareness of the spiritual dimension of human existence. In this way, *maqom*—and especially *Shashmaqom*—functions as both an artistic and educational phenomenon, fostering spiritual immunity in young listeners by linking beauty with wisdom, and emotion with moral consciousness.

Conclusions

All the ghazals performed in the main branches of the *maqom* repertoire are imbued with the theme of divine love. In the vocal sections of *Shashmaqom*, the finest poetic examples—selected for their perfect correspondence with the melodic and rhythmic structure—are performed with deep aesthetic sensitivity. The more attentively a listener understands the unity of melody and poetic meaning, the richer and more enlightened their spiritual world becomes.

The foremost duty of classical music theorists, educators, and performers is to study the *maqom* tradition from theoretical, practical, and philosophical-religious perspectives, and to convey a comprehensive understanding of it to students and young audiences. Through such education, young people develop musical taste, learn to distinguish between genuine and artificial forms of art, and cultivate refined aesthetic discernment.

As a result, they strengthen their sense of national pride and deepen their respect for the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Spiritually mature youth, nurtured by exposure to authentic *maqom* art, are less susceptible to the negative influences of mass culture and are unlikely to follow meaningless or excessively stimulating forms of entertainment music that promote superficiality instead of reflection.

In essence, the *Shashmaqom* tradition not only preserves the nation's artistic and moral heritage but also serves as an enduring source of spiritual immunity—protecting the younger generation from cultural erosion while

guiding them toward enlightenment, harmony, and inner integrity.

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