

earliest known illustration of a telescope

Sadly, when Muslims lost sight of their religious beliefs and their role, responsibilities and obligations, the fervour for scientific achievements began to pale into obscurity.

The following hadith highlights the importance and reward of striving for beneficial knowledge.

"He who pursues knowledge, acquires a lofty position. If anyone goes in search of knowledge, Allah Ta'ala will make easy for him, the path to Jannah." (Abu Dawood)

"Allah will elevate, by stages, those among you who believe, and those who were given knowledge".

(S.58 - V.11)

"Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim (male and female)"

(Ibn Majah)

"Acquire knowledge, and learn tranquility and dignity"

(Omar ibn Khattab ؓ)

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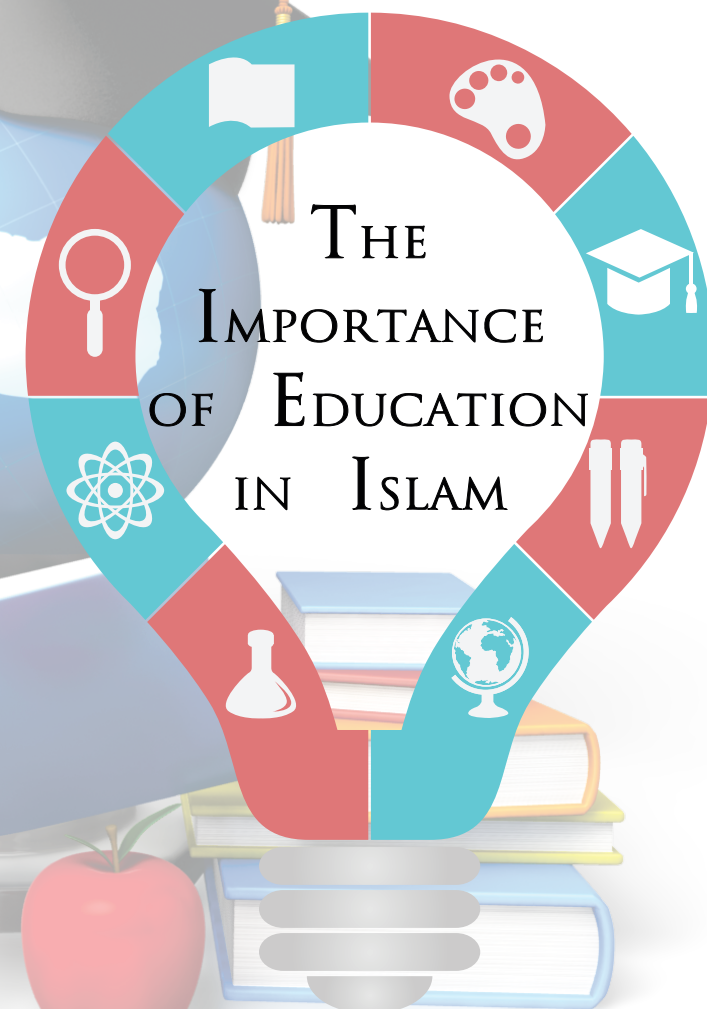
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THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM

Nabi ﷺ stated: "If Allah Ta'ala wishes good for a person, He gives him (a deep) understanding of the Deen." (Bukhari)

- To seek knowledge is a sacred duty.
- This is obligatory on every Muslim.
- The first word revealed of the Qur'an was "Iqra" ... "READ"!

Net summary of the above - seek knowledge, educate yourselves, and be educated. Allah Ta'ala rhetorically questions: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?" (S.39 - V.09)

Nabi ﷺ, on the authority of Hazrat Ibn Abbas ؓ is reported to have stated, "A single scholar of religion is more formidable against shaytaan than a thousand devout persons." (Tirmizi)

It is indeed an undisputable fact that moral and spiritual degeneration of mankind, the Muslims in particular, throughout the world, has and is causing disastrous havoc. In order to emancipate us from this disgraceful degeneration, Allah Ta'ala has ordained the acquisition of beneficial knowledge.

However, central to this injunction, is the structuring of the entire educational process within unswerving Islamic principles, tenets and guidelines. Additionally, it is incumbent upon students to rigidly stick with, and remain within the paradigm of the Noble Qu'ran and the Sunnah. True success of beneficial knowledge is totally and wholly dependent upon this.

"Allah grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and to whom wisdom is granted, indeed, he receives an overflowing benefit" (S.2 - V.269)

This special class of wisdom is not only limited to worldly knowledge, virtues, values, special and technical skills, as well as general know-how about life and living.

It is a fact, that these mundanities are also acquired by students from the other segments of the Ummah - and sometimes with great distinction, outstanding honour and cum laude.

A Muslim student, however, transcends this secular, non-spiritual and tedious barrier. For a beloved Muslim student, striving for beneficial knowledge is underpinned by the specific objectives of:

- a holistic fulfilment of all his needs, viz. all of the above, but, within the clear parameters of the noble Deen of Islam;
- recognising and understanding the Source and Fountain of all knowledge, Allah Ta'ala;
- procuring and sustaining a serious and everlasting connection with his Maker and Creator, Allah Ta'ala;
- a sincere desire to adorn and beautify his life with the "life-giving and invigorating" Sunnah of our beloved Nabi ﷺ;
- attaining a strong sense of spirituality and morality as well as sound Allah-pleasing values; and
- serving as a useful member of the Ummah, engaged in the lofty task of propagating the noble Deen of Islam.

On the authority of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud ؓ, the Messenger of Allah Ta'ala, Nabi ﷺ said, "The position of only two persons is enviable - the person whom Allah Ta'ala bestowed with wealth empowering him to spend it in the way of righteousness, and the person whom Allah Ta'ala gave wisdom (beneficial education), with which he adjudges and which he teaches to others."

(Musnad ibn Ahmed)

It is only through such educational programmes, which are strongly dyed with the "colour of Allah" (S.2 - V.138) that our future generations can become "torch-bearers of Islamic values" and play an effective role in the world.

Muslim scholars made a vital contribution to the enrichment and advancement of human civilization. While Europe was still in the dark ages, religious Muslims were making great advances in the fields of medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, literature, and historic documentations - to mention but a few.

Inter alia, Arabic numerals, with zero as the central catalyst to the advancement of mathematics and algebra, was a giant contribution. Then, sophisticated instruments such as the astrolabe, the quadrant, as well as navigational maps, were first developed by Muslims. Islamic scholars such as the Egyptian physician, Al-Hazin (born in the 10th century) made significant contributions to the study of optics.