



---

# Education And Its Importance In Islam: A Research Review In The Context Of Islamic And Other Civilizations

**Dr. Badshah Rehman**, Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand

**Ajaz Hussain**, Subject specialist (Islamiyat) GHSS Khar, Malakand, KP Pakistan,  
Email: [ajazhussain717@gmail.com](mailto:ajazhussain717@gmail.com)

**Dr. Mian Mujahid Shah**, Lecturer Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand

**Dr. Shakeel ur Rahman**, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand

**Iftikhar Ahmad**, M.Phil. Scholar University of Management and Technology, Lahore Pakistan

**Roman Ali**, M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand

**Submission: March, 05, 2021**

**Revision: March, 25, 2021**

**Acceptance and Publication: April, 22, 2021**

---

## Abstract

Education is the basic human right of every human being, male or female. Any nation who was away from knowledge and education was enslaved or whenever they deprived themselves of the opportunities of education, they lost their identity as a nation. It is also the means of recognition of Allah Ta'ala, that is why the first revelation was revealed about education and learning. In the Quran, the importance and excellence of education has been described at about five hundred places. The obligation of learning has also been mentioned in a number of hadiths. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Acquiring knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims (without distinction between men and women). From this hadith, it is known that the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory on women just as it is obligatory on men. In this paper, a research review of the importance of education and learning will be presented in the light of Islamic teachings.

**Keywords:** Education, Learning, Teaching, Islamic Teachings, Importance

### **Introduction:**

Education is a process through which an individual and a nation gain self-awareness. It improves the consciousness of people of any nation and teaches them the art of living a good life. It empowers the people to achieve collective goals by inculcating in them a sense of responsibility. It is through education that a nation transfers its cultural and intellectual heritage to future generations. Goals and objectives are passed on from one generation to another generation via education. In educational process, a society transfers its overall knowledge, skills, traditions and values to posterity. Moreover, education is a universal process and the life of any nation depends on its education.

An ancient Chinese proverb reflects this very well. "If your plan is for a whole year, then grow crops, if it is for ten years, then grow trees, if it is permanent, then create trained people, because education is the process through which people can be empowered."

### **Importance and Necessity:**

The importance of education, whether it is of a religious nature or secular education, has always played an important role in the development and welfare of the society because it is via education that ignorance is eradicated from the society.

Education is one of the basic needs of a human being. Without education, achieving a just and peaceful society is a distant dream. The development of a country and a nation depends on education. Education, whether religious or worldly, plays an important role in character building. Education is a weapon through which every war in the world can be won. History bears witness that the nations whose people are equipped with education have achieved eminence in the world.

### **The state of knowledge in the world before Islam:**

Before Islam, China, India, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and Rome were considered to be the centers of knowledge, but the fact is that calling the knowledge of other countries, except Greece, is doing injustice to knowledge.

Babylonian, Assyrian and Assyrian sciences were mostly a combination of myths and superstitions and magic. The intellectual ambiance of China and India were also infected by in the art of magic and enchantment. At most, it can be said that China had advanced some steps in ethics and India in theology and medicine. Rome's relation to knowledge remained nominal and that too due to the inherited Greek knowledge. The Romans never indulged in meaningful academic pursuit. Instead, the people of Rome prioritized materialistic glory. Conquest, imperialism, looting and enslaving other nations were its favorite pastimes.

Undoubtedly, great sages were born in Greece and they imparted great wisdom to the human intellect. In fact, Greece was the worthy inheritor of sciences of all the leading civilized nations that existed before it. Especially the sciences of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria were

transferred to it and that made the Greece shine like a sun in the ancient world. Even the source of the rational sciences of the Muslims was Greece, but in Greece, the scope of knowledge was limited to a few people and when it expanded, a kind of luxury took the place of knowledge. The rulers and philosophers of Greece are worthy of respect. However, who can deny the fact that one of the reasons why knowledge never became common in Greece, like in other countries, was that writing was reserved for a certain group in each country. The hieroglyphic script of Egypt, the cuneiform script of Babylon and the talismanic script of China were not common. A few men who belonged to a particular family or class adopted this profession. Knowledge was not preserved via book writing. Instead, it was protected through memorization. Moreover, knowledge was the legacy of certain classes and its dissemination to others was prohibited, the result was that what knowledge remained confined to a few souls and remained a kind of mystical secret.

All the civilizations of the world were built on the basis of religion. No religion except Islam has based its call on knowledge and reason. All other religions did not use reason and reasoning in their call, they only used miracles and power, they did not appeal to the human intellect. Therefore, the importance of knowledge was not recognized in the ancient world. People kept sinking in the swamps of blind imitation, stagnation and superstitions. Greece was a country where knowledge could breathe and flourish. But despite this, even Greece did not tolerate such scholars who did not support its superstitions. It was Greece that gave the cup of poison to a sage like Socrates; it was Greece where Plato could not express his knowledge to any of his special disciples. It was Greece from which Euripides had to flee. It was Greece where Aeschylus was stoned. And it was Greece whose chief philosopher had to flee the country simply because his knowledge could not support the superstitions of his countrymen.

The Christian religion (Christianity) flourished in Europe much earlier than in its native Asia. Christianity in its perverted form destroyed Europe. The empire of Rome was powerful and worldly, but as soon as they accepted the Christian religion, the empire crumbled like a house of cards. As long as the grip of Christianity remained strong, Europe continued to languish in the darkness of ignorance. Christianity had reached its peak in Europe in the second century of Hijri. Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman world. Before this event, Christianity was persecuted in Europe. But as soon as it ascended the ladders of power, the religion of Christianity let loose the reign of terror on other religions and civilizations. It took the extreme form of papalism and blocked the intellectual growth and advancement of humans for fifteen hundred years- an era rightly labelled as a Dark Age.

### **Islam's attitude towards the promotion of knowledge:**

The meaning of knowledge is 'to know' and through knowledge a person gets light. With the help of this light of knowledge he comes out of darkness by treading the path of virtue instead of falsity.

### **Importance of education in the light of Quran and Sunnah:**

Education is very important in Islam. The way Islam has put emphasis on education is unparalleled. No other religion gives so much importance to education as Islam does. The importance of knowledge has been described at various places in the holy Quran. For example, in the first revelation the angel Gabriel ordered Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to say (اقرأ) "Iqra" which means "read". The importance of education can be inferred from the fact that Allah Himself taught mankind knowledge, saying: <sup>1</sup>عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمِ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ "He taught man what he did not know." This is clear from this verse that learning is a sacred process. Also, in the Holy Qur'an, it has been said that fear of God is the foundation of education. Education is obligatory for both men and women (إنما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء)<sup>2</sup> according to Islam.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave the good news of Paradise to those who take the path of education in these words. It has been given

"من سلك طريقا يطلب فيه علما سلك الله عز وجل به طريقا من طرق الجنة"<sup>3</sup>

. It was because of knowledge that the first Prophet Adam was blessed with superior status vis a vis other creatures of God and the last Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, was told to teach. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"I was sent as a teacher". The Prophet Says about education: <sup>4</sup>تَعَلَّمُوا الْعِلْمَ؛ فَإِنَّ تَعَلُّمَهُ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى خَشْيَةٌ، وَطَلَبُهُ عِبَادَةٌ، وَمُذَاكَرَتُهُ تَسْبِيحٌ، وَالْبَحْثُ عَنْهُ جِهَادٌ، وَتَغْلِيمُهُ لِمَنْ لَا يَعْلَمُ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبَدَلُهُ لِأَهْلِهِ قُرْبَةٌ؛

"Teach knowledge because teaching knowledge is good and asking for it is worship. Discussing it is glorification and arguing about it is Jihad, teaching it to someone who does not know is Charity and educating others is a good work.)

There is no doubt that the need and importance of education is an indisputable fact. That is why Islam has emphasized on education irrespective of any age limit. Therefore, the concept of Islam is about the knowledge is: "Get knowledge from your mother's lap till you reach the grave." Is narrated in a hadith by Baihiqi: The prophet said:

اطلبوا العلم ولو بالصين<sup>5</sup>، Seek knowledge even if it is in China.

Since the acquisition of knowledge is a fundamental element of the religion of Islam, below we will examine the fundamental aspects of the Islamic education system.

**Compulsory Education:** Acquiring knowledge is mandatory in Islam. Optional education has no place in an all-encompassing concept of knowledge in Islam. As the acquisition of knowledge is inevitable, it cannot be left to the will of the people. It is a responsibility of a government to highlight the importance of education among the people and encourage them to acquire knowledge. Especially in an Islamic society, there can be absolutely no room for illiterate people. That's why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم<sup>6</sup>. "Acquiring knowledge is a duty of everyone."

During the blessed era of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it was necessary for every new Muslim to obtain knowledge and to that and different people and

educational institutions were active. Hazrat Umar, may God bless him and grant him peace, enforced the teaching of the Qur'an especially for the nomadic Bedouins and appointed patrolling teams for it. Also, patrolling educational teams were appointed to assess the educational ability of the people and assign such persons to teachers as per the need.

**Free Education:** Islam believes in free education. Education was free during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He (peace be upon him) has imposed the responsibility on every Muslim scholar to convey knowledge to others. Therefore, Katman (Concealment of knowledge) has expressed a strong commitment to knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: <sup>7</sup> (من سئل عن علم فكتمه ألجمه الله بلجام من نار يوم القيامة) "Whoever is asked a question about knowledge and hides it, Allah will make him wear the bridle of fire on the Day of Resurrection" Education remained free even in later times. During his caliphate, Hazrat Umar established various schools for the education and training of the new Muslims whose teachers were paid from Bait Al-Mal. During this period, the government, in addition to the Holy Quran, also provided free education of Hadith, Sirat and Ghazwat, Fiqh, Arabic literature, genealogy and literature, etc. In addition to government organization, private teachers also avoided taking salary and generally did not accept remuneration. Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz appointed Yazid bin Abi Malik and Harith bin Abi Muhammad Ash'ari as patrol teachers and fixed their salaries. Yazid accepted the salary, Haris did not. Hazrat Umar said that there is nothing wrong with what Yazid did, but may Allah create many people like Harith.

**Children's Education:** Children are the future of any nation. Managing their education is actually shaping our own future. Hazrat Urwa bin Zubair said:

(وقال عروة بن الزبير لبيته: تعلموا العلم فإن تكونوا صغار قوم فعسى أن تكونوا كبار قوم آخرين)<sup>8</sup>

"You should acquire knowledge. If you are the youngest among the people, tomorrow you will become their elder or leader (because of knowledge). Also, the memory is strong in childhood, that's why Hazrat Hassan Basri said:

(وقال الحسن: العلم في الصغر كالنقش على الحجر.)<sup>9</sup>

"Learning in childhood is like curving an image on stone, and learning in old age is like an image on water." While recommending education, the holy prophet (pbuh) said:

(ما نحلّ والدٌ ولداً من نحلٍ أفضلَ من أدبٍ حسنٍ.)<sup>10</sup>

"No father can give his child a better gift than a good education." And he (saw) said:

(قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لأن يؤدّب الرجل ولده خيرٌ له من أن يتصدّق بصاع.)<sup>11</sup>

"It is better for a man to teach his son good etiquette than giving him one Sa'a in charity."

**Education of the disabled:** In the eyes of Islam, no deficiency or weakness can stand in the way of one's duties. Yes, no one will be burdened beyond his capacity. In the matter of education too, Islam has this peculiarity and distinction that it hid the physical weaknesses with the wealth of continuous good deeds and made those with disabilities to do so

prominently that the healthy people became envious. The most important example of this is Hazrat Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoum (RA) who had the honor that the Prophet (PBUH) appointed him as his deputy of an Islamic state like Madinah in his absence, and he got this honor ten times. While none of the other great Companions could get this honor. Disabled people continued achieving milestone even the later stages of Islam. The biggest proof of which is that in every era and in every art, there have been great scholars who were blind but who did not let their disability to come in the way of their impeccable achievements. Even today, special arrangements for the education of the disabled and people deprived of normal physical abilities due to many reasons is indispensable.

**Women's Education:** It is imperative to make special arrangements for the education of women under which they can get education catering to their basic needs, be it religious or worldly, and there should be no obstacles to obtain this objective. Education of women has to continue in purely Islamic environment without the slightest opposition and even the slightest reaction to the teachings of Islam. In view of the same objectives, he ﷺ fixed a separate day and a separate place for the education of women. During the reign of Hazrat Umar (RA), this policy was expanded further and regular, separate madrasahs for women were established. Women were compelled to get education and the policy was strictly enforced.

Even today, special attention is needed in this regard. The issue of a separate women's university keeps coming up from various quarters. This demand, while valid in its place, is incomplete. The main justification for this demand is the prohibition of mixed education in Islam. This requires that not only at the level of universities, but at every level and stage after primary, there should be separate institutions for male and female students, in which male and female students must have male and female teachers respectively. And this demand is not a new thing, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaheed Millat Liaquat Ali Khan had said on one occasion while expressing his opinion on this issue:

"Muslims do not even listen to these foolish things that boys and girls should be educated together. To-date no one has articulated any compelling benefits of co-education. .... It is possible that there are some people among Muslims who are in favor of mixed education, but the whole nation of Muslims is against it."

**Adult Education:** The importance of adult education is undeniable. Many older people stop learning because they were not able to study in childhood due to some compulsion, inattention or lack of resources. Islam does not set any time for education. This is the reason that among the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) there are a large number of companions who not only acquired knowledge at an advanced age but also reached the level of perfection. This process continued even in later times, but the process of memorizing the Holy Quran in old age continues even today and this is the blessing of the Holy Quran. Hazrat Umar (RA) said: "You people should acquire knowledge

before being made a leader. The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ acquired knowledge in their old age." Therefore, there must be established learning centers for the adult people so that they can cope with the challenges of life in a better way.

**Education of non-Muslims:** In the presence of an Islamic education system in an Islamic state, a non-Muslim may inevitably be concerned about who will provide for his educational needs. But this fear is unfounded. All the affairs of the Islamic state are governed by the Islamic system, and this system itself gives complete freedom to all non-Muslims in their religious and educational matters. This was guaranteed by the Holy Prophet himself in his first treaty of Madinah, given to non-Muslims. Therefore, it is important to take care of their rights and educational needs in the Islamic system.

**Specializations:** Along with general education, the importance of higher education and specialization on special topics is also recognized. The Holy Qur'an itself has drawn attention to its importance. For example, the holy Quran said:

{فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ} <sup>12</sup>

"So why don't some people from each of their groups go out to develop an understanding of religion."

In this verse, the importance of specialization in jurisprudence is explained. In another place, the preparation of experts to fulfill the duty of "Amr al-Muruf and Nahi an al-Munkar" is emphasized. He said:

{وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ} <sup>13</sup>

"A group of you should be one who calls people to good, invites to good and forbids from evil."

And during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) many companions under his training had acquired specialization and distinction in various subjects some of whom were lucky enough to receive the certificate of specialization from the Prophet himself. For example, Hazrat Abi bin Ka'b had expertise in recitation and Tajweed. The Prophet ﷺ said about him that the greatest reciter is Abi bin Kaab. Hazrat Ali (RA) was distinguished in Qada. Hazrat Umar (RA) says that our greatest Qazi is Hazrat Ali (RA) and the greatest reciter is Abi (RA). In the same way, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (RA) was distinguished in Quranic sciences. Ikrama says that Ibn Abbas had the most knowledge of the Qur'an among the Companions. Ibn Mas'ud gained fame in the science of interpretation and jurisprudence. He (pbuh) himself gave him the certificate by saying that you are an educated boy. Zayd bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, was distinguished in the field of knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ once said that "Zayd bin Thabit is the most knowledgeable in my ummah." And Mu'adh bin Jabal was distinguished in the knowledge of halal and haram. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the person who has the most knowledge of Halal and Haram in my Ummah is Mu'adh bin Jabal.

Even in modern times, in order to keep these qualities intact, we have to prepare experts in various disciplines according to today's demands.

## **Conclusion:**

Islam has made education essential for men and women, young and old. It is obligatory for every human being to learn the Shariah matters of his respective field. The jurists of Islam have deduced from various texts that every nation must have an expert on the essential affairs of the world. Therefore, it is obligatory to learn every art and knowledge in every nation. Its importance can also be inferred from the fact that Islam has declared the one who learns and teaches as the best of all human beings.

## **References**

---

- 1 - Al Quran:99/4-5
2. Al Quran : 35/28
3. Abu Dawud Sulaiman bin Al-Shaath al-Sijistani, Sunan Abi Dawud, Dar al-Risalah al-Anlamiya, Beirut, 2009: 5/485
- 4 . Ibn Abd al-Barr Abu Umar Yusuf bin Abd Allah, Jami Bayan al-Ilam wa Fazlah, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, Al-Malkammad al-Arabia Saudi Arabia, 1994 AD: (1/239)
- 5 . Al-Bayhaqi A. Abu Bakr Ahmed Bin Al-Hussein, People of Faith, Abu Bakr, Al-Rushd Library, Riyadh, 2003 AD: (3/194)
- 6 . Ibn Majah Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazid Al-Qazwini, Sunan Ibn Majah, Dar Al-Risala International, Beirut, 2009 AD: (1/151)
- 7 . Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal Al-Shaibani, Musnad Ahmad, Dar Al-Hadith, Cairo, 1995 AD: (8/ 341)
- 8 . Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi, Sunan al-Darimi, Dar Al-Mughni, Saudi Arabia, 2000 AD: 1/460
- 9 . Al-Bayhaqi Abu Bakr Ahmed bin Al-Hussein, Al madkhal Ila sunan Al Kubra, Dar Al-Khulifa, Kuwait: 375
- 10 . Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Issa Muhammad bin Isa, Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1998 AD: (3/402)
- 11 . Al-Hakim Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Abdullah, Al-Mustadrak on Al-Sahihayn, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiya, Beirut, 1990: (4/292)
- 12 . Al Quran, 09/122
- 13 . AlQuran 3/104