

Importance of Education

The first and foremost condition for the vitality of a nation is acquisition of knowledge. In view of this Islam has encouraged the people very much to acquire knowledge and science. As a matter of fact it has made it obligatory for them. The Holy Prophet says:

“It is obligatory for every Muslim, man and woman to acquire knowledge”.

It is narrated that one day the Holy Prophet came into the Masjid and saw some people gathered there. They were divided into two groups. Whereas one of the two groups was busy offering prayers, the other was engaged in religious discussions. The Holy Prophet was very pleased to see those people and said:

“Both these groups are doing something good but I prefer the group which is busy discussing”. Saying this, he himself joined that group.

Islam attaches so much importance to the acquisition of knowledge that it has declared the path of knowledge and wisdom to be the path leading to Paradise.

The Holy Prophet took a keen interest in promoting education among the Muslims and availed of every possible opportunity to achieve this object. At times it so happened that as a result of wars with the enemies of Islam, some literate people were also captured as prisoners of war. The usual custom in those days was that prisoners of war were released only on the payment of ransom. However, the Holy Prophet always treated these literate prisoners well and agreed to set them free provided they taught at least ten Muslims how to read and write.

Amir al-Mu'minin (the Commander of the Faithful), Imam Ali (a) has emphasized the importance of education in these words: “The most valuable treasure is knowledge and wisdom and the worst misfortune is ignorance”.

Knowledge is power.

Questions

1. Why did the Holy Prophet join the group which was busy in religious discussions?
2. In what form did the Holy Prophet receive ransom from the literate prisoners of war?
3. What has Imam Ali (a) said in praise of knowledge?

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