

Love of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) with Knowledge

We have already referred to the Arabian Prophet's devotion to knowledge and science as distinguishing him from all other Teachers, and bringing him into the closest affinity with the modern world of thought.

Medina, the seat of the theocratic commonwealth of Islam, had, after the fall of Mecca, become the centre of attraction, not to the hosts of Arabia only, but also to inquirers from abroad. Here flocked the Persian, the Greek, the Syrian, the Iraqian, and African of diverse hues and nationalities from the north and the west. Some, no doubt, came from curiosity, but most came to seek knowledge and to listen to the words of the Prophet of Islam.

He preached of the value of knowledge:

"Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God."

Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next."

He would often say: "The ink of the scholar was more holy than the blood of the martyr;" ... "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of God." "He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to paradise."

The Koran itself bore testimony to the supreme value of learning and science. Commenting on the Surat-ul-Aalaq, Zamakhshari [one of the most prominent commentators of Quran] thus explains the meaning of the Koranic words:

"God taught human beings that which they did not know, and this testifies to the greatness of His beneficence, for He has given to His servants knowledge of that which they did not know. And He has brought them out of the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, and made them aware of the inestimable blessings of the knowledge of writing, for great benefits accrue there from which God alone compasses; and without the knowledge of writing no other knowledge (uloom) could be comprehended, nor the sciences placed within bounds, nor the history of the ancients be acquired and their sayings be recorded, nor the revealed books be written; and if that knowledge did not exist, the affairs of religion and the world, could not be regulated."

Up to the time of the Islamic Dispensation, the Arab world, properly so called, restricted within the Peninsula of Arabia and some outlying tracts to the north-west and the north-east, had shown no signs of intellectual growth. Poetry, oratory, and judicial astrology formed the favorite objects of pursuit among the pre-Islamite Arabs. Science and literature possessed no votaries.

A knowledgeable but not a God-fearing person is the greatest punishment for his society. Abdul Qadir Jeelani

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The words of the Prophet gave a new impulse to the awakened energies of the race. Even within his lifetime was formed the nucleus of an educational institution, which in after years grew into universities at Baghdad and Salerno, at Cairo and Cordova. Here preached the Master himself on the cultivation of a holy spirit;

One hour's meditation on the work of the Creator [in a devout spirit] is better than seventy years of prayer.

To listen to the instructions of science and learning for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs — more meritorious than standing up in prayer for a thousand nights;

To the student who goes forth in quest of knowledge, God will allot a high place in the mansions of bliss; every step he takes is blessed, and every lesson he receives has its reward;

The seeker of knowledge will be greeted in Heaven with a welcome from the angels;

To listen to the words of the learned, and to instill into the heart the lessons of science, is better than religious exercises; ...better than emancipating a hundred slaves;

Him who favors learning and the learned, God will favor in the next world;

He who honors the learned honors me.

12 برس قبل لکھی گئی، اصول فقہ کی پہلی کتاب "الرسالہ" کا اردو ترجمہ بلا معاوضہ دستیاب ہے۔ ان
میں کے لئے جو قانون اور فقہ سے دلچسپی رکھتے ہوں۔

Ali lectured on branches of leanings; most suited to the wants of the infant commonwealth. Among his recorded sayings are the following:

Eminence in science is the highest of honors;

He dies not who gives life to learning;

The greatest ornament of a man is erudition.

Naturally such sentiments on the part of the Master and the chief of the disciples gave rise to a liberal policy, and animated all classes with a desire for learning. The art of Koofi writing, which had just been acquired by a disciple at Hira, furthered the primitive development of the Moslems.

(Author: Syed Ameer Ali, Excerpts from "The Spirit of Islam")

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Think about it!

- List five contributions of knowledge to human personality.
- Identify the reason of Prophet's love with knowledge as mentioned by the author.

Please send your answers through email to post your comments on this web page.