ISLAM

The importance of learning in Islam

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The Prophet of Islam said: "Every Muslim, man and woman, is duty-bound to acquire learning." This tradition of the Prophet shows the importance of learning in Islam. Learning is necessary for the realization of God. That is why acquiring learning is held to be a duty for all. Learning increases one's consciousness. Learning is responsible for the breadth and depth of one's thinking, it enables one to understand the deeper realities, to enrich oneself from the experiences of others and to elevate one's intellectual level.

The importance of learning in Islam can be seen from the prayer given in the following verse of the Quran: "My Lord! Increase me in Knowledge." (20:114)

The mission of the Prophet of Islam has been introduced in the Quran at more than one place as an instructor of the Book and giver of wisdom. Here is a verse from the Quran: "He it is who has raised among the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves who recites to them His signs and purifies them, and to instruct them in the Book and wisdom." (62:2) Similarly, on another occasion the Prophet of Islam presented himself before the people saying, "I have been sent only as a teacher."

Learning is essential for religious and spiritual development. Setting off the process of intellectual development, it brings maturity to one's thinking. Without learning, one can neither study the sacred books, nor can one be aware of the history of man and the universe. In short, learning brings man from the level of the animals to the level of human beings.

Therefore, learning is an essential component of Islam. However, this is possible only when one meets others with open minds, when one tries to learn from them instead of always wanting the others to learn from oneself. It is essential for this learning process to continue uninterruptedly.