"say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge."

(Al Quran-20:114)

CHAPTER - ONE

| Introduction |

|| The Motivating Force Behind Knowledge |
1) **INTRODUCTION**

Intellectual life of Pre-Islamic Arabia was not on a high level except linguistic elements. With arid atmosphere of vast desert it did not have a flowering civilization. But as soon as they accepted the revealed knowledge, with the sudden showers of this blessed knowledge the whole atmosphere of the waste land was filled with the fragrance of the flowers blooming in the meadows of the healthy Muslims civilization.

Like the intense wave of the desert wind, the Muslims made rapid scientific progress which the heaven never saw before. It established a heritage of immense significance which proved blessings to the world at large. They saved the legacy of antiquity from getting extinct and transmitted it to the world. They drew it from Greek Aramaean, Persian and Indian sources, spread civilization to the distant parts of the world from Transoxiana and China to Spain and became its ardent protectors.

Soon they started their own independent research inquiries and devoted themselves to scientific investigations, particularly in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, geography and other natural sciences.
They carried knowledge to a high degree of excellence and commenced the new age of the glory of sciences and arts under the principles of free inquiry and intellectual freedom in the pursuit of scientific knowledge in Islam. They collected, created and contributed wisely to every field of knowledge.

They evolved sciences from the groundwork of the centuries old crude knowledge, improved them, gave them new shape, and new dimensions and immortalized them as a living force and passed them on to the European countries. Their accomplishments and contributions are the most precious intellectual treasures which opened new horizons for intellectual, cultural, industrial achievements. Its bearing to bring about the development of modern sciences and technology are highly valuable. They laid the foundation of modern sciences. With the spirit of inquiry, originality and industry they became pioneers in the field of new inventions and discoveries.

The part played by the Muslims' vitality of scientific activities is of utmost importance. The scientific spirit of Islam encouraged them to ponder over natural phenomena, to know and discover the truth, to cultivate knowledge systematically and enrich life. It enabled them to establish a heritage. They saved the world intellectual treasure, acquired compre-
hensive knowledge of the secular sciences revived and added much to them. As a natural religion based on rational foundations Islam encouraged investigations in His creation. Their study would reveal the astonishing facts about truth. The Arabs were among the most backward communities, morally economically and politically. But Islamic teaching brought sudden and complete transformation. The Arabs the most disunited people achieved a strong feeling of brotherhood. It united people of different colour, culture and countries who accepted this teaching, and created among them harmony and a bond of love.

They at once adapted themselves to the more complicated tasks of the attainment of perfection in civilization and culture.

As long as they were willing to be guided by its teachings, it produced in them the superior qualities of character. It emphasized the more important and higher aspects of life, with belief in the continuity of life after death. It developed a living sense of the presence of God in their practical life.

The sole purpose of Islamic teaching was to set man on the path of progress. Islam never tried to create escapist
outlook. Islamic education was not of an speculative philosophy isolated from life. It had been a practical and experimental science of purity of soul, radiating faith in the life hereafter, insisting on righteous deeds, and advance concepts of social and scientific activities, based on the higher vision as viceregent of God. It thereby controlled his worldly desires. This approach made lasting contribution to man's spiritual regime.

This dynamic education was the endeavour for forward movement of culture and the inner unity of the society by the process of continuous and universal application of knowledge. The promotion of scientific activity was the direct impact of this teaching and intellectual awakening, which made them eager to acquire knowledge from all sources and advance from the known to the unknown.

They continued researches with brilliant records. They adapted the old ideas and on the foundation of ancient knowledge they extended all the branches of knowledge.

This education produced eminent scientists, deeply varying great inquisitive innovators and encyclopaedic minds
who have been involved painstakingly in precise and objective study and survey of ancient sciences as excellent systematizers of knowledge. They endeavoured to find out the facts and tested them critically and impartially, ascertained them by observations and experimentations without any prejudice. By their understanding, devotion to the scientific investigations and strivings they discovered and elaborated various facts. They refuted the old established ideas of superstitions and ultimately discovered new theories and concepts to fill the gap.

They widened the scope of the subjects and put them on new foundations. Sciences achieved new heights and new capacities. And with new set of values they combined religion, philosophy and science and attained a high degree of excellence. Their philosophy of education by its simplicity and directness made possible unrestricted development of positive sciences. Its principles of democracy equality and freedom of inquiry and thought, helped to spread education among the masses; which generated deeper currents in the culture and set highest ideals for civic life and new standards of conduct and gave rapidly practical shape for the welfare of the assimilative progressive and creative society free from stagnation and evolved the civilization to the great heights par excellence.
They wrote books with practical objectives that knowledge had to serve the needs of life, and for all the seekers of knowledge not for individuals for themselves alone. This spirit was unknown among their predecessors throughout the world.

Learning was held high in honour at each stratum of the Muslim society. Free schools were coming up in every town of the Muslim world under their generous patronage. Every village had its own mosque, which were used as educational institutions. Sciences were flourishing under their loving care and protection, and the same spirit was at work from Transoxiana to Spain and Morocco.

Travelling in quest of knowledge as a sacred duty, was common. They used to travel thousands of miles to seek knowledge from the renowned teachers at different seats of learning unmindful of their financial resources.

The Muslims under the inspiring influences of Islamic teachings gave impetus to the great intellectual movement, and kept alive the intellectual activities and the study and cultivation of sciences from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific coast when the Christian West was sleeping in the darkness.
There are statements regarding secular subjects which were considered indicating concern and encouragement for acquisition of secular knowledge useful for the benefit of humanity. The Muslims took keen interest in scientific works. This has been manifest in the veneration and honour extended by the Muslim sovereigns to the knowledge and cultivation of sciences.

Before the twelfth century of the Christian era, the European who had some desire for light or science had to travel to the Muslim countries. Thousands of European Christians and Jews had been studying different sciences in the mosques of Spain. They studied in Cordova, Seville, Malaga, Granada, Aleppo, and other towns of the Muslim world where which had hundreds of colleges, philosophy, history, literature and sciences were being taught.

They had superior skills and technical knowledge in ship building and navigation. Their mercantile fleet made regular voyages from the Mediterranean sea to the Pacific ocean touching all the important ports on the coasts of Spain, Africa, India and to the Port of Kanfu, modern Canton and even further north of China.

In their world trade they linked Baghdad and Basra to Kanfu (Northern China) and Constantinople. The centres of their commercial communication including Malabar, Indian archipelago, coastal areas of east Africa, south west Asia, Malacca, Java, Sumatra and China, etc., become places of transmission and borrowing of knowledge.

Besides their sea trade expeditions, they had regular caravan traffic to central Asia, China, Afghanistan and African countries, for hajj pilgrimages and active trade, they had their immemorial land routs and caravan tracks through the steppes of Asia and Africa.

In Africa the Muslim travellers and traders travelled from north African countries e.g. Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia etc., to the south of the Dark continent trade centres. The prosperous towns of those regions which were frequently visited or inhabited by the Muslims, mosques were the centres of learning where teachers sitting by its column with a ring of students discussed knowledge.

In their lively commercial activities, their cultural influences penetrated from Transoxiana and Khwarizim, (the countries of the river Volga and the river Oxus) as far north as to the Scandinavian countries by the Bulgarians and the Russians through the Baltic Sea.
There was no direct commercial intercourse between the Muslims and the North Western European countries. But over wide areas of the Scandinavian countries numerous Muslims coins belonging to seventh to eleventh centuries of the Christian era have been found.

In the north west the Muslims had commercial relations with the Khazar empire, through the course of the river Volga and the Caspian sea. The empire of Khazars was like a buffer state between the Muslims and the Byzantine Empire and contributed in transmission and spread of Islamic culture and values to the west.

Through the delta region of Khwarizm of the rivers Oxus and Volga, where was situated Atil the capital of Khazars, the Muslims exchanged the merchandise. The chief import being fur, hide, goat, wax, fish, honey, swords, nuts, and among them were also the slaves who played an important role in the transmission of Muslim culture and learning to the West.

These mutual commercial relations were among the strongest factors in the transmission of Muslim culture.

The Muslims communicated their spirit of search after knowledge to Europe and formed a connecting link between ancient and modern sciences and civilizations.
By their manifold relations the Muslims as teachers for all humanity poured down to the west the riches of their civilization and cultural heritage which they had acquired and enriched for some five centuries. They passed the knowledge to the west and introduced the same spirit of inquiry.

The knowledge gained by Muslims deeply influenced the European nations. The Andalusians communicated many ideals and ways to European countries. They borrowed them deliberately, immitated and adopted in many fields including architecture, agriculture, irrigation, food, dress, music and military arts, etc.

The magnificience of the Muslim civilization attracted them; their zeal for acquiring knowledge was quickened. Thus the oldest European universities were started in the twelfth century, among those were Paris, Montepellier, Bologna, Padua and Oxford.

The Muslim learning had powerful influence on these earliest Western universities. They accepted the Muslim method of knowledge. The Muslims' works remained university text booked for centuries, providing enormous material for study. The widespread influence of Muslim learning and culture can be traced in the development of sciences in the Western World.
The universities of medieval Europe not only drew from Muslim learning, but the nature of systematic study, their manifold activities, and customs of those institutions had indications that they had resemblance to the Muslim patterns of knowledge of the tenth and eleventh centuries, A.D.

Delimitation of the Topic:

The present study covers a span of two centuries i.e. 7th and 8th and a vast canvas of three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. The Muslim world is not synonymous with Muslim states in this study, and it covers besides Arabian peninsula, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Khurasan upto Transoxiana and northern China, coastal areas of India from Sind to Sri Lanka and coastal areas of the Pacific Ocean upto the present Peking and Korea, North Africa from Indian to Atlantic Ocean including Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, island ports of Sicily Mumbasa and Spain in South Western Europe.

Muslim world was a combination of heterogeneous people with different languages, distinct cultures, systems of thought and intellectual traditions of ancient civilizations challenging the unity of simple monotheistic religion of Islam by constant interplay of social systems and subtle speculative traditions of Greece, Rome and Persia.
Purpose of the Study:

Modern education has brought humanity the greatest material progress. And the greatest problem of modern civilization is that man could not develop his hidden moral and spiritual forces. It has disturbed the balance between the spiritual and the material. Man's spiritual development is lagging far behind. This disbalance has increased human miseries. He is constantly developing deadly weapons, making war more destructive, hatred greed selfishness and avarice is increasing. World nations have come closer to each other physically but political and social upheavals and tangles are confronting humanity with distress.

In this psychological background there is a dire need to change the too materialistic mental outlook of man to bring about the actual solutions of the problems of this age. To pave the way for real social peace purification of man's soul is needed.

History of the past provides lessons that may serve as guide towards better future. This gave importance to the present study. It would be interesting that the facts concerning
the educational system in the Muslim world, during the early period of Islam, should be brought into light for the benefit of man.

Review of the Literature:

Besides the studies which have been utilized as a source material, al Quran the divinely revealed book has the fundamental importance. It is the most authentic source of information of Muslim philosophy of education as their epistemology, ontology and ethics have been described in it, their law and their whole way of life was based on it. It was their main text book and the fountain of all their knowledge by mentioning principles in brief, and it urged Muslims to study, reflect and act, with reasonable arguments.

Its English translation by W.M. Pickthall only has been quoted throughout the present study.

The other important source are the collections of hadith especially the six authentic compilations i.e.

*Sahih Bukhari* compiled by Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ismail Bukhari (d. 256 H.), is the supreme collection of highly trustworthy hadith.
Sahih Muslim compiled by Muslim b. Hajjaj Qushalri in (d. 261 H.) which is regarded/authenticity next to Sahih Bukhari only.

Sunan Abu Dawud by Abu Dawud Sulaiman b. Ashath (d. 275 H.), Jame’ Tirmidhi by ’Isa Muhammad b. ’Isa Tirmidhi (d. 279 H.), Sunan Nasai by Ahmad b. Shueb Nasai (d. 303 H.). Sunan Ibn Maja, Muhammad b. Yazid, known as Ibn Maja (d. c. 273 H.), all of them were compiled with extraordinary carefulness and under the strict principles of scrutiny by the most God fearing men of piety. These collections of prophetic traditions are the rich source of highly valuable material. The Prophet had made acquisition of knowledge obligatory, and a deliberate and conscious process, inspiring his people by harmonizing knowledge and action in his personal life.

Among the biographical accounts of the Prophet, which have been consulted is Sirat Muhammad Rasulallah by Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Yasar (85-c. 151 H), revised by ‘Abd ul Hakik b. Hisham (d.219/834), the oldest comprehensive work available, which is the deliberate striving by the erudite savants for gathering organizing and systematizing the vast body of original knowledge of the life of the Prophet gained from the Companions through their disciples.
Material has been collected from biographical dictionaries and vast works dealing with the lives of Companions, Followers and their successors and savants by the recognized authorities like *Tabagat al Kabir* by Ibn Sa'd (168-230 H); *Tadhkiratul Haffaz* by Muhammad' b. Ahmad adh Dhahbi (d. 748H), *Usudul Ghaba* by Ibn Athir (d. 606 H) and *Al'Iqd al Farid* by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Tahdhib ut Tahdhib* by Ahmad b. 'Ali Ibn Hajar al 'Asqalani (d. 852 H.).

The importance of all of them has long been recognized, they are the sources of valuable information. They shed light on educational activities, culture and intellectual atmosphere also of the then Muslim world.

*Kitab ul Fehrist* compiled by Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Abi Yusuf an Nadim (d. 385 H.) is a mine of information. It is an important source book on ancient sciences, authors and their works.

*Mu'jam ul Buldan*: the great encyclopaedic work by Yaqut Hamawi, the scribe of Ibn Sa'd the compiler of *Tabagat*; and *Muqaddima*, the enormous compendium by Ibn Khaldun as introduction to his History these compilations give very important descriptions in their diversity of subjects, alchemy, geography, astronomy, mathematics, history, linguistic
and philological sciences, etc., and provide valuable information by their richness of contents.

Classical works on early history of Islam by the authorities like Futuh ul Buldan by Al Baladhuri (d. 279 H); Futhush Sham by Muhammad 'Umar al Waqidi (130 - 207 H), and Futuh ul Misr by the same author, and Nafh ut Tib by Shahabuddin Abul 'Abbas at Tilimsani al Maqri (d. 1041 H), compilations with wide and deep knowledge and earnest zeal by the great scholars, have been consulted.

Al Itqan fi 'Uloomil Quran by Shaykh Jalaluddin 'Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr as Suyuti (848 - 911 H), occupies an important place in sound works. It is a detailed and complete description of sciences related to the Quran and their early history.

Al Farq bain al Firaq by Abu Mansur 'Abd ul Qahir Baghdadi, is an important source work on the philosophies and development of systems of various sects and schisms among Muslims.

Jame' Bayan ul 'Ilm wa Faqlhi is an important work by the great scholar Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul ul Barr (368-463 H) of Cordova (Spain). He had discussed the importance of knowledge and the learned in the Muslim society.
when striving for knowledge was regarded as a form of worship. He had dealt with aims of acquisition and transmission of knowledge and methods of transmission and preservation of knowledge in early Islam.

Another important work is *Kitab ul'Ilm*, a part of *Ihya ul 'Ulum*, the encyclopaedic compilation by Imam Ghazzali (1059 - 1111 A.C.), which occupy an important place in medieval Islamic literature. He has highlighted the excellence of knowledge, the qualification and importance of the learned, the classification of subjects religious and non-religious and the sciences acquisition of which was obligatory or optional.

*Ta'lim ul Muta'lim Tariq ut Ta'llum*, is a small treatise composed by Burhan uddin az Zarnuji, a Hanafite scholar from Iran (died in the sixth century of Islamic era). It is one of the old essays on instructions and methods of learning according to the Hanafite school.

Special mention is to be made of the treatise 'Ahd-i-Nabwi ka Nizam-i-Ta'lim, by Dr. M. Hamidullah. This important work has covered many aspects of education during the life time of the Prophet.
Sahifa-i-Hammam b. Munabbih, edited by the same scholar, M. Hamidullah. The learned editor has discussed in its introductory pages some of the activities related to preservation and transmission of knowledge during the early period of Islam.

Two books by a Chinese author are also worth mentioning, they are Cheeni Musalman, and Cheen wa Arab ke Ta'llugat, both in Urdu, by Huei Badruddin (Cheeni), a scholar from south China who came to India studied and taught at Nadwat ul Ulama Lucknow. Here he learned Urdu also and composed Cheeni Musalman, a cultural history of Chinese Muslims and discussed Muslims' first arrival in China. He then proceeded to Egypt for further study in Arabic and Islamic sciences and compiled Cheen wa Arab ke Ta'llugat, on ancient relations of Muslims with China, after consulting Arabic sources also. The two books are the valuable works on the topics in a foreign language by a Chinese Muslim.

Material for the present study has been collected from primary as well as secondary sources.

All this is given in the bibliography at the end of the dissertation.
The method of the study employed is critical interpretative and evaluative study of the original and other available material.

Though seeking knowledge has been a religious obligation and Muslims paid great attention to acquisition of knowledge, and it has been very important aspect of their life but the scholars and the historians of the old did not pay due attention to record ideas and practices concerning education prevalent among the Muslims. Later Imam Ghazzali, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn 'Abdul Barr, Haji Khalifa, az Zarnuji, Qadi Ibn Jumah were among those who have discussed about education. They have recorded the sayings of the old people and some of them reviewed, the state of education during that period.

But most of the records of intellectual activities and thriving learning in the domain of sciences and arts during that period were perished in the political turmoil of the next centuries.

Scientific investigations in the field of Muslim education have received little attention. There is a need of problem oriented study in this direction. An humble attempt is made to investigate and evaluate its merits critically to find out its contribution to the emancipation of humanity.
11) The Motivating Force Behind Knowledge:

To trace and recognize the educational motives and movements of Muslims that led them to an extraordinary process of the evolution of knowledge, one has to study the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet which were the greatest stimulating factors leading to the sudden elevation of the believers.

The supreme importance of knowledge is manifest in the Quran itself, the first revelation and the first Divine command was 'Read'. It was in praise of the pen. Knowledge has been described as the great blessing from the Creator and the Cherisher the Most Bounteous. It is revealed just after mentioning the creation of man. It refers that by knowledge humankind has been distinguished from all other creation which testifies His immense beneficence:

96:1 - "Read: In the name of thy Lord who createth,
96:2 - Createth man from a clot
96:3 - Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,
96:4 - Who teacheth by the pen;
96:5 - Teacheth man that which he knew not."

2. The numbers of the verses of the Quran mentioned throughout the present dissertation, are according to M. M. Pickthall's work: The Meaning of the Holy Quran (The Glorious Koran).
Those who know the history of Pre-Islamic Arabia, and are aware of the condition in which the Arabs were leading their life in those days; it is astonishing and quite unexpected that in the first revelation mention was made of pen. The pen which was unfamiliar in that environment. It was neither used there generally nor its need was felt.

This is the greatest historical contrast the most distinguished and the most brilliant educational movement revealed to and launched by an unlettered prophet, born in the midst of unlettered people:-

62 : 2 - "He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and Wisdom, though heretofore they were indeed in error manifest.

Thus began an era of the glory of knowledge:

42 : 52 - 'And thus We inspired in thee (Muhammad) a Spirit of Our Command. Thou knewest not what the Scripture was nor what the Faith. But We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our bondmen. And lo! thou verily dost guide unto a right path.'

According to 'Allama Zamakhshari, (d. 1144 A.C.), the famous commentator of the Quran and the author of al Kashshaf,
to understand the secret of the Muslims scientific advance
one should understand the deep spirit and intense religious
fervour which was working behind their engagement in the
pursuit of knowledge and research.

Explaning the meaning of the verse 96 : 4-'Who teacheth
by the pen'; he writes that this demonstrates His Most Bounti-
fulness that He taught His slaves what they did not know. He
brought them out of the darkness of ignorance to light of
knowledge and made them aware of the immense blessings and
utility of the gift of the art of writing which God alone
compasseth. Without the knowledge of the art of writing
neither the sciences('ulum)could be comprehended nor the wisdom,
nor the books revealed by God be preserved by committing them
to writing. Without the art of writing the affairs of this
world and the hereafter could not be regulated. Had there
been no other proof of the wisdom and knowledge of the glorious
God, the teaching by pen and the art of writing alone were its
sufficient proof.1

The tremendous significance of knowledge cannot be
understood fully. Other creatures live and die with those

1. 'Allama Zamakhshari (d. 538 H), : Al Kashshaf part 2
commentary on 96th chap. the Clot. (Egypt, Matba' Muhammad
Afindi) p. 553.
instincts and qualities with which they are born. Man is born ignorant, but he starts to discover, learn, and improve his knowledge slowly and gradually. For man its limits are unknown. God alone compasseth its unlimited blessings, and His bondman is commanded to pray, 20:114—'and say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.'

‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali commenting the verse 96:2 writes:—

"The lowly origin of the animal in man is contrasted with the high destiny offered him in his intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature by his 'most bountiful' Creator. No knowledge is withheld from man. On the contrary through the faculties freely given to him, he acquires it in such measure as outstrips his immediate understanding and leads him ever to strive for newer and newer meaning."

Thus according to the Quran the evolution of man depends upon knowledge. The Quran infused a spirit in his believers and gave a remarkable impetus to the acquisition of knowledge which resulted in the growth of a new civilization.

In the commentary of the verse 96 : 4 - 'who teacheth by the pen'.

'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali writes:—

"The Arabic words for 'teach' and 'knowledge' are from the same root. It is impossible to produce in a translation the complete orchestral harmony of the words for 'read' 'teach' 'pen' (which implies reading, writing, books, study, research) 'knowledge' (including science, self-knowledge spiritual understanding) and 'proclaim' an alternative meaning of the word 'to read'. Thus proclaiming or reading implies not only the study of blazoning forth God's message as going with the prophetic office but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the Truth by all who read and understand it. The comprehensive meaning of qara refers not only to a particular person and occasion but also gives a universal direction. And this kind of comprehensive meaning, as we have seen, runs throughout the Quran - for those who will understand it."

The purpose of the creation of man, as declared by the Quran is:

51 : 56 - 'I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.'

1. Ibid
The word Ya'budun which has been translated as worship does not mean the service only. Its root is 'ABD which signifies slavery. A slave does not follow his own desires. It is the total obedience to the Divine will and complete submission to the commands of his Lord.

It is not man alone, but everything in the universe is worshiping Him, and is subservient and obedient to Him:

22:18 - "Hast thou not seen that unto Allah payeth adoration whoever is in heavens and whoever is in the earth and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the hills, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind?"

And:

24:41 - "Hast thou not seen that Allah, He it is whom all who are in the heavens and the earth praise, and the birds in their flight? Of each He knoweth verily the worship and the praise, and Allah is Aware of what they do."

Every thing in the universe is obeying Him willingly:

41:11 - Then turned He to the heaven when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth: Come both of you willingly or loth. They said: We come, obedient.

The purpose of man's creation, according to the commentators of the Quran, was not the adoration only in which every thing in the universe is busy willingly.
The Follower Mujahid (d. 103/721), the great commentator of the Quran, explained the meaning of the verse: 51:56.

That it means that the aim of the creation of jinn and humankind is that they should achieve the cognition of God\(^1\).

Ibn Juraij (80-150/699-767) said that liya\(\text{b}u\text{dun} in 51:56 meant to gain the knowledge of that good and evil on which man has been created\(^2\).

According to the commentary of Imam Fakhruddin ar Razi (d. 606 H.), by \textit{ibadah} was meant the respect of the Divine command and love for His creatures. There had been no Divine law without these two kinds of worship though in details these had been different in their appearance and outward forms in intensity, wants, time and space, in conditions and in pillars. The suitable respect of which the glorious God is worthy, could not be known through the human intellect alone, for which to follow the Law and sayings of the prophets had been necessary, God by His grace had been sending Prophets (may peace be on them) to explain the two kinds of worships\(^3\).

Acquisition of knowledge was necessary because of the trust also which man has accepted. To accomplish the lofty mission, he has to gain knowledge and follow the truth.

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1. Ibn 'Ab\(^\text{d} ul Barr (368-463\text{H}) : \textit{Jame\' Bayan ul 'Ilm},'Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi (translator, Urdu) p. 155.
2. Ibid.
It was the trust and grave responsibility which the heavens and the earth could not bear and were afraid of it.

33:72 - "Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! he hath proved a tyrant and a fool."

The trust which heavens and the earth could not accept was the vicegerency of God and free will with duties and responsibilities, which none in the whole universe could dare to accept. It was the grave responsibility on the fulfilment of which the one could gain the pleasure of God and His is the promise of the reward of the gardens of eternity. The misuse of the trust would result in His anger and punishment. To achieve success and prosperity in this world and in the hereafter he has to follow a complete code of conduct: a complete and comprehensive way of life, as prescribed by his Creator.

11:7 - "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days - and His Throne was upon the water - that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct."

18:7 - "Lo! We have placed all that is in the earth as an ornament thereof that we may try them: which of them is best in conduct."
and:

6 : 166 - "He it is who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you."

and:

67 : 2 - "Who hath created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct;"

The vicegerent has no personal rights, neither he has the right to work according to his personal views, his duty is to obey his master. If he tries to become the master and use the powers given to him to obey the real master for the fulfilment of his own desires, or accepts another in place of his real master, and follows his commands, it is revolt and perfidy.

Man is the vicegerant of God which is the highest position and supreme honour bestowed upon human kind only, and to no other creation, no idea can be higher than this position.

God has described this unique blessing in an unusual manner, which has an extraordinary importance.

In the verses 2 : 30 - 39 the reality of man and his position in the universe has been described and it presents the chapter of the history of the mankind which could not be known by any other source. The results according to some commentators, gained by these verses are more valuable and instructive, than by the excavations, modern researches and propounding hypotheses by the study of human fossils.
And if an obedient slave of God, adores and prays Him humbly, and begs his Lord to help him, these services cannot make him vicegerent of God because every creature is doing so. It is the virtue of a creature and not the attribute of God to act as vicegerent of God, man must have such knowledge which even the angels do not have.

2:31 - "And He taught Adam all the names then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful.

2:32 - They said: Be glorified: We have no knowledge saving that which Thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the knower, the Wise.

2:33 - He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names and when He had informed them of their names He said: did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth?"

It is the knowledge which distinguished humankind and established his supremacy over all the creations in the universe.

These verses prove the excellence and superiority of knowledge over worship. The angels are greater worshippers and innocent but they are lesser in knowledge than man therefore the dignity of vicegerency was bestowed on man, which
the angels accepted and it was because that to worship is the quality of the creature and not of the Creator. But knowledge is an attribute of God.

It would be utter disgrace for man also, if he bowed his head before other creations of God, to rule on whom he had been created, as vicegerent of God. And if he followed his own desires without caring the Divine will it would be misuse of the trust.

It is the superiority of knowledge that the angels who are all goodness and there is no evil in them had to prostrate before Adam who had the qualities of good and evil both. And says the Quran:-

3 : 190 - 'Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the difference of night and day are tokens (of His sovereignty) for men of understanding.

3 : 191 - Such as remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, (and Say) : Our Lord! Thou createdst not this in vain. Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the doom of Fire.'

To understand the wisdom of the Creator of the wonderful design of the universe and its value in relation to man, the Quran inspires man to observe and ponder:-
10:6 - "He it is who appointed the sun a splendour and the moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning. Allah created not (all) that save in truth. He detailleth the revelations for people who have knowledge.

10:7 - Lo! in the difference of day and night and all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are portents, verily, for folk who ward off (evil).

13:3 - 'And He it is who spread out the earth and placed therein firm hills and flowing streams, and of all fruits He placed therein two spouses (male and female). He covereth the night with the day. Lo! herein verily are portents for people who take thought.'

And:–

6:100 - 'He it is who sendeth down water from the sky and therewith we bring forth buds of every kind, we bring forth the green blade from which we bring forth the thick-clustered grain; and from the date-palm, from the pollen thereof, spring pendant bunches; and (we bring forth) gardens of grapes and the olive and the pomegranate, alike and unlike. Look upon the fruit thereof, when they bear fruit, and upon its ripening. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who believe.'
13:2 - 'Allah it is who raised up the heavens without visible supports, then mounted the Throne, and compelled the sun and the moon to be of service, each runneth unto an appointed term; He ondereth the course; He detailleth the revelations that happily ye may be certain of meeting with your Lord.'

And:-

13:12 - 'He it is who showeth you the lightening, a fear and a hope and riseth the heavy clouds.'

47:24 - 'Will they not then meditate on the Quran, whereby there locks on the hearts?'

The cognition of God needs the knowledge of God, the knowledge of the works of God, that is His entire creation, the universe, man's own self, and the knowledge of the hereafter. It can be a useful means to attain perfection.

According to Imam Ghazzali "every science is a religious science" if it helps to bring about perfection and "aprehension of realities". Every science is the knowledge of facts the realisation of facts may help him to advance at the right path.

The true knowledge is a means to approach God. The value and significance of the study of the world of matter and contemplation over the scheme of creation is that it testifies the Supreme Creator. Every thing reveals supersensory realities. But due to his excessive attachment to this world man fails to achieve the cognition of God which is the real purpose of his creation.

It is related on the authority of Hazrat Anas the companion, that a person came to the prophet and asked "which deed is the best?"

The prophet replied "Your knowledge of God". The person repeated the question and the prophet gave the same reply. Then the person said: "O Apostle of Allah! I ask about the deed and you answer about the knowledge".

The Prophet explained: "with your knowledge of God a few deeds will suffice, but without such knowledge, your deeds however numerous, will not avail".

Islam reconciled religion and knowledge. The development of the one was the development of the other. The end and object of one was related to the other. Religion could not remain lively without knowledge; and the correct knowledge

1. Ghazzali: Ihya, cited by Prof. 'Umar uddin Cit.
2. Ibn 'Abd ul Barr: Jame' Bayan ul 'Ilm, Abdur Razzaq (translator urdu) p. 45
could not be even imagined without faith and religion. Islam had enlarged the scope of knowledge. It has provided the link which has united the different units of knowledge which were separated and contradicting each other. Before the dawn of Islam, subjects like philosophy, physics etc., had been considered against religion. But Islam removed this controversy. Its eternal teaching is full of life and vitality, eagerness for piety, moral uprightness and courage etc.

By reconciling knowledge and religion, Islam made the greatest service in the cause of knowledge. The Muslim scholars extended the span of knowledge. They cultivated and enriched knowledge, improved its qualities to flourish in every time and clime. It was because of the Quran which gave them the knowledge of that unifying force, which combined the different units of knowledge and harmonized them. This unity of knowledge is the cognition of God:

3 : 190 - "Lo ! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the difference of night and day are tokens (of His sovereignty) for men of understanding."

The impetus and importance given by the Quran to the knowledge study, observation, pondering and understanding, of natural phenomena motivated and encouraged the Muslims in

1. All this will be discussed in chapter IV of the present study.
developing special disciplines, on the foundation of the Quranic and the Prophetic teachings, they evolved elaborate systems of knowledge which covered every field of life, and made vast expansion in various directions in the light of brief references to those problems in the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. They interpreted the Quran, and the words of the Prophet, his acts, and even his silence.

With all consuming religious fervour they endeavoured and made sacrifices in the achievement of knowledge because the Quran urged Muslims to reflect over the world of matter:–

16 : 11 - "Therewith He causeth crops to grow for you, and the olive and the date - palm and grapes and all kinds of fruit. Lo! herein is indeed a portent for people who reflect."

The natural forces the sun, the moon, etc. were for the service of man, not to be worshipped by man:–

16 : 12 - "And He hath constrained the night and the day and the sun and the moon to be of service unto you, and the stars are made subservient by His command. Lo! herein indeed are portents for people who have sense."
16:13 - And whatsoever He hath created for you in the earth of diverse hues, lo! therein is indeed a portent for people who take heed."

The Muslims were required to ponder and reflect over the world of nature, and thank Allah, by proper utilization of His creation:-

16:14 - "And He it is Who hath constrained the sea to be of service that ye eat fresh meat from thence, and bring forth from thence ornaments which ye wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing it that ye (mankind) may seek of His bounty, and that haply ye may give thanks."

16:16 - "And land marks (too), and by the star they find a way."

Everything has been created for the benefit of man. Man has to find out its utility. The rightful use of the bounties of God, is the thankfulness to Him.

and:-

31:20 - "See ye not how Allah hath made serviceable unto you whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth and hath loaded you with His favours both without and within? Yet of mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah, without knowledge or guidance or Scripture giving light."
The Muslims diverted their mental energies towards the intellectual movements they borrowed, studied and developed many sciences of general utility, like history, geography, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, etc.

The main idea of this education was unity of His creation in the whole universe, unity of knowledge, unity of the institution of prophecy and the brotherhood of the prophets and unity and equality of mankind; and they believed in the easy path of direct access to their Lord for every individual:

50:16 - "We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."
There is no intermediary between God and man:

40:60 - "Pray unto Me I will hear your prayer."

The Economic and Social Context of Policy Making:
This education did not ask for the renunciation of the world and ascetic practices to please God.

To earn wealth by lawful means and spend it on the poor and deserving, is a praiseworthy and righteous deed. The Quran has exhorted this at various places.

Caliph 'Umar al Farooq and other Companions and the learned men have been counselling people to earn their livelihood by lawful ways and not to be a burden on the society,
but they believed that to avoid the risk of the fondness of the world which leads to sin, abstinence from the luxuries is better than indulgence. They would prefer simplicity and economy.

Many traditions of the Prophet, and sayings of the Companions, their Followers and the learned men have been recorded.

Some significant Quranic verses are quoted here:

62 : 10 - "And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, and remember Allah much."

5 : 88 - "Eat of that which Allah hath bestowed on you as food lawful and good, and keep your duty to Allah in whom ye are believers."

But:

59 : 7 - "that it become not a commodity between the rich among you."

2 : 275 - "Allah permitteth trading and forbiddeth usury."
7:31 - "O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not prodigal. Lo! He loveth not the prodigals."

2:60 - "Eat and drink of that which Allah hath provided, and do not act corruptly, making mischief on the earth."

The Quran has given principles and has made it clear what is permissible and what is forbidden, and stopped the practice of personal likes and dislikes in the name of religion, and showed the limits to be observed to save humankind from corruption.

Social reformation was the chief object of this education and to make social life pure, it taught beneficial ascetic disciplines besides equality and brotherhood of mankind.

To remove the assumptions of ignorance based on misunderstanding, the Quran urged them for fresh interpretations and creative unfolding of the secrets of the universe. Allah has created man and the universe and He made inquiry and investigation man's nature; man has to investigate in the universe and seek knowledge to utilize them and thank the Lord of the universe for their benefit; according to a tradition an hour's contemplation is better than a thousand years worship.
The Quran and the traditions of the Prophet created such a spirit that Muslims engaged zealously in achieving knowledge. They suffered all the hardships and difficulties in the path of acquisition of knowledge cheerfully.

Besides the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet, there have been records of many sayings and practical lives of the Companions of the Prophet and the Followers of the Companions. Though some of the traditions and sayings may be of doubtful authority in their chain of narrators; but they reveal the significance and importance, and the respect for knowledge and learning in the then Muslim world.

There are many verses in the Quran which testify the significance, importance and excellence of knowledge, and there are so many traditions of the Prophet on the subject that Bukhari, Muslim and other great traditionists have devoted whole chapters on knowledge in their collections.

The verses emphasizing knowledge are mostly of Meccan surahs and they were revealed during the pre-migration period. whereas at Medina, when the Muslims had greater freedom of action, the surahs dealt with the practical side of knowledge. 6:92 - "Ye were taught that which ye knew not yourselves nor (di?) your fathers (know i?)"

(Revealed at Mecca)
31 : 27 - "And if all the trees on earth were pens, and the
sea, with seven more seas to help it (were ink), the words of
Allah could not be exhausted."

(Revealed at Mecca)

68 : 1 - "Nun. By the pen and that which they write
(therewith),"

(Revealed at Mecca)

52 : 1 - "By the Mount,

52 : 2 - And a Scripture inscribed

52 : 3 - On fine parchment unrolled"

(Revealed at Mecca)

16 : 44 - "With clear proofs and writings; and we have
revealed unto thee the Remembrance that thou mayst explain to
mankind that which hath been revealed for them, and that haply
they may reflect."

(Revealed at Mecca)

39 : 9 - "Are those who know equal with those who know not?
But only men of understanding will pay heed."

(Revealed at Mecca)

16 : 43 - "Ask the followers of the Remembrance if ye know
not."

(Revealed at Mecca)

16 : 125 - "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and
fair exhortation and reason with them in the better way."

(Revealed at Mecca)
17 : 85 - "and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little.

(Revealed at Mecca)

20 : 114 - "and say: My Lord! increase me in knowledge.

(Revealed at Mecca)

7 : 52 - "Verily we have brought them a Scripture which we expound with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."

(Revealed at Mecca)

29 : 49 - "But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge, and none deny our revelations save wrong doers."

(Revealed at Mecca)

7 : 7 - "Then verily we shall narrate unto them (the event) with knowledge."

(Revealed at Mecca)

29 : 43 - "As for these similitudes, we coin them for mankind, but none will grasp their meaning save the wise."

(Revealed at Mecca)

13 : 19 - "Is he who knoweth that what is revealed unto thee from thy Lord is the truth like him who is blind? but only men of understanding heed:"

(Revealed at Mecca)

Importance and the superior ranks of the learned men:-
4 : 83 - "Whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it."

In this verse, the learned men are placed next to the messengers of Allah. By their understanding and efforts, they can gain knowledge of the Divine will and make it known.

And :-

13 : 43 - "Say: Allah and whosoever hath true knowledge of the Scripture, is sufficient witness between me and you."

Referring to the above quoted verse, Imam Ghazzali writes that it shows the power of knowledge, through which it has been possible to be witness with Allah between the Prophet and the disbelievers.¹

And says that Quran:-

3 : 18 - "Allah (Himself) is witness that there is no god save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness)"

In this verse, Allah has mentioned the men of learning after Himself and the angels, In which according to Imam Ghazzali, is honour, distinction and excellence.²

1. Imam Ghazzali: Ihya:Kitab ul 'Ilm,Nabih Amin translator p,10
2. Ibid.
It was because of knowledge that Adam got superiority over the angels. And knowledge is the source of strength and greatness says the Quran that 2 : 247 - Allah hath increased him abundantly in wisdom and stature.

59 : 11 - "Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge to high ranks."

Imam Ghazzali writes that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas (d A.H. 69/ A.D. 688), the cousin of the Prophet said that the rank of the men of learning would be seven hundred grades above the believers, the distance between each of two of which is five hundred years long.

Knowledge is superior than worship. It has been placed on equal footing with prophecy, writes Imam Ghazzali that despite the fact the worshipper might not be ignorant of the worship he observed and the Prophet said:

"The superior rank the learned man holds in relation to the worshipper is like the superior rank I hold in relation to the least of men."

"Anas b. Malik the Companion narrated that the Prophet said that the best part of your faith is that which is the easiest and the best form of worship is figh, (insight)."

1. al Quran 2:31
2. Ghazzali op.cit p.10
3. Ibid p. 13
4. Ibid, and Ibn ‘Abd ul Barr: Jame Bayan ul Tlm, Abd ur Razzaq Malihabadi, translator, Delhi: Nadwat ul Musannifeen, 1974 p.53
The Prophet said:—

The learned believers hold a rank seventy degrees higher than that of the ordinary believer¹.

The Prophet said that the learned men are the heirs of the Prophets.

Commenting this tradition Imam Ghazzali writes that this is the highest honour because there is no rank above the Prophets².

Said the Prophet: "God revealed unto Abraham the friend of God, 'O Abraham! verily I am knowing and I love every knowing person'³.

Companion Mu'adh b. Jabal narrated that the Prophet said "The learned is the trustee of God on earth"⁴.

Said the Prophet: "On the day of resurrection the ink of the learned men will be linked to the blood of the martyrs"⁵.

The Prophet said:

"What is in the heavens and in the earth intercedes for the learned men"⁶.

1. Imam Ghazzali : Kitab ul 'Ilm, p. 13.
2. Ibid, p. 11.
6. Ibn Maja cited by Imam Ghazzali op cit, p. 11.
Said the Prophet:

"The passing away of a whole tribe is more tolerable than the death of a learned man".\(^1\)

and -

"There are two groups among my people when they become righteous the populace becomes righteous, and when they become corrupt the populace becomes corrupt: these are the rulers and the jurisprudents",\(^2\), (fuqha) i.e. those learned scholars who have religious insight.

'Ali b. Abi Talib said:-

"The learned is superior to the fasting, praying and self-mortifying man. Should the learned die, a gap would be created in Islam (by his death) and no one would fill this gap save one of his successors".\(^3\).

'Umar al Farooq said:-

"O men seek ye knowledge. For verily God has a mantle of love which He cast upon him who seeks knowledge, even a single section. Should he then commit an offence, God will remonstrate with him thrice in order not to rob him of his mantle, even though that offence may persist with him until he dies".\(^4\).

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1. Ibid. P. 12
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. P. 14
4. Ibid.
A tradition of the Prophet reported by Mu'adh b. Jabal is:

"Acquire knowledge, for its acquisition is (equivalent to) the fear of God, its pursuit is (equivalent to) worship, its study is (equivalent to) praise, searching for it is (equivalent to) jihad, teaching it to him who does not know is (equivalent to) almsgiving, and imparting it to those who are worthy is meritorious. Furthermore, it is the bosom friend of the lonesome, the companion in solitude, the guide to religion, the comforter in both happiness and misfortune, the aid to the lonely the relative among strangers, and the beacon on the road to Paradise. Through it God exalts a few and makes them leaders in virtues, chiefs and counsellors worthy of emulation, pioneers in righteousness whose footsteps should be followed and whose deeds should be observed. The angels seek their friendship and with their wing they touch them to gain thereby their favour. And even the whales and the fish of the sea, the lions and beasts of the field, as well as the heaven and its stars intercede for them, because knowledge is the protection of hearts against blindness, the light of the eyes in darkness, and the fortification of the body against decay. Through it man attains sainthood and the loftiest ranks. To reflect upon it is (as meritorious) as fasting and its study, as continual prayer. Through it God is obeyed,
worshipped and glorified; through it he admonishes and forewarns; through it His unity is declared, and through it also (man) abstains from sin. Through knowledge the ties of relationship are made close by kindly deeds and the lawful and the unlawful are made known. Knowledge is like an imam whereas works are his followers. Knowledge is bestowed upon the fortunate and from the unfortunate withheld. 

Imam Ghazzali writes about the seekers of knowledge that "they are like those who have undertaken to guard the outpost of Islam where they are encamped, or like the conquerors who are warring on behalf of them some are active fighters, others are on the reserve, others are in charge of water supply, while others look after the mounts; but all will receive their reward if their aim is the glory of God rather than the possession of spoil."

Said the Prophet:

"Whoever follows a path in search of knowledge, God will guide him unto a path leading into paradise."

"To rise up before day break and learn but a section of knowledge is better than prostrating yourself in prayer a hundred times."

1. Ibid P. 24
2. Ibid P. 138
3. Muslim: Sahih, cited by Imam Ghazzali op. cit P. 138
From the above quoted some of the Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions and sayings of his companions, can be judged the importance of knowledge in Islam.

'Ali b. Abi Talib narrated that the Prophet said:

Why shall I not tell you the identity of a learned (faqih); who is a perfect learned (faqih). He is that who neither disappoints people from God, nor leaves the Quran carelessly.

Be aware! there is no goodness in that worship which has no insight, and knowledge without understanding (fahm) is useless; the recitation (of the Quran) without tadabbur (reflection), has no profit.