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Many of us today suffer from misconception about the true meaning and aim of education. That education is to enable a student to obtain a highest possible rank and degree and consequently a lucrative job, is a common belief. Man's actions are determined and influenced by his original intentions, as the saying goes, the future of a student is bound to be influenced by his understanding of the meaning and aim of education.

What is then the true aim of education? We are told the word 'Education' in English is originally derived from the Latin words 'AY' and 'CATUM' which mean to bring out from within. In other words, the true meaning of education is to work and strive to bring out in open the innate capabilities of human body and mind so as to derive benefit from them.

Every human being is divinely endowed with certain faculties which need to be developed through training and education. They remain dormant in an ignorant and uneducated person whereas the educated and trained one is able to benefit himself, his family and the society as a whole.

It is incorrect to value education with any materialistic gain or with it aim at lucrative jobs. It was during the seventh century when Ali a.s. the cousin of the Prophet of Islam was expounding on the importance of education and acquisition of knowledge and he said this:

"BE PREPARED TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE

DO NOT PLACE ANY RETURN AGAINST IT"

This means that knowledge and education in itself is a great wealth and it is not right to value it by any materialistic gain.

Islam has emphasized that there is no boundary line for education. Acquisition of knowledge is said to start from cradle to grave. That is educating oneself is not to be restricted to going to schools only but need to be constant throughout one's lifetime, whether by attending lectures studying useful books or by meditating on events around the world and taking lessons from them.

By restricting the aim of education to attaining school certificates or university degrees, one may risk failures in life. Here educational testimonials may at times prove worthless even harmful. Warning us for such a possible situation, Ali a.s. says:

"MANY A-LEARNED ARE RUINED BY THEIR OWN IGNORANCE"

The purpose of education need to be as widely understood as possible to include acquisition of good character and virtues, development of one's intellect and reasoning power so as to recognize and follow the path of truth. On this Ali a.s. had this say:

"TRUTH IS THE BEST PATH AND KNOWLEDGE IS THE BEST GUIDE"

There is a tendency in our society today to take things for granted by assuming that our acquired educational qualifications or any heritage from ancestors are enough to see us successful through our life time. Warning against this, Ali a.s. says:

"YOU MAY BE THE OFFSPRING OF ANYONE, ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE
AS THIS WILL MAKE YOU INDEPENDENT OF FAMILY STATUS"

We should not lose sight of the fact that environment has much influence over the mind of a child. However good school and the care of the best teachers under which you may place your child, he or she is not likely to progress and truly achieve success if left in an unhealthy and indescant surrounding at home and outside. The influence of sensual film programs, pornography or company of undesirable friends cannot be overlooked. The environmental influence starts right when the child is in the womb of mother as can be understood from the following saying of the Prophet of Islam:

" A MISERABLE AND UNFORTUNATE ONE BECOMES SO WHEN
IN THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER AND SIMILARLY THE HAPPY
AND LUCKY ONE"

In other words the bad character and mental outlook of a would-be mother casts its influence over the child to be borne.

It is rightly said that education of child starts from home and undoubtedly parents carry heavy responsibility in shaping the future of their offsprings.