

# Fruits for the Week

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## IQRA' (READ)

Allah (SWT) commands: "*Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher.*" (Al-'Alaq: 1)

The very first word in Islam is the word "*IQRA*" which means "READ", a very important and valuable word in education and training. This is the very first command given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a man who did not know how to read but who afterwards rose up to the pinnacle of educatedness and wisdom. It is this first word that spurred him to show people the importance of knowledge and skills in life.

"*Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher*" (Al-'Alaq: 1) is a command directed not only to the Prophet but also to all Muslims. The word is not merely an instruction or motivation but a command. Hence, the Prophet followed it and became successful in his mission. The word "*READ*" is a symbol of educatedness. The word is an all-important active verb, a word of action in education and training. It is a command that should be followed devotedly and forthrightly by every Muslim "in the name of your Lord and Cherisher" to sustain and promote work, expertise, personal development and progress.

Education is essential for high growth and good life. It imbues the ardent student with the right values and develops him with upright character, and makes him contribute to his community and nation effectively.

Indeed, in Islam, investment in education for children is a requirement; it is an inherent Islamic obligation. The progress and success of a country depend on how well its people are nurtured, educated, trained and developed, and how well they utilize their talent, creativity and expertise in their respective jobs. In short, as Muslims, we should adhere to the command of Allah to "READ", that is, learn as much as we can and as long as we live, and righteously use the knowledge and skills that we acquire.

In the Qur'an there is also a chapter called "*AL-QALAM*" or "*PEN*", an instrument used for writing. Even when people use computers to type or process word for reading and communication, the pen, a symbol of educatedness, would still be used and carried by people to jot down notes and to sign documents.

When Allah Himself has directed people to read and write, it becomes inexcusable for a believer in Him to remain uneducated or semi-educated. A Muslim should therefore have the motivation to be educated and wise so as to live in peace and harmony with respect and dignity. This is the deep meaning of happiness and success in Islam. Wallahu A'lam.

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