

# Guidelines for Memorizing the Holy Qur'ān

Useful information and techniques for reciting, memorizing,  
retaining, and teaching the Holy Qur'ān or parts thereof

Compiled by  
Muntahā Ibrāheem Kenny

This is a gift to: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Kindly remember me in your du'ās**

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to every sincere and earnest student of the Holy Qur'ān, and to all of those involved in its preservation and propagation.

## Introduction

*In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

I thank and praise Allāh for guiding us to Islām and for instilling in us the love and enthusiasm for His Holy Book. All peace and salutations go to our beloved Prophet and the savior of mankind, Muḥammad (SAW), his family (RA), his righteous companions (RA), and the pious ones that came after them (R).

Memorization (*taḥfeedh*) of the *Qur'ān* was the earliest form of transmission of the text and has been practised by Muslims since the revelation began. The *Qur'ān* is perhaps the only book in human history that has such an outstanding tradition of oral transmission that can be traced back to the Prophet (SAW) himself. Although many Muslims known as *ḥufādh* (memorizers) have memorized the entire *Qur'ān*, it is an obligation for each Muslim to memorize as much of it as possible. It is reported from Ibn Abbās that Allāh's Messenger (SAW) said: "He in whose heart there is no part of *Qur'ān* is like a deserted house."

While in the past, memorization of the *Qur'ān* used to be the basis of all sound Muslim education; today there is less emphasis on it due to changes in the educational system of the Muslims. However, memorization of passages from the *Qur'ān* is still required from all Muslims particularly because of the following reasons:

- Memorization was the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) as was observed by the companions (RA), *Tābi'ūn* (R), and all pious Muslims.
- Recitation of passages from memory is required for the correct performance of prayer (*ṣalāh*).
- Passages memorized are useful in practical *da'wah* (propagation) work.
- Memorization and repetition of the *Qur'ān* leads to more remembrance of Allāh and His message.
- Memorization of the *aḥkām* (laws) passages leads to more consciousness and determination.

- Memorization leads to deeper understanding and faith in the message of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

This book intends to present you with a broad and comprehensive way of understanding the elements that come into play for the (average) person that wishes to memorize the Holy Qur'ān. While it may be accepted that each individual's encounter and experience in memorizing the Qur'ān is unique in terms of his physical, mental and spiritual condition, this book serves as an ideal guideline, and motivation for the enthusiast who desires and yearns to commit the Holy Qur'ān, or parts thereof, to memory. I tried to keep the information as versatile and useful as possible so that it can be applied to other fields of study as well, and not necessarily limited to the memorization of the Holy Qur'ān alone. This book explores various spiritual, practical, and scientific techniques that will aid the reciter, memorizer, and teacher of the Qur'ān; hence, it also serves as a manual to the (fulltime *hifdh*) student, parent, and teacher.

This work was originally based on a compilation of two books: *Causes That Aid in the Memorization of the Holy Qur'ān*<sup>2</sup> (found in Sections One, Two, and Eight in this book) and *The Best Way to Memorize the Noble Qur'ān*<sup>3</sup> (parts of Sections Two and Three).<sup>4</sup> Additions to the above sections and the rest of the book are derived from various other sources including my own experiences, and from that of my colleagues.

I sincerely trust, pray, and hope that you will find this book useful, informative, and of benefit; and that our efforts be accepted in the Court of Allāh.

*Muntahā Ibrāheem Kenny, 1 May 2009*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ulūm al-Qur'ān* - Aḥmad von Denffer

<sup>2</sup> by Shaikh Maḥmūd al-Miṣri - translated by Farhia Yaḥya

<sup>3</sup> by Dr. Yaḥya al-Ghouthani, translated by Abu Muqatil

<sup>4</sup> Footnotes and references provided by these authors have been left in the manner that it was used by them and was not necessarily established and verified by myself.

## SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

No.	Arabic	English	No.	Arabic	English
1	ب	<b>b</b>	17	ع	'
2	ت	<b>t</b>	18	غ	<b>gh</b>
3	ث	<b>th</b>	19	ف	<b>f</b>
4	ج	<b>j</b>	20	ق	<b>q</b>
5	ح	<b>h</b>	21	ك	<b>k</b>
6	خ	<b>kh</b>	22	ل	<b>l</b>
7	د	<b>d</b>	23	م	<b>m</b>
8	ذ	<b>th</b>	24	ن	<b>n</b>
9	ر	<b>r</b>	25	و	<b>w</b>
10	ز	<b>z</b>	26	ه	<b>h</b>
11	س	<b>s</b>	27	ي	<b>y</b>
12	ش	<b>sh</b>	28	آ	<b>ā</b>
13	ص	<b>s</b>	29	اي	<b>ee</b>
14	ض	<b>dh</b>	30	او	<b>û</b>
15	ط	<b>t</b>	31	آي	<b>ai</b>
16	ظ	<b>dh</b>	32	أو	<b>ou</b>

### Abbreviations:

- (SAW)= *Sallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam* - May the Peace and Salutations of Allāh be upon him. Comes after the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW).
- (AS)= *‘Alaihis-Salām*- Peace be upon him. Comes after the names of the Angels and Prophets.
- (RA)= *Radhiyallāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā* - May Allāh be pleased with him/her. Comes after the names of the companions of the Prophet (SAW).
- (R)= *Raḥmatullāhi ‘alai* - May Allāh have mercy on him/her. Comes after the name of a Pious Predecessor.

Throughout this book, as is customary in the Arabic language; the masculine (he) includes the feminine (she).

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## **Can I really do it?**

Most of us assume that we have a bad memory that cannot keep important and sometimes even basic information, and that memorizing the Holy Qur'ān is one of the most difficult tasks a person can embark on. We often think that 'it is not for me' or that 'I would never be able to do it'. This is some of the many hindrances we tend to create that eventually discourage us from the idea of starting to memorize the Holy Qur'ān. Some other self-imposed obstacles are:

### **I can never memorize that much.**

Have you ever tried before? You will never know unless you try, and you might even be amazed about what you can really accomplish.

### **Even if I start memorizing now, by the time I finish a part, I will forget the part I have memorized before.**

This will never happen if you consistently revise what you have already memorized. Reciting the memorized parts in your daily prayers is one of many ways with which you can revise the Qur'ān in a manner that will also give you more confidence in your capabilities.

### **I don't have time.**

Make time. We waste so much time on things that bring us no useful benefit in this world and the Hereafter. All it requires is to manage your time efficiently in order to set a few minutes aside everyday during which you can focus on memorizing the Qur'ān.

**How can I memorize something when I do not understand its meaning?**

That's double benefit. It may seem ambiguous for you, but you can read over the translation of the verses before you start to memorize it. In that way you will be able to retain the verses better because you can now relate to its English meanings as well.

**I am not sure if I am reciting correctly.**

Ask a capable person to listen to your recital before and after you memorized the lesson. You may even get a friend to memorize with you. Remember, Allāh rewards double and triple fold for the one who strives to read the Qur'ān even in difficulty.

Finally, Allāh says:

**“And We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy to understand and remember, but is there any that will remember?” [al-Qamar: 17]**

## **SECTION ONE**

### **Benefits of Memorizing the Holy Qur'ān**

Indeed, reciting the Qur'ān and memorizing it has benefits that cannot be counted. The famous author, Khurram Murād (R) said:

As you come to the Qur'ān, you come to a new world. No other venture in your life can be so momentous and crucial, so blissful and rewarding, as your journey to and through the Qur'ān.

It is a journey that will take you through the endless joys and riches of the words that your Creator and Lord have sent to you and all mankind. Here you will find a world of untold treasures of knowledge and wisdom to guide you on the pathways of life, to mould your thoughts and actions. In it you will find deep insights to enrich you and steer you along the right course. From it you will receive a radiant light to illumine the deeper reaches of your soul. Here you will encounter profound emotions, a warmth to melt your heart and bring tears running down your cheeks.

It is crucial for you because, as you travel through the Qur'ān, at every step you will be summoned to choose, and to commit to Allāh. To read the Qur'ān is nothing less than to live the Qur'ān willingly, sincerely, devotedly, and totally. The outcome of your entire life depends on how you heed the call given by Allāh. The journey is therefore decisive for your existence, for mankind, for the future of human civilization.

A hundred new worlds lie in its verses.  
Whole centuries are involved in its moments.

Know, then, that it is the Qur'ān, and only the Qur'ān, which can lead you on and on to success and glory in this world and in the world-to-come.<sup>5</sup>

Let us now look at a few points that may encourage us and our children to embark on the noble task of *hifdh* al-Qur'ān (the memorization of Qur'ān).

### ♦ 1.1 - People of Qur'ān are a People of Exalted Rank

The Noble Qur'ān is the Final Word of Allāh, which is not approached by falsehood, neither from before it nor from behind it, and whoever is blessed by Allāh to recite it all or memorize it all, then that is the highest objective and the lofty rank that necks only stretch forth to attain. Allāh lightens the heart of the reciter with the *nūr* (light) of *eemān* (faith) and He protects him from the darkness of the Day of Judgment. He distances him away from unbearable difficulties, guides him to the straight path, expand his chest with it and He makes the angels supplicate for the bearer of Qur'ān with mercy and forgiveness. It is by the Qur'ān that hearts and homes are built, and they are sustained and enveloped by goodness and blessings. The *shayāteen* (devils) leave it and stay away from it, and Allāh elevates the capabilities of the *qāri'* (reciter/memorizer of Qur'ān) in this world and in the Hereafter.

### ♦ 1.2 - The People of Qur'ān Hope for a Trade That Will Never Perish

The people of Qur'ān who live with it by their hearts and souls without desiring to attain by it the vanities of this temporary life – they hope for a trade and a gain that will never perish. Allāh bears witness to their righteousness when He says:

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<sup>5</sup> The Journey of life - *Way to the Qur'ān* by Khurram Murad

Verily, those who recite the Book of Allāh, perform prayers, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) trade-gain that will never perish. That He may pay them their wages in full, and increase them, out of His Grace. Verily! He is Oft Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate. [al-Fāṭir: 29-30]

Qatādah (RA) used to say whenever he read this verse: “This is the verse of the *qurrā’* (reciters).”<sup>6</sup> – and that is because of what it confirms for them from great recompense and multiplied reward, and they do not take pleasure in just abundant reward, but rather Allāh increases them in honour and virtue.

Al-Qurtubi (RA) said: “This increase is intercession in the Hereafter.”<sup>7</sup>

### ♦ 1.3 - We Cannot Do Without the Book of Allāh

Ibn ‘Abdil-Barr (R) said:

The Qur’ān is the foundation of knowledge, so whoever memorized it before his coming of age (i.e. puberty), and he went along to study whatever would aid his understanding of it from language, then that would be a great help for him in attaining his objective from it (i.e. knowledge).<sup>8</sup>

Indeed no Muslim can ever do without the Book of Allāh. The *faqeeh* (scholar) uses its verses to derive evidences, the one who teaches people *‘aqeedah* (creed) requires every verse in the Book and the one who teaches them the *sunnān* (ways) of Allāh in past nations also has a need towards the Book of Allāh.

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<sup>6</sup> *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (3/562)

<sup>7</sup> *Tafseer al-Qurtubi* (14/345)

<sup>8</sup> *Saḥeeh Jami’ Bayān al-ilm wa Fadhlīhi* (454)

So, in a nutshell, the Qur'ān is the course and path for a complete life and no Muslim can ever do without it, regardless of his condition or state.

#### ♦ 1.4 - Memorization of the Qur'ān Guides You to the Straight Path

We know with certainty that if a youth keeps themselves occupied in the memorization of the Qur'ān from a young age, then that will keep them busy and prevent them from stumbling upon sin and disobedience. From there, a youth will be going from memorization to revision and from studying the *tafseer* (interpretation) of those verses to striving upon learning the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (causes for revelation). Like that they will find themselves moving from knowledge to knowledge until at the end of the matter, he or she becomes a scholar from the righteous scholars of this *ummah* (Muslim nation), *insha-Allāh*.

#### ♦ 1.5 - Memorizing the Qur'ān Means Taking Advantage of the Moments of Life

Indeed, the Prophet (SAW) ordered us to take advantage of every moment of our lives and to use it in the obedience of Allāh. He (SAW) said:

Take benefit of five before five:

1. Your youth before your old age,
2. Your health before your sickness,
3. Your wealth before your poverty,
4. Your free-time before your preoccupation,
5. And your life before your death.<sup>9</sup>

In a time when the people of this world are occupied with their *dunya* and its vanities, and they make their gatherings one of amusement, heedlessness and slander – the people of Qur'ān are taking advantage of every

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<sup>9</sup> Reported by al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqi – *Sahih Jami'* (1077)

moment by living the Qur'ān in heart and soul by reciting it, memorizing it, pondering over it and acting upon it.

Indeed, the *nafs* (soul) commands evil and if you do not busy it in obedience, it will busy you in disobedience – so take advantage of life memorize the Book of Allāh and act upon it.

### ♦ 1.6 - The Qur'ān is a Cure for the Hardening of the Heart

Indeed, the most effective way to cure the hardness of the heart is to draw closer to the Book of Allāh the Great, for Allāh says:

Allāh has sent down the best statement, a Book, its parts resembling each other in goodness and truth, oft repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it. Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allāh. That is the guidance of Allāh. He Guides therewith whom He pleases and whomever Allāh sends astray, for him there is no guide. [al-Zumar: 23]

### ♦ 1.7 - The Qur'ān Increases Your *Eemān*

Whoever wishes for an increase in *eemān* day after day, upon him is recourse to the Book of Allāh, for He (*Subhānahu wa Ta'āla*) has said:

The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses are recited unto them, they increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone). [al-Anfāl: 2]

He also said: “And whenever there comes down a *sūrah* (chapter from the Qur'ān), some of them (hypocrites) say: “Which of you has had his Faith

increased by it?” As for those who believe, it has increased their Faith, and they rejoice.” [al-Toubah: 124]

You will increase in faith when you read about the Promise of Allāh to His believing servants, the promise of Paradise and pleasure, and His stern warnings of anger and hellfire to the disbelievers. For whenever you read in the Qur’ān how Allāh gave victory to His slaves, the Prophets and Messengers (AS) and brought defeat to the disbelievers, you will increase in faith.

Narrated from Jundub (RA) that he said: “We were young youth with the Messenger of Allāh (SAW), so we learnt faith before we learnt Qur’ān, then we learnt Qur’ān and it increased our faith.”<sup>10</sup> Allāhu Akbar.

### ♦ 1.8 - Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) You Have a Great Example

Allāh *Ta’āla* said: “Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allāh and the Last Day and remembers Allāh much.” [al-Aḥzāb: 21].

The Prophet (SAW) used to memorize the Qur’ān and he used to be continuous in its recitation. Jibreel (AS) used to review it with him once every year and in the year that he (SAW) was taken (passed away), he came to him twice. So whoever memorized the Qur’ān, then he has indeed taken the beloved (SAW) as an example.

### ♦ 1.9 - Memorization of Qur’ān is From the Special Characteristics of This *Ummah*

Memorization of al-Qur’ān is from the special characteristics of the *Ummah* (nation) of Muḥammad (SAW). Ibn al-Jazari (R) said: “The transmission of Qur’ān by relying upon memorization (off by heart) and not upon script in the *muṣ-ḥaf* and in books, is from the most noble of characteristics given to this *Ummah* by Allāh *Ta’āla*.”

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<sup>10</sup> *Nuzhat al-Fudhalā’* (1/383)

He (R) also said:

Allāh *Ta'ala* has informed us that the Qur'ān does not need to be confined - in preserving it - to a page that can be washed with water. Instead it is read in all states as has been narrated in the description of this Ummah "Their scriptures are in their hearts" – and this is different to the people of the Book who do not memorize it except in (referring to) the Books, they do not read it except by looking at it and it is never off by heart.

#### ◇ 1.10 - Our Pious Predecessors (R) and Memorization of Qur'ān

Imām al-Nawawi (R) said: "The pious predecessors would never teach *hadeeth* and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) except to someone who had memorized the Qur'ān"<sup>11</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (R) also said:

Seeking knowledge is in consecutive levels and ranks, it does not befit that they should be bypassed. Whoever bypasses them at once, then he has bypassed the path of the pious predecessors –may Allāh have mercy on them. Whoever bypasses them intentionally will go astray and whoever bypasses them with sincere effort will fall into error. The first of knowledge is memorizing the Book of Allāh *`azza wa jall* and understanding it."<sup>12</sup>

Abul-Fadhl al-Rāzi (R) said: "It was upon the memorization and teaching (of Qur'ān) that the hearts of the first ones (of this nation) and those after them lay."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *al-Majmū'* (1/38)

<sup>12</sup> *Jamī' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadhlīhi* (2/166)

<sup>13</sup> *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pg. 33

So whoever wishes to take the pious predecessors (R) as an example, then upon them is to memorize the Qur'ān.

♦ **1.11 - Memorization of Qur'ān is Easily Accomplished**

Allāh Ta'āla said: “And We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy to understand and remember, but is there any that will remember?” [al-Qamar: 17].

Al-Qurtubi (R) said: “This means - ‘We have made it easy for *hifdh* and we will aid whoever wishes to memorize it, so is there anyone who seeks to memorize it that We may help him?”<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, from the miracles of the Noble Qur'ān is the ease of memorization upon all tongues so that even the non-Arab and others besides them are able to memorize it. *Hifdh* al-Qur'ān is the basis of learning and pursuing of knowledge. Allāh, the Exalted, and Most High described this Qur'ān saying, “Nay, but they, the clear *Āyāt* are preserved in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge” [al-'Ankabût: 49]

And Allāh Ta'āla has said in a *Hadeeth Qudsi*, which is narrated by *Saheeh Muslim*:

I have indeed sent you (O Prophet) to test you and test others by you, and I have revealed onto you a Book that cannot be washed by water, so that you may recite it while in the state of wakefulness or sleep.

Al-Nawawi said: “This means that it's preserved in the hearts – it's not free to depart but rather it stays in the course of history.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *al-Jami' li-Ahkām al-Qur'ān* (17/134)

<sup>15</sup> *Saheeh Muslim, Sharh al-Nawawi* (17/204)

### ◇ 1.12 - *Huffādh* al-Qur'ān are the People of Qur'ān

The Prophet (SAW) said: “Indeed, Allāh has people from amongst mankind: the people of Qur'ān, they are the people of Allāh and His specialties...”<sup>16</sup>

What companionship! Such companion that this world and all that is in it do not parallel it of temporary enjoyment! It is from the complete honour of Allāh to the carriers of Qur'ān that He has made them from His people and His specialties. In a time where the people of art and skill have attached themselves to their talents and the people of wealth to what is with them, the people of Qur'ān have triumphed with the companionship of the King of kings and dominion, Exalted be He.

### ◇ 1.13 - None Take Delight in the Night Prayer Similar to the People of Qur'ān

It is obvious that the one who reads the Qur'ān – in *Qiyām al-Layl* (night prayer) or *Tarāweeh* prayers– from the *mus-haf* (Qur'ān) does not feel the delight of the one who reads the Qur'ān from his heart. It is for this basis we find that amongst the biggest reasons a person becomes lazy from the night prayer is that they do not have with them the Qur'ān (he or she has not memorized the Qur'ān).

The night prayer is the honour and glory of a believer and it is the time that mercy descends from the Lord of the heavens and the earth, a time wherein Allāh descends to the lower heaven. The Prophet (SAW) said:

Whoever stands (for the night prayer) with ten verses is not written amongst the heedless, whoever stands with a hundred verses is written to be amongst the devout and sincere ones and whoever stands with a thousand verses is written amongst the *muqantareen*” [‘those for whom a

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<sup>16</sup> Reported by Ahmad and Nasā’i – *Saheeh al-Jāmi’* (2165)

*qintār* (a measurement of weight) of reward is written']<sup>17</sup>

#### ◇ 1.14 - **The Qur'ān Puts You in the Company of the Elite**

It is also well known that in the gatherings of the people of Qur'ān, none is present therein except people of righteousness and piety, and hence the Qur'ān puts you in the companionship of (these) elite.

Indeed, the Prophet (SAW) said: “A man is upon the way of his friend, so let each one of you look to whom you befriend.”<sup>18</sup>

He, (SAW), informed and spoke of the state of people on the Day of Judgement. He (SAW) said – as is narrated in the *Saḥeeḥain* – “A man will be with whom he loves”. So if you love the people of Qur'ān and accompany them, then you will be from amongst them and be raised up with them on the Day of Judgement – *insha-'Allāh*.

#### ◇ 1.15 - **The *Hāfidh* of Qur'ān's Evidence is in Front of Them**

For the one who memorized the Qur'ān, if they were to one day stand and deliver a speech to the people, or remind them during lessons and classes of knowledge, then their evidences will be in front of them (in their heart) – one does not need to search for them since with them are all the evidences from the Qur'ān with regards to *sulūk* (branches), *adāb* (manners), rules, the *farā'idh* (obligations), *targheeb* and *tarheeb* (character building), stories and lessons etc. Whenever one intends to speak on a specific subject, they will find the evidences from the Qur'ān flow from their mouth to the hearts of the people without difficulty or hesitation.

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<sup>17</sup> Reported by Abu Dāwūd and Ibn Hibbān – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (6439)

<sup>18</sup> Reported by Abu Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhi – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (3545)

### ◇ 1.16 - Treasures of Goodness in the Memorization of Qur'ān

Certainly Allāh intends to preserve His Book in the hearts of the believers, and it is normally not possible for a believer to achieve this, except by much repetition and revision and committing to memory. The Prophet (SAW) said:

Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allāh, he will have a reward. And that reward will be multiplied by ten. I am not saying that “*Alif, Lām, Meem*” is a letter, rather I am saying that “*Alif*” is a letter, “*Lām*” is a letter and “*Meem*” is a letter.<sup>19</sup>

Imagine the number of letters read by a person sitting in the House of Allāh (*Masjid*) for two hours or more, in memorization and recitation.

### ◇ 1.17 - The Qur'ān is Evidence for You or Against You

Surely, the Qur'ān is either a proof for you or against you as he (SAW) said- as reported in *Saḥeeh Muslim*, “The Qur'ān is evidence for you or against you.”

So if a person recites the Qur'ān, memorizes it, and acts upon what is in it – and intends nothing thereby except the Pleasure of Allāh – then the Qur'ān will be a proof and an intercessor for them on the Day of Judgement, *bi'ithnillāh*.

### ◇ 1.18 - *Hifdh* al-Qur'ān Eases Recitation of Qur'ān at All Times

Whoever memorizes the Qur'ān is able to read it whilst walking, driving their car, or waiting for one of their brothers or sisters, what is evident is that they are able to attach their tongue to the recitation of Qur'ān at

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<sup>19</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhi and al-Hakim – *Saḥeeh al-Jāmi'* (6469)

any time. As for the one who has not memorized the Qur'ān, they are unable to recite except if by opening the *mus-haf* (copy of Qur'ān) in front of them. This is a blessing that Allāh honours to those who have memorized the Qur'ān.

♦ **1.19 - *Hifdh* al-Qur'ān is One of the Causes of Protection from the Hellfire**

The Servant of Allāh hastens with all that they have in order to be saved from the punishment of Hellfire. Allāh has indeed written for the one who has memorized the Qur'ān – seeking thereby the Delight of Allāh – that the Fire will never touch them.

The Prophet (SAW) said: “If the Qur'ān was to be gathered inside a vessel (heart), Allāh will never punish it with the Hellfire.”<sup>20</sup>

♦ **1.20 - Memorization of the Qur'ān is the Dowry of the Righteous Women**

There was from amongst our pious predecessors' (R) one who would marry righteous women and make her dowry memorization of some chapters from the Qur'ān.

It is reported from Sahl ibn Sa'ad (RA) that he said:

A woman came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: “O Messenger of Allāh, I came to give myself to you in marriage.” So the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) looked at her, he raised his gaze and stared at her and then lowered his head. When the woman saw that he had not made any decision, she sat down. Then a man from among his companions stood up and said: “O Messenger of Allāh, if you don't want to marry her - then marry her to me.” He (SAW) said: “Do you have anything with you (of dowry)?”<sup>21</sup> He said: “No, by Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh.” He

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<sup>20</sup> Reported by al-Baihaqi from 'Usmat ibn Mālik – *Saḥeeh al-Jāmi'* (5266)

<sup>21</sup> Dowry (*mahr*) – bridal gift given to the wife by her husband upon marriage

(SAW) said: “Go to your family and see if you can find anything.” So he went and then returned and said: “No, by Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh, I did not find anything.” He (SAW) said: “Look around, even if it be a metal ring.” So he went, but returned and said: “No, by Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh, not even a metal ring but this here is my lower garment (Sahl said, he did not have an upper garment). For her is half of it.” So the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “What is she going to do with your lower garment? If you wear it, she won’t have much of it on her and if she wears it, you won’t have much of it.” The man then sat for a long time and then stood up and the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) saw him go on his way. He ordered that he be called back and when he came, he (SAW) said: “What do you have with you of Qur’ān?” He said: “I have such and such chapter,” - listing them. He (SAW) asked: “Can you read it off by heart?” He said: “Yes.” He (SAW), said: “Go, for I have given her to you in marriage for what is with you of Qur’ān.”<sup>22</sup>

So if you do not find one who will marry you for what is with you of Qur’ān, then be patient until you present it as dowry to one of the *Hūr al-‘ain* (maidens) in the Paradise of the Most Merciful, *insha’Allāh*.

### ♦ 1.21 - The One With the Most Qur’ān Leads the People

The carrier of Qur’ān has great worth and value in this world and in the Hereafter for the Prophet (SAW) has informed us that the *ṣalāh* (prayer), which is the support of this *deen* (religion) and its second pillar – none leads the people therein except the one with the most Qur’ān. It is narrated from Abu Mas’ūd al-Anṣārī (RA) that he said: The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “The one with

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<sup>22</sup> Al-Bukhāri (5030) and Muslim (1425)

the most Qur'ān leads the people. If they are the same in that, then the one most knowledgeable of the Sunnah. If they are the same therein, then the one to have made *Hijrah* first.”<sup>23</sup>

◊ **1.22 - There is No Envy Except in Two**

The Prophet (SAW) informs us that the one who carries the Qur'ān deserves to be envied by the people – a praiseworthy jealousy – because he has taken up a great rank in this life and the Next.

It is reported from Ibn 'Umar (RA) that the Messenger (SAW) said:

There is to be no jealousy except in two (types of people): A man whom Allāh has given the Book and he stands by night with it (in prayer) and a man whom Allāh has given wealth and he spends of it by day and night.<sup>24</sup>

It is reported by Abu Huraira (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said:

There is to be no envy except in two (types of people): a man whom Allāh has taught the Qur'ān so he reads it by night and by day such that his neighbours hears him and says 'Oh, I wish I had been given what so-and-so has been given so that I may do what he does.' And a man whom Allāh has given wealth so that he spends it in truth, so that a man would say 'Oh, I wish I had been given what so-and-so has been given so I may do what he does.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Muslim* (673)

<sup>24</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (5025) and *Muslim* (815)

<sup>25</sup> Reported by *al-Bukhāri* (5026)

### ◇ 1.23 - From the Honour of Allāh is to Honour the Carrier of Qur’ān

Truly, the honour of the carrier of Qur’ān is not due to their personal self, but rather it is because of, and due to the honour of Allāh’s Words that are carried in their heart. For this reason the Prophet (SAW) said: “Indeed, from the honour of Allāh is to honour the grey-haired (older) Muslim and the carrier of Qur’ān who is neither extreme in it nor turns away from it...”<sup>26</sup>

### ◇ 1.24 - Allāh Raises a People by This Book

Just like the carrier of Qur’ān has the most right to leading the people in their *salāh*, he also has the most right to leadership and government.

It is narrated from Nāfi’ ibn ‘Abd al- Hārith (R) that he met ‘Umar (RA) in *‘Isfān* and ‘Umar made him a governor over *Makkah*:

He (Nāfi’) asked: “Who have you put over *Ahl al-Wādi* (as a governor)?” ‘Umar replied: “Ibn Abzi.” Nāfi’ asked: “And who is Ibn Abzi?” He said: “A slave from amongst our slaves.” Nāfi’ exclaimed: “And you put a slave over them as a governor?!” ‘Umar replied: “Indeed, he recites the Book of Allāh *‘azza wa jall* and he is knowledgeable of the *farā’idh* (obligations). Did your Prophet (SAW) not say: “Truly, Allāh raises a people by this Book and debases others by it.”<sup>27</sup>

‘Abu Bakr (RA), sent four armies to fight the reprisal of Musailimah al-Kathāb, the liar who claimed he was a prophet and a messenger of Allāh. The armies contained the most senior of *Sahābah* (RA) and their slogan for the battle was ‘Oh companions of Sūrah al-Baqarah!’

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<sup>26</sup> Reported by Abu Dāwūd from Abu Mūsa – *Saheeh al-Jāmi’* (2199)

<sup>27</sup> Reported by Muslim

The battle raged on and the forces of Musailimah al-Kadhab were winning. The Sahābah (RA) could not lose; they would not lose. ‘Ammar ibn Yasser (RA) mounted a rock and gathered a battalion of Sahābah that only consisted of the huffādh. Every fighter at the side of ‘Ammar ibn Yasser had memorized the Qur’ān in his heart. The battle was won!

Back to today. Have you ever been in a *masjid* with elder respected members of a community, but when prayer time comes, a young unassuming brother step forward from amongst everyone and leads the congregation? Why was this young boy honored such? Someone whispers into your ear, do you not know? He memorized the Qur’ān by heart.

So this brings us back to what ‘Umar (RA) said: “Truly, Allāh raises a people by this Book and debases others by it.”<sup>28</sup>

### ♦ 1.25 - Memorization of the Qur’ān is Better Than the World and All That is In It

If the people of this world take delight in their world and the people of status take delight in their status and the people of wealth take delight in their wealth, then the bearer of Qur’ān is more worthy of taking delight in the speech of Allāh which is not moved by the *dunya* and all that is in it of temporary enjoyment.

It is narrated from Abu Huraira (RA) that he said:

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “Would any one of you like that when he returns to his family to find there three large, fat, pregnant she-camels? We said: Yes. Upon this he said: Three verses that one of you recites in his prayer are better for him than three large, fat, pregnant she-camels.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Tips on memorizing the Qur’ān* by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef

<sup>29</sup> *Muslim* (802)

And it is narrated from ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir (RA) that he said:

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) came out whilst we were in *Suffa* and said: “Which of you would like to go out every morning to *Buthan* or *al-'Aqiq* and bring two large she-camels without being guilty of sin or without severing the ties of kinship? We said: Messenger of Allāh, we would like to do it. Upon this he (SAW) said: Does not one of you go out in the morning to the mosque and teach or recite two verses from the Book of Allāh, the Majestic and Glorious? That is better for him than two she-camels, and three verses are better (than three she camels) and four verses are better for him than four (she-camels), and so on their number in camels.”<sup>30</sup>

#### ◇ 1.26 - The Hāfidh of Qur’ān is the Best of People

If Allāh rewarded every servant a value and a rank, then the people of Qur’ān are the best of people in rank, for the Prophet (SAW) said, as is narrated in *Bukhāri*, “The best of you is the one who learns Qur’ān and teaches it.”

#### ◇ 1.27 - Tranquility descends Upon the People of Qur’ān and Mercy Envelopes Them

The Messenger (SAW) said: “No people gather together in one of the Houses of Allāh, reciting the Book of Allāh and studying it among themselves, except that *sakeenah* (tranquillity) descends upon them, and *rahmah* (mercy) envelops them, and the angels surround them, and Allāh mentions them amongst those who are with Him.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Muslim* (803)

<sup>31</sup> *Muslim* (2699)

♦ **1.28 - The *Hāfidh* of Qur'ān is Like a Sweet-Smelling Fruit**

The one who recites Qur'ān, their fragrance is pure and the taste is sweet like the *utrujjah* (citron) and due to this, they are a righteous companion to befriend and sit with, the pious and good-doers draw nearer to them to smell of their fragrance and scent.

It is narrated from Abu Mûsa al-Ash'ari (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said:

The example of a believer who reads the Qur'ān is like that of a citron fruit (*utrujjah*); its taste is delicious and its scent is pleasant. And the likeness of the believer who does not read the Qur'ān is like that of a date; its taste is delicious, yet it has no scent. And the likeness of a hypocrite who reads the Qur'ān is like that of basil (*raihāna*); its scent is pleasant, yet its taste is bitter. And the likeness of a hypocrite that does not read the Qur'ān is like that of a colocynth (*handhala*); its taste is bitter and it has no scent.<sup>32</sup>

♦ **1.29 - Memorization of the Qur'ān and Protection From the Trial of the *Dajjāl* (Antichrist)**

In the *hadeeth* narrated by *Muslim*, it states that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “Whoever memorized the first ten verses from Surah al-Kahf will be protected from the *Dajjāl*.”

♦ **1.30 - The Love of Allāh is Attained With the Qur'ān**

The Qur'ān is the speech of Allāh *`azza wa jall*, so whoever loves the speech of Allāh, Allāh loves him.

It is narrated from `Aisha (RA) that:

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<sup>32</sup> *al-Bukhāri* – al-Fath 8 (5020) and *Muslim* (797), wording from Muslim

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) appointed a man in charge of an army unit who led them in *ṣalāh* (prayer); he always concluded his recitation with Sūrah Al-Ikhlās: "Say: 'He is Allāh, (the) One. Allāh - the Self- Sufficient. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none equal or comparable to Him.'" (al-Ikhlās: 1-4). Upon their return to *al-Madeenah*, they mentioned this to the Messenger of Allāh (SAW), who said: "Ask him why he does so?" He was asked and he said: "This chapter contains the Attributes of Allāh, the Gracious, and I love to recite it." The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) then told them: "Tell him that Allāh loves him".<sup>33</sup>

He, (SAW) said: "Whoever reads *Āyah al-Kursi*<sup>34</sup> at the end of each mandatory prayer, nothing prevents him [or her] from entering Paradise except death."<sup>35</sup>

He (SAW) also said – as is in the *Saḥeeḥain* <sup>36</sup>: "Whoever reads the last two verses from Sūrah al-Baqarah every night, they suffice him [or her]."

"Whoever reads a hundred verses in one night (in prayer), it's written for him [or her] as if he stood to pray the entire night."<sup>37</sup>

"Whoever reads – "Say: He, Allāh, is One (Sūrah al-Ikhlās) – ten times, Allāh will build a house for him [or her] in Paradise"<sup>38</sup>

"Whoever reads Sūrah al-Kahf on the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday), a light will be shone for him [or her] between the two Fridays"<sup>39</sup>

"Whoever reads Sūrah al-Kahf on the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday) a light will be shone for him [or her] which

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<sup>33</sup> *Muslim* (813)

<sup>34</sup> Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 255

<sup>35</sup> Al-Nasā'i and Ibn Hibbān – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (6464)

<sup>36</sup> *Saḥeeḥ al-Bukhāri* and *Saḥeeḥ Muslim*

<sup>37</sup> Reported by Ahmad and al-Nasā'i – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (6468)

<sup>38</sup> Reported by Ahmad from Mu'adh ibn Anas – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (6472)

<sup>39</sup> Reported by al-Hakim and al-Baihaqi – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (6470)

extends from him [or her] to the Ancient House (*Ka'bah*).”<sup>40</sup>

♦ **1.31 - The Qur'ān is a Cure – by the Permission of Allāh**

Allāh *Ta'āla* said: “And We send down from the Qur'ān that which is a cure and a mercy for the believers, but it increases the disbelievers in nothing but loss.” [al-Isrā: 82] It is narrated from 'Aisha (RA):

When the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) ever fell ill, he would read the *mu'awwadhat* (Sûrah al-Falaq and al-Nās) and blow over himself. When his ailment worsened, I would read over him and wipe with his hands hoping for its blessings.<sup>41</sup>

And it is reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (RA) that he said:

We were travelling once and when we settled down, a maid came saying: ‘The master of this place has been bitten by a snake and our people are absent, so is there from amongst you one that can cure?’ So a man stood up who we did not know to be a curer, he cured him (the sick person) and he recovered. So they ordered for us thirty sheep and gave us milk to drink. When he returned, we asked him ‘Are you an expert in curing or have you cured from beforehand?’ He said: ‘No, I did not cure except with *Umm al-Kitāb* (Sûrah al-Fātiḥa).’ We said: ‘Let’s not speak about this until we reach or ask the Prophet (SAW). When we reached *Madeenah* we mentioned this to the Prophet (SAW) and he (SAW) asked: ‘What made him know that it is a cure (i.e. Sûrah al-

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<sup>40</sup> Reported by al-Baihaqi from Abu Sa'eed – *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (6471)

<sup>41</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (5017)

Fātiḥa)? Divide it (the sheep) and give me some of it.<sup>42</sup>

◇ **1.32 - The Qur'ān is the Banquet of Allāh**

It is narrated from Ibn Mas'ūd (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said:

Indeed this Qur'ān is the banquet of Allāh so learn as much as you can from the banquet of Allāh. Indeed this Qur'ān is the strong rope of Allāh and it is the clear guidance and it is a beautiful cure, a protection for those who cling to it and a salvation for those who follow it. Nothing is bent or corrupted except that the Qur'ān rectifies it, nor deviated but that it reprimands them. Its marvels do not fade nor is the sweetness of it decreased by the frequency of those who recite it. Therefore recite it, for indeed Allāh will bestow upon you ten times the single reward for your recitation of each letter. I do not say for *Alif*, *Lām*, *Meem* is a letter but *Alif* is a letter, *Lām* is a letter and *Meem* is a letter.”<sup>43</sup>

◇ **1.33 - The Reciter of Qur'ān is a Cause for His/Hers Parents' Mercy**

It is reported from Buraidah al-Aslami (RA) that he said:

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “Whoever recites the Qur'ān, learns it, and then acts upon it is adorned with a crown of light on the Day of Judgement, its radiance is like the radiance of the sun. His parents are adorned with two jewels that the world could never contain, so they say ‘Why

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<sup>42</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (5017)

<sup>43</sup> Reported by al-Hakim, declared *saḥeeḥ* by al-Albani in *al-Silsilah al-Saḥeeḥah* (660)

have we been adorned as such?’ It will be said: ‘for what your child has acquired of Qur’ān.’<sup>44</sup>

### ◇ 1.34 - The Qur’ān and Dispelling Anxiety

It is narrated from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said:

Whoever’s anxiety increases, let him say: ‘O Allāh, I am your slave, the son of your slave, and the son of your maidservant. Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask you by every name belonging to You which You have named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Qur’ān the life<sup>45</sup> of my heart and the light of my breast, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety.’<sup>46</sup>

### ◇ 1.35 - The Qur’ān is Your Soul Amongst the People of the Heavens

It is narrated from Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (RA) that he said:

Have *taqwa* of Allāh because it is the head of all matters and upon you is *jihād* because it is the monasticism of Islām and upon you is the remembrance of Allāh and the recitation of Qur’ān as it is your soul amongst the people of the heavens and your mention amongst the people of the earth, and upon you is to remain silent except

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<sup>44</sup> Reported by al-Ḥakim (1/568) he said ‘It’s authentic on the conditions of Muslim.’

<sup>45</sup> ‘*Rabee*’ of my *Qalb*’ literally means ‘spring of my heart’ because a person’s heart finds tranquillity in the spring season compared to other seasons.

<sup>46</sup> Reported by Aḥmad, al-Ḥakim, and Ibn Hibban with a Ḥasan chain of narration.

in the truth as you will then over power the *Shaitān*.<sup>47</sup>

Narrated from Jundub (R) that he said:

I advise you with the *taqwa* of Allāh and I advise you with the Qur'ān for truly it is a light by the dark night and a guidance by the day - act upon it in difficulty and in poverty. If a calamity befalls, sacrifice your wealth instead of your *deen* (religion) and if the calamity intensifies, then sacrifice your wealth and your life instead of your *deen* for surely the ruined one is he whose religion is ruined and the deprived is he who has been deprived of his *deen*. Know that there is no poverty after entering Paradise and no prosperity after entering Hellfire."<sup>48</sup>

◇ **1.36 - The *Hāfidh* of Qur'ān is Lowered Into Their Grave Before Others**

Just like Allāh raised the value of the bearer of Qur'ān in this world and made them the most deserving of leadership amongst the people, He has also raised their rank and value in the Hereafter by making them the most deserving of entering the grave first. Narrated from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (RA):

The Prophet (SAW) used to gather together two men from those killed in *Uhud* in one piece of cloth, then he would say: "Which one of them knows Qur'ān more?" If one of them were pointed out to him, he would lower him into the grave first and say: "I am a witness over them on the Day of Judgement." He would then order for their burial

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<sup>47</sup> *Nuzhat al-Fudhalā'* (1/248)

<sup>48</sup> *Nuzhat al-Fudhalā'* (1/258)

in their natural blood and they were neither washed nor were they prayed over.”<sup>49</sup>

◇ **1.37 - With the Qur’ān, You’ll be Protected From the Punishment of the Grave and Enter Paradise**

The Prophet (SAW) said: “Sûrah Tabāarak prevents the punishment of the grave.”<sup>50</sup>

He (SAW) also said: “There is a *Sûrah* in the Qur’ān of thirty verses, it intercedes for a man until he is forgiven, and it is *Sûrah* Tabāarak, Blessed Be He in Whose Hand is the Dominion.”<sup>51</sup>

He (SAW) also said: “There is a *Sûrah* in the Qur’ān not more than thirty verses, it argues on behalf of its companion until it enters him into Paradise – and it is Tabāarak.”<sup>52</sup>

◇ **1.38 - The *Hāfidh* of Qur’ān is in the Shade of the Throne of the Most Merciful**

In that terrifying place wherein people will stand on the Day of Judgement without food, drink or shade they will be gathered together bare-footed and naked. The sun will have come near above their heads until it is only a mile from them and the people will drown in their sweat according to their sins. In these difficult moments, the Prophet (SAW) informs us of seven noble types of people who will be in the Shade of the Most Merciful.

He (SAW) said, as is in the *Saḥeeḥain*: “Seven will Allāh give shade to on the Day when there’ll be no shade except His” – and he mentioned from amongst them: “a youth who grew up in the worship of Allāh.”

What is clearly known here is that this youth who grew up in the worship of Allāh and whose heart is

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<sup>49</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (1343)

<sup>50</sup> Reported by Ibn Mardāwih from Ibn Mas’ūd – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jami’* (3643)

<sup>51</sup> Reported by Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhi from Abu Huraira – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jami’* (2091)

<sup>52</sup> Reported by al-Tabarāni in ‘Al-Awsat’ from Anas – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jami’* (3644)

attached to the mosques – they must be one given to reciting the Book of Allāh and memorizing His verses.

♦ **1.39 - The Qur’ān intercedes for its companion on the Day of Judgement**

On this critical Day – the Day of Judgement – a person will search out for someone to intercede for him or her so they may be saved from the punishment of Hell and enter the Paradise of the Most Merciful, may He be Glorified. Then, there will they find the Qur’ān acting as an intercessor for them, a protector for them in front of Allāh until it takes them by the hand to the gardens of the Most Merciful wherein is what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and has never occurred to the hearts of men (and women).

It is narrated from Jābir (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said: “The Qur’ān is an intercessor that intercedes, and a truthful opponent. Whoever puts it in front of him, it leads him to Paradise and whoever casts it behind him, it drags him to Hell.”<sup>53</sup>

And he, (SAW) said: “Fasting and Qur’ān will intercede for the servant on the Day of Judgement. Fasting will say: ‘O Lord, I prevented from him food and desires during the day so let me intercede for him’ and the Qur’ān will say: ‘O Lord, I prevented from him sleep during the night so let me intercede for him’ – so they will both intercede.”<sup>54</sup>

And Abu Umāmah al-Bāhili (RA) said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) say: “Read the Qur’ān for indeed it will come on the Day of Judgement as an intercessor for its companion.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Reported by Ibn Hibbān and al-Bayhaqī – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jami’* (4443)

<sup>54</sup> *Muslim* (804)

<sup>55</sup> Reported by Aḥmad and al-Tabarāni – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jami’* (3882)

#### ◊ 1.40 - The *Hāfidh* of Qur'ān Will be in the Company of the Noble Angels (AS)

At a time when the people of this world boast about their connections with the rich and famous notables, the *hāfidh* of Qur'ān will boast that they'll soon be with the Noble Angels (RA) who are chosen by Allāh and who He has honoured with having the Pure Scriptures in their hands, "It is in Records held in honour (*al-Louh al-Mahfūdh*). Exalted, purified. In the hands of scribes (angels)." [al-Abasa: 13-15]

#### ◊ 1.41 - The *Hāfidh* of Qur'ān Ascends Through the Levels of Paradise

The Prophet (SAW) said: "It will be said to the companion of the Qur'ān when he enters Paradise: 'Read and rise!' and he'll read and rise for every verse a rank until he reads the last thing with him."<sup>56</sup>

He, (SAW) also said: "It will be said to the companion of the Qur'ān: 'Read, ascend and recite like you used to recite in the world for surely your abode is at the last verse you used to read.'<sup>57</sup>

The Prophet (SAW) said: "The Qur'ān will be brought on the Day of Judgement and it will say: 'O my Lord, clothe him.' So he'll be clothed with the crown of honour. Then it will say: 'Increase him', and he'll be clothed with the garment of honour. Then it will say: 'O my Lord, be pleased with him so that He (Allāh) will be pleased with him and say: 'Read and ascend!' and he'll be increased in one good deed for every verse."<sup>58</sup>

Ibn Hajar al-Haithāmi (R) said:

The matter mentioned is only for the one who memorized it by heart not for the one who reads straight from the *mus-haf*, because people do not

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<sup>56</sup> Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Mājah – *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (8121)

<sup>57</sup> Reported by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi – *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (8122)

<sup>58</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhi and al-Hākim – *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (8030)

differ in reward when purely reading (from the Book) and they are not differentiated by amount – truly the only thing they are differentiated in, is memorization and for this reason, their abodes in Paradise are different according to the difference in their memorization.<sup>59</sup>

#### ◇ 1.42 - The State of the Prophet During Recitation of the Qur’ān

It is narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (RA) that he said:

The Prophet (SAW) said to me: ‘Recite to me.’ I said: ‘Shall I recite to you when to you it has been revealed?’ He said: ‘Yes’, so I read Sūrah al-Nisā until I came to the verse “So how will it be when We bring from every nation a witness, and We bring you as a witness over them.” [al-Nisā: 41]. He said: ‘That is sufficient for you now.’ I turned to him and his eyes were flowing with tears.”<sup>60</sup>

It is narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Shakheer (RA) that he said: “I came to the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) whilst he was praying, and in his throat was a sound like the sound of a boiler from all the weeping.”<sup>61</sup>

Such was the state of the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) when he read the Qur’ān in *Salāh* (prayer) or outside of it.

#### ◇ 1.43 - The State of the Sahābah (RA) with the Qur’ān

It is narrated from ‘Aa’isha (RA) that she said: “Whenever Abu Bakr (RA) read the Qur’ān, he would

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<sup>59</sup> Al-Fatawa al-Ḥadithiya (156)

<sup>60</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (5050) and *Muslim* (800)

<sup>61</sup> Reported by Abu Dāwūd – *Saḥeeh Sunan Abi Dāwūd* (799)

weep much.” And some of them (companions) said: “in the *salāh* and outside of it.”<sup>62</sup>

It is also narrated from Asmā bint Abi Bakr (RA): “None from amongst the *sahābah* used to faint or fall unconscious when reading the Qur’ān, but indeed they used to weep and shiver, then their skin and heart would turn to the Remembrance of Allāh.”<sup>63</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (R) said:

Whoever has gathered the Qur’ān (memorized it), then he has indeed carried a great matter and prophethood has been placed between his shoulders, except that he is not inspired (with revelation). So it does not befit the carrier of Qur’ān to be angry amongst the angry ones, or be ignorant amongst the ignorant because the Qur’ān lies in his chest.<sup>64</sup>

#### ♦ 1.44 - The State of the Non-Muslims Upon Listening to the Qur’ān

The famous reciter of the Qur’ān, Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt Abdus-Ṣamad (R), related an event from the time of Jamal ‘Abdul Nasser (R), who was the President of Egypt when communism was at its height. Whilst on a tour of the Soviet Union, ‘Abdul Nasser was pressured heavily to become a communist and to spread the doctrine in his country. He was promised that the Soviet Union would make Egypt a technological giant if only ‘Abdul Nasser would renounce Islām and introduce communism as the state religion. ‘Abdul Nasser politely refused and thus ended the particular tour. He reached home but was restless that he had not defended Islām as efficiently as he should have because he was not knowledgeable enough.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibn Atheer in ‘*Jāmi’ al-Usūl* (2/466)

<sup>63</sup> *Tafseer al-Baghawi* (7/238)

<sup>64</sup> Narrated by al-Ḥākim and it was declared *saḥeeh* by al-Dhahabi

‘Abdul Nasser was invited to the Soviet Union again after a few years and requested Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ to travel to Moscow with him. ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ was surprised because he had never imagined that he would ever be required in the Soviet Union, a land whose government and leadership refused to acknowledge Allāh.

On this occasion Jamal ‘Abdul Nasser courageously introduced Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ to the Soviet heads of state, telling them that he would recite the Holy Qur’ān, the Book of Islām. Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ closed his eyes and started reciting Sūrah Tā-Hā, the same part of the Holy Qur’ān that had made Hadrat ‘Umar ibn Khattāb (RA), bow to Islām. Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ opened his eyes and looked up after reciting two *rukus*, and saw the miracle of the Holy Qur’ān in front of his eyes. Four to five leaders of the communist party were in tears. Jamal ‘Abdul Nasser smiled and asked: "Why are you crying?" to which one of them replied: "We don't know, we haven't understood a word but there is something in this Qur’ān that has melted our hearts and compelled us to cry. We don't know what has done this."

Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ said that this was an amazing miracle that he saw in front of him. These were people who did not know the Glorious Qur’ān; did not accept the Glorious Qur’ān, and could not understand the Glorious Qur’ān, yet Allāh was affecting their hearts through the recital of the Glorious Qur’ān.

A noble scholar, Imām Ghulām Habib (R), used to say that no one makes routes for rivers; rivers make their own routes and ways. The Holy Qur’ān is such a Book that winds its own route of mercy through to the hearts of people, which is why the unbelievers of *Makkah* and *Madeenah* accepted Islām upon hearing it. This is why the unbelievers used to confer among themselves and advise each other to shout and make noise whenever the Holy Qur’ān would be recited, so that they would not be affected.

#### ◇ 1.45 - The Aspirations of the Predecessors (R) in Memorizing the Qur'ān

Here are some illuminating examples from the aspirations and striving of the predecessors with regards to memorizing the Qur'ān.

It is narrated from Masrūq (R) that he said:

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (RA) said, “By Allāh Whom there is no god besides Him, there is no *Sūrah* that has been revealed from the Book of Allāh except that I am the most knowledgeable with regards to where it was revealed and no *āyah* (verse) has been revealed from the Book of Allāh except that I am the most knowledgeable with regards to whom it was revealed about, and if I knew anyone more knowledgeable than me regarding the Book of Allāh (who was within a distance) whereby camels could reach him, I would have ridden to him.”<sup>65</sup>

‘Amr ibn Salāma (RA) used to aspire in pursuing knowledge of the Qur'ān whilst being one of the younger companions. He used to pursue the caravans, questioning them and seeking to recite to them until he surpassed his people, and that made him fit for their leadership. In his narration he said:

We were once present and the caravans were passing us by after returning from the Messenger of Allāh (SAW). I would go closer to them and listen until I would memorize (some) Qur'ān. The people were waiting for the Conquest of *Makkah* to openly declare their Islām (submission). So when it was conquered, a man would come to him (the Prophet) and say: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, I am a delegate from such-and-such tribe, I have come to

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<sup>65</sup> *al-Bukhāri* (5002)

you to declare their Islam'. My father went to declare the Islām (on behalf) of his people and returned to them saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: 'Bring forth the most knowledgeable of you in Qur'ān.' They looked around and I was in a large house full of people but they did not find in it anyone possessing more Qur'ān than me. So they put me forth whilst I was (still) a young boy.'<sup>66</sup>

We can also witness true aspiration in Zaid ibn Thābit (RA) when his people came to the Prophet (SAW) whilst they were proud of what their companion (Zaid) had attained. He narrated that his people said to the Prophet (SAW):

This is a young boy from Banu al-Najjar and he has with him over ten chapters from what Allāh has revealed to you.' So the Prophet (SAW) became amazed at that and said: 'O Zaid, study for me the writings of the Jew; for by Allāh I do not feel safe from their writings.' Zaid said: 'So I learnt their language and writings within 15 nights until I mastered it. I used to read to him whatever they wrote to him and answer for him whenever he wished to reply.'<sup>67</sup>

Another one (of these young youth) who was just over the age of ten years was al-Barā ibn 'Azib (RA), who said: 'The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) had not reached us until I read (many) chapters from the *Mufasssal*.'<sup>68</sup>

'Ali ibn Hibatullāh al-Jumaizi (R) memorized the Qur'ān by the age of ten.'<sup>69</sup>

Majdudeen Abu al-Barakāt Ibn Taimiyyah (R) memorized the Qur'ān and attained knowledge from his

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<sup>66</sup> Narrated by Aḥmad (5/30) – (19821)

<sup>67</sup> al-Bukhāri reported it ta'leeq, and Aḥmad (5/186) / (21108)

<sup>68</sup> *Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd* (4/271)

<sup>69</sup> *Ma'rifat al-Qurrā al-Kibār* (2/651)

uncle al-Khateeb Fakhrudeen (R), then he travelled in the companionship of his cousin Saifudeen (R) whilst still a teenager.<sup>70</sup>

Zaid ibn al-Hasan Tājuddeen al-Kindi (R) recited the Qur'ān to Abu Muḥammad Subt al-Khiyat (R) whilst he was about seven years old, which is very rare – as al-Dhahabi (R) says – and rarer than it, is that he recited in all ten *qirā'āt* (variants) by the age of ten!<sup>71</sup>

It is not only the males that excelled in studying the sciences of the Qur'ān. It is documented that among the female predecessors, there were those who surpassed their male counterparts in terms of their enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān.

There was a slavegirl called Tawaddud in the time of Hārūn ar-Rasheed who knew all ten readings by heart.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, the *as'hāb* (RA) and those that came after them, aspired and pursued the study and memorization of Qur'ān whilst they did not have available to them a *tahfeeth al-Qur'ān* class nor did they have private teachers - indeed the Qur'ān was not even compiled into a *mus-haf* from which they could read and memorize from – and despite all that, they excelled in their objectives.

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<sup>70</sup> *Ma'rifat al-Qurrā al-Kibār* (2/653)

<sup>71</sup> *Siyar A'tam al-Nubalā'* (22/41)

<sup>72</sup> <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Abewley/Page6.html>

## SECTION TWO

### Causes Aiding in the Memorization of the Qur'ān

As for the causes that aid and assist one in memorizing the Holy Qur'ān, there are two types: the inner resources and the outer resources.

- The inner resources are 'basic states and attitudes of heart and mind (that) are a necessary prerequisite to any fruitful relationship with the Qur'ān'.<sup>73</sup>
- The outer resources consist of physical or material support that will aid in the actual memorization of the Qur'ān.

These (resources) are neither difficult nor impossible to find. Through constant awareness and reflection, through appropriate words and deeds, you can acquire and develop them. The more you do so, the closer you will be able to come to the Qur'ān, and the closer you come to the Qur'ān, the greater will be your harvest.<sup>74</sup>

We will look at some of the important ones that will help both the average person and fulltime memorizer of the Qur'ān.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*- Basic Prerequisites by Khurram Murād

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> All the unreferenced incidents and quotations used in this section were taken from the book *'Adābul Muta'allimeen* by Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul 'Ulamā (KZN), South Africa. The references were omitted from this book for continuation purposes. It can be obtained from the original work which is available for download from [www.quranunion.co.za](http://www.quranunion.co.za)

## ♦ 2.1 – Sincerity in Intention

Indeed actions are judged by intentions, whoever wants to memorize the Book of Allāh must purify their heart from evil and make their intention sincerely for the Lord of the heavens and the earth, so that He may open up for them all the doors to goodness and ease for them the memorization of the Noble Verses.

The first that will be devoured by the Hellfire on the Day of Judgement is the one who lacked sincerity and good intentions of memorizing the Qur’ān, but rather they wished for *riyā’* (to show off) and *sum’ah* (to spread their mention among the people).

The Prophet (SAW) said – as is in the Saheehain:

Indeed, the first of the people to be judged on the Day of Judgement is – and he mentioned from amongst them – a man who studied knowledge, taught it and recited Qur’ān. He (Allāh) will bring him and make him recognise His blessings and say: ‘What have you done with it?’ He will say: ‘I learnt knowledge, taught it and I recited Qur’ān for Your sake.’ He (Allāh) will say: “You have lied. Rather you learnt knowledge so that it can be said that you’re a scholar and that you recited the Qur’ān, and so that it can be said that you’re a reciter and indeed (so) it was said.’ Then he’ll be ordered away with his face on the ground until he is cast into the Fire.”

‘Abdullāh bin Mubārak (R) said that to attain knowledge, the first step is to have a good intention, thereafter, to have good understanding, then to practice on what you learnt, then to memorize it and thereafter to propagate it.

It is therefore important that you have a pure and sincere intention to memorize the Qur’ān solely for the pleasure of Allāh and not for any worldly gain. If that was not your objective for memorizing, then don’t

despair, as you can start with the correct intention as from now.

## ◇ 2.2 – Establishing the *Touheed* of Allāh

Whoever establishes (and firmly believes in) the *touheed* (Oneness) of Allāh, Allāh opens for him all doors of goodness and the greatest of those doors is *hifdh al-Qur’ān*. That is because *touheed* is the foundation of all principles of which Allāh created the heavens and the earth, revealed the Scriptures, sent the Messengers (AS) and made people on the Day of Judgement into two parties – a party in Paradise and a party in Hellfire.

## ◇ 2.3 – *Du’ā*

*Du’ā* (supplication) is from the greatest causes that will aid you in memorization. The beloved, the chosen one (SAW) has said: “*Du’ā* is worship.”<sup>76</sup>

In the Qur’ān, *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) was instructed to make *du’ā* for an increase in knowledge:

“And say: O Allāh! Grant me an increase in knowledge.” [Sūrah Tāhā: 114]

Practicing upon this command, *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) would make this supplication:

“*Allāhumma innee as’aluka ‘ilman-nāfi’ā, wa a’ūthubika min ‘ilmil-lā yanfa*”

[Translation] “O Allāh I am beseeching You for beneficial knowledge and (“O Allāh) I seek protection from you from non-beneficial knowledge.”

The Prophet (SAW) ordered us to have *yaqeen* (certainty) that the *du’ā* will be answered.

He (SAW) said, “Call unto Allāh in certainty and know that Allāh does not answer the heedless and inattentive heart.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Reported by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi – *Saheeh al-Jāmi’* (3407)

<sup>77</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhi and al-Hakim from Abu Huraira – *Saheeh al-Jāmi’* (245)

So increase in *du‘ā* – that Allāh makes you from the people of Qur‘ān, because as it is said, ‘Whoever persists knocking at the door, it’s bound to open for him.’

#### ♦ 2.4 - That They Intend to Adorn Their Heart and Clean Their Soul by Their Learning

It is incumbent upon the student of Qur‘ān that they intends by their learning to adorn their heart, clean their soul, purify their inner being, draw closer to Allāh, endeavour to be with the Noble Angels (AS) and join the rows of the Angels (RA), as *Umm al-Mu‘mineen*, ‘Aisha (RA) informed us of that when she said, “The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said: “Verily the one who recites the Qur‘an beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, he will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels.”<sup>78</sup>

#### ♦ 2.5 – Envision the Delights of Paradise and the Punishment of the Hellfire

If you knew that the Qur‘ān is a cause for your salvation from the punishment of the grave and a cause for your rescue from the punishment of the Hellfire rather if you knew that on the Day of Judgment you will rise and ascend through the ranks of Paradise with the Qur‘ān, then this should urge you to memorize the Qur‘ān from start to finish so that you may reach the highest levels of Paradise. May Allāh make us from the people of Qur‘ān.

#### ♦ 2.6 - Cleansing of the Soul From Bad *Akhlāq*

Learning the Qur‘ān is worship of the heart, prayer in secret and drawing closer to Allāh. Just like the fact that the prayer is invalid except with outward *tahārah* (purity) of the body, clothes and place of prayer the inner acts of worship - of the heart - are invalid except with the

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<sup>78</sup> *Mishkāt Maṣābeeh*- *Fadhā‘il Qur‘ān*

purification of the heart from hypocrisy, deception, filth, malice, envy, enmity and hatred.

The Noble Qur'an is like a crop or plantation: it does not grow except in good, fertile soil. As for land that is salty or deprived, no produce will come forth, and if some things do come out, then they will not grow, and if they do grow, they will not produce fruit, and even if they do produce fruit, it will not be of good quality. So the Qur'an will not grow or produce fruit except in a good, pure, and righteous heart.

Sha'bi (R) used to say that whilst you are obtaining knowledge, engage in much crying. This is because you are not only attaining knowledge but rather you are establishing a proof of Allāh upon yourself.

Due to this, it is incumbent upon the student of Qur'an that they should be clean and pure from bad characteristics and adorn themselves with good, honourable, and generous characteristics like truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, and in a nutshell, all that faith requires.

## ♦ 2.7 – Purification of Thoughts

The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (R) wrote in his book *al-Fawā'id*<sup>79</sup>:

The origin of all perceived knowledge and chosen action lies in notions and thoughts. For these [both] necessitate imaginations, and imaginations call towards desires and desires necessitate the occurrence of action. The abundant repetition of this [action] then leads to the formation of a habit. Thus, the rectification of all these [subsequent] steps lies in the rectification of the notions and thoughts, and the corruption [in these subsequent steps] lies in the corruption of these [notions and thoughts]. Rectification of thoughts occurs by

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<sup>79</sup> *The Origin Of All Knowledge and Action*, (p.224, Dar un-Nafaa'is, 1989)

being mindful of the Master and Lord, and ascending to Him, revolving around His pleasure and love, for indeed, by Him, the Sublime, is all of rectification. He is the one with all guidance, and by His granting of success is all of right-direction, and in His guarding of His servant is every protection (for the servant).”

He also said, continuing later:

Know that notions and whisperings lead what is associated with them to [the faculty] of thinking (thought). The thought then leads them to remembrance (*tathakkur*). Thought takes them and leads them to the will (*irādah*). The will takes them and leads them to the limbs and to action. These then become deeply rooted and become an [established] habit. Thus, to repel them (the notions and whisperings) from their very foundations is easier than cutting them off after their [development of] strength and completion.

What does this mean? Well, whatever thoughts, notions, and ideas pass through your mind will eventually lead to its expression in action. That eventual expression in action will be directly correlated to the nature of the original thoughts, notions, and ideas. Good for good, evil for evil. Further, to rectify it at the very beginning of these steps - which is the stage where these thoughts and notions occur in your mind and heart - is much easier than having to get rid of a habit, because a habit is the eventual outcome of all of these steps if a person allows them to continue progressively.

So a healthy sound mind is one in which only beneficial thoughts occur and all bad and evil thoughts are repelled. By keeping ones mind occupied with only those thoughts and ideas, a person keeps is or her actions in check. A mind that has only good thoughts leads to good and beneficial actions. It is a healthy

sound mind. Having bad thoughts and notions makes one inclined to the outward expression of these thoughts in one's actions- thereby leading to corrupt actions and development of hard-to-rid habits. It all starts with what goes through your heart and mind.<sup>80</sup>

### ◇ 2.8 – Be More Conscious of Allāh When Learning the Qur’ān

Maimūn bin Mihrān (R) used to say that there is no benefit in obtaining knowledge or increasing it if it is not coupled with fear (for Allāh) and obedience (to Allāh).

A pious person once narrated an incident of a student who was studying in Dehli and was staying in a Masjid.

One night, a young female living in the area went to visit some of her relatives when riots broke out in that part of the city. She ran into the *masjid* for protection. The student saw her and panicked. He excused himself and explained to her that it was inappropriate for her to stay there. “People may see us and I will be disgraced” he said. “They will remove me from the *masjid* and my studies will be affected.” “But, if I leave this *masjid*, it is possible that my honour will be destroyed” said the girl. The student was silenced with her reply. He asked her to sit in a corner whilst he occupied himself with his studies.

Whilst studying, throughout the night, he continuously placed his finger in the flame of the lamp. The girl sat watching the entire scene. It was approaching morning when he told her: “The rioters have all gone home. The path is now clear. You may leave now.” She replied: “I will not go home until you explain to me your actions. Why were you placing your finger in the fire?” “What’s

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<sup>80</sup> Taken from [www.healthymuslim.com](http://www.healthymuslim.com)

that got to do with you?” said the student, “You don’t worry about that, go off now.” However, after much insistence, he answered: “*Shaitān* was inciting me to commit sin with you. Hence, I kept on placing my finger in the fire and addressed myself saying, ‘You cannot tolerate the fire of this world, how then will you be able to tolerate the fire of *Jahannam*?’ All thanks are due to Allāh that He protected me.”

Hearing this, the daughter of a wealthy man and was about to be engaged to a rich relative of hers. She immediately refused the proposal and informed her parents: “I want to marry that certain student.”

The entire family tried to reason with her. Many people became suspicious of her. When she realised this, she explained the entire incident to them and said: “I will marry only him. He has the fear of Allāh in his heart. He will never cause harm to anyone.” She married that student and eventually he became the owner of that home.

How true it is that the one who saves himself from *harām*, Allāh will grant it to him in a *halāl* manner.

Unfortunately, evil habits are on the increase among students. There are no signs of consciousness of Allāh, trustworthiness, humility, or piety left in them. In fact, sometimes even the outward actions are lacking in them. If we cannot correct ourselves whilst we are students living in an environment of *deen*, how will we ever be able to correct others?

Indeed, fearing Allāh, being conscious (aware), and mindful of Him (at all times) is a prerequisite for attaining any knowledge, as He, the Most High says: “Be conscious of Allāh, and Allāh will teach you.” [al-Baqarah: 282]

## **The Qur'anic Criteria of Inner Participation**<sup>81</sup>

Say to yourself: My Qur'ān reading will not be true recitation unless my inner self participates in it as (how) Allāh desires it to participate.

So what does Allāh desire? And how should you receive the Qur'ān? The Qur'ān itself in many places tells you clearly how it was received by the Prophet (SAW) and by his Companions (RA), and by those whose hearts were gripped by it. Try to remember such Qur'anic verses and recollect and reflect upon them whenever you read the Qur'an. Some of these are:

“Those only are believers who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts tremble; and when His verses are recited to them, they increase them in faith.” [al-Anfāl: 2].

“Allāh has sent down the best discourse as a Book, fully consistent within itself, oft-repeated, whereat shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and hearts soften to the remembrance of Allāh.” [al-Zumar: 23].

“When it is recited to them, they fall down upon their faces, prostrating, and say: Glory be to our Lord! Our Lord's promise is fulfilled. And they fall down upon their faces, weeping; and it increases them in humility.” [al-Isrā: 107-9].

“Whenever the verses of the Most-Merciful are read unto them, they fall down, prostrating themselves and weeping.” [Mariam: 58].

“And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflow with tears because of what they have recognized of Truth. They cry: Our Lord! We believe; so You do write us down among the witnesses [to the Truth].” [al-Mā'idah: 83].

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<sup>81</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān, Participation of the Inner Self* by Khurram Murād

## ◇ 2.9 – Strive to Attain a Good End

Indeed, whoever dies upon something is only raised upon it, and this should make you strive hard to live the verses of the Qur'ān with your heart, tongue and limbs so that you may die upon that, and be raised with the people of the Qur'ān who are the people of Allāh and His Specialties.

## ◇ 2.10 – Bringing Gratitude and Praise<sup>82</sup>

Make yourself constantly alert with intense praise and gratitude to your Lord for having blessed you with His greatest gift (the Qur'ān) and for having guided you to its reading and study.

Once you realize what a priceless treasure you hold in your hands, it is but natural for your heart to beat with joy and murmur, and for your tongue to join in (as stated in the Qur'ān): 'Thankful praise be to Allāh, who has guided us to this; (otherwise) never could we have found guidance had not Allāh not guided us' [al-A'raf: 43].

Of all the intimate blessings and favours He has bestowed upon you, nothing can match the Qur'ān. If every hair on your body becomes a tongue praising and thanking Him, if every drop of blood in your body turns into a joyful tear, even then your praise and thanks will not match His enormous generosity that is the Qur'ān.

Even if the Qur'ān had not been sent down for us, its perfection and beauty, its majesty and splendour would deserve all the praise at our command. But that this sublime and perfect gift, having the unique distinction of embodying our Lord's speech, has been given solely for our sake must intensify our praise beyond bounds.

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<sup>82</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*- Basic Prerequisites by Khurram Murād

### ◇ 2.11 – Allow the Qur’ān to speak to you<sup>83</sup>

As a part of your effort to involve your inner self, you should try to think that you are hearing the Qur'ān from the Sender himself. The Qur'ān is the speech of Allāh. For, just as you cannot see Him while He is always with you, you cannot hear Him while it is He who is speaking. Let the printed words and reciter's voices therefore recede and allow you to move nearer to the Speaker. This feeling will be generated and greatly strengthened as your consciousness of 'being in His presence' continues to grow.

Al-Ghazālī (RA), in his *Ihya'*, tells about a person who said:

I read the Qur'ān but did not find sweetness in it. Then I read it as if I was hearing it from the Prophet (SAW) while he (SAW) was reciting it to his Companions (RA). Then, I moved a stage further and read the Qur'ān as if I was hearing it from Jibra'eel (AS) while he delivered it to the Prophet (SAW). Then Allāh brought me to a further stage that I began to read it as if I was hearing it from the Speaker.

Such feeling will imbue you with a delight and sweetness that will make your inner self fully enveloped by the Qur'ān.

### ◇ 2.12 – Beware of Arrogance and Deception

Arrogance and deception will at times come upon the heart of the slave when he memorizes the Qur'ān. This is the beginning of failure, so beware dear brothers and sisters from arrogance and delusion, and strive to attain the blessing of humbleness for the Prophet (SAW) has informed us that, “Whoever humbles themselves to Allāh, then Allāh will raise him.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Participation of the Inner Self by Khurram Murād

<sup>84</sup> Reported by Abu Nu'aim in al-Hilyah – *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (6162)

It is very difficult to acquire knowledge if one has pride as pride and conceitness can destroy knowledge just as a flood destroys a huge building.

Imām Ghazālī (R) says that knowledge that creates pride in a person is even worse than ignorance.

### ♦ 2.13 – Adopt a Noble Character

A'ishah (RA) said that noble character consists of ten things:

1. Speaking the truth.
2. To be honest – do not to deceive.
3. To give something to a beggar.
4. To return a favour.
5. To maintain ties with family members.
6. To safeguard trust.
7. To fulfil the rights of sustenance. i.e. (ensure that it is earned and spent via *halāl* channels)
8. To fulfil the rights of colleagues.
9. To fulfil the rights of guests.
10. The root and essence of all the above is *hayā* (modesty).

### ♦ 2.14 – Try to Follow the Example of the Prophet (SAW) in Your Ways

Those studying the Qur'an should not adopt a lax attitude with regard to the *Sunnah* (Prophetic practices) and *mustahab* (recommended) actions. It is an accepted fact that the person who is neglectful in their *ādāb* (actions pertaining to etiquette) will be lax with regard to practising the *sunnah* actions and the one omits the *sunnah* actions will omit the *fardh* (compulsory) actions. One who is unmindful of his *fardh* actions will be deprived of the blessings of knowledge and the *ni'mat* (bounties) of the Hereafter.

Adopt the clothing and ways of the pious and righteous as part of your daily lifestyle.

### ◇ 2.15 – *Salāh al-Hājah*

It is recommended to pray two units of ‘*Salāh al-Hājah*’ (prayer of need) wherein you ask Allāh for aid, precision, and sincerity. It would even be better if you would pray two units of *Salāh al-Toubah* (prayer of Repentance) as well, so that your sins do not come in between you and memorizing the Book of Allāh.

### ◇ 2.16 – *Qiyām al-Lail* (the Night Prayer)

The night prayer, particularly in the last third of the night, is at a blessed time wherein Allāh descends to the lower heaven in a manner befitting His Majesty and He calls to His slaves – as is reported in the *Saheehain*, “Who will call upon Me so I can answer him? Who will ask Me so I can give him? Who will seek My forgiveness so I can forgive him?”

So ask your Lord to forgive your sins and to honour you with the memorization of His Book.

### ◇ 2.17 – Preserving *Wudhū* (Ablution) with *Ihsān* (Consciousness of Allah)

What is meant here is to follow the guidance of the Prophet (SAW) with regards to *wudhū*.

It is narrated from a companion of the Prophet (SAW) that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) lead the Morning Prayer and read in it Sūrah al-Rūm, but he hesitated. So when finished, he (SAW) said: ‘The Qur’ān becomes obscure to us because a people from amongst you pray with us but they have not perfected ablution. So whoever attempts to pray with us, let him perfect his ablution.’<sup>85</sup>

### ◇ 2.18 – When You Sin, You Lose It

That’s right, we cannot completely have the words of Allāh in our hearts, while we persist in sinning. We are

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<sup>85</sup> Reported by Ahmad and al-Nasa’i with a good chain of narration – as clarified by al-Arna’out

human and naturally we do sin, but the losing ones are those who, when they sin, they do not feel any guilt and do not repent at all. Those are the ones who will lose any Qur'ān they have in their heart.

Imām Shāfi'ee (R) once complained to his teacher about his poor memory. The teacher of Imām Shāfi'ee advised him to abstain from sin.

Ad-Dahhak Bin Muzāhim (R) said:

There is no one that has learnt the Qur'ān then forgets it, except that it is due to a sin being committed by him. This is so because Allāh says: 'And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned', and forgetting the Qur'ān is one of the greatest misfortunes to befall a person."<sup>86</sup>

*Rasūlullāh* (SAW) is reported to have said:

A person who does not refrain from sins during his student days, Allāh will involve them in one of three things:

1. Either they will die in their youth; or
2. Despite their capability and academic achievements, they will go to such places where their knowledge will be destroyed and they will not be able to spread his knowledge; or
3. They will suffer disgrace in the service of a king or some wealthy person.

If a student of *deen* keeps away from sins, people will benefit from their knowledge and the sources of knowledge will open up for them. This is indeed great advice for us to follow, since abstaining from sin will

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<sup>86</sup> *Fadaa'il Qur'ān - Ibn Katheer*

eventually make us focus more on the *'ibādah* (worship) rather than the *dunyā* (worldly matters).

### ◇ 2.19 - Seeking Forgiveness

Because a person forgets what they memorized due to their sins, it gives us more reason to increase in *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness).

Ibn Mas'ūd (RA) said, "I reckon a man forgets knowledge that he has learnt due to a sin that he has earned."

And if a *mas'ala* (matter) became ambiguous for Imām Abu Haneefah (R), he would say to his companions, "This is not except due to a sin I have committed." and he would seek forgiveness and perhaps even pray, and then the *mas'ala* would become clear to him.

### ◇ 2.20 – Know that *Hifdh al-Qur'ān* is the First Step to Seeking Knowledge

A Muslim can never attain knowledge of any discipline from the sciences of the *Sharee'ah* without Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān opens up for you the doors to knowledge – indeed it opens up for you the doors to all goodness in this world and the Next.

### ◇ 2.21 – Stages of Acquiring Knowledge

It is important that we understand and practice the stages that will assist us in gaining knowledge:

#### Stage 1 - Listening Attentively:

When *waḥee* (revelation) would descend upon *Nabee* (SAW), he would listen to the revelation attentively observing total concentration.

At least two instructions are recorded in the Qur'ān concerning listening and paying attention (to the Qur'ān), "And when the Qur'ān is being

recited, then pay careful attention to its recitation.” [Sūrah A’rāf: 204].

In addition: “Listen attentively to what is being revealed”. [Sūrah Tāhā: 13].

The Angel Jibreel (AS) descended with *waḥee* to *Nabee* (SAW). After listening to it, he would relate it to the companions (RA). The companions (RA) listened to the recitation of the Prophet (SAW) with utmost devotion and concentration. In turn, the *Tābi’een* (R) (those that came after the time of the companions) heard from the companions (RA) and subsequently the narration continued over the centuries until the knowledge of the Prophet (SAW) has reached us today.

### Stage 2 – Pondering in Silence:

This means to pay attention, pondering, being observant, and without a wandering mind. If a person listens to the lesson inattentively, they will miss the intended meaning. Subsequently, there can be no guarantee that they have understood the lesson correctly.

An example of listening without pondering and understanding is as follows:

It is recorded regarding a *Muḥaddith* (person that compiles the sayings of the Prophet (SAW)) that he used to perform *Witr Salāh* whenever he relieved himself from the call of nature, be it during the day or at night. When asked why he did this, he replied: “It is reported in the *ḥadeeth* - “Whosoever relieves himself should perform *Witr*.” The questioner told him: “This is not the actual meaning of the *ḥadeeth*.” He then explained the *ḥadeeth* to him: “Use uneven clots of soil to clean yourself after answering the call of nature.” In this case,

*witr* meant 'odd' and does not refer to the *Witr Salāh*.

In short, pondering and understanding must follow listening.

### Stage 3- Remembering or Memorizing:

One should try to remember whatever one has read, heard, or understood. If the information leaves the mind, we will not be able to practice upon it. What would then remain of knowledge if one heard the lesson, paid attention, but did not remember it?

### Stage 4- Practice:

One should practice on whatever one has heard attentively and remembered. If one does not practice on the acquired knowledge, it will obviously be void of any benefit and blessing.

### Stage 5- Preaching and Imparting:

Knowledge cannot be transferred or protected without being imparted to others. However, merely embarking on preaching, without acquiring the first four stages, is insignificance.<sup>87</sup>

## ◇ 2.22 – Understanding the Word *Hifdh*<sup>88</sup>

The Qur'ān is unique in demanding to be preserved in memory.

The word *hifdh* itself, though now used in the limited sense of memorizing, includes both understanding and practice. In fact there is no English word that can accurately reflect its true and full meaning.

*Hifdh* is an essential way of making the Qur'ān penetrate you. It is not a mechanical, ritual act; it is an

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<sup>87</sup> *Stages of Acquiring Knowledge* - Mufti Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ganghoi, Published by Jamiatul 'Ulāmā (KZN), South Africa

<sup>88</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*, Rules of Reading by Khurram Murād

act of high spiritual and devotional importance. Only through *hifdh* can you read the Qur'ān in prayers and ponder over its meaning while you stand in the presence of the Speaker. But apart from that, it makes the Qur'ān flow on your tongue, reside in your mind, and dwell in your heart: it becomes your constant companion. Also as you memorize more you will find it easier to make your inner self participate in its reading whilst your mind study and understand its meaning.

### ♦ 2.23 – Go Out in Search of Knowledge

An outstanding quality of a *hāfidh* is an undying thirst for knowledge. If there are no regular Qur'ān classes to be found in their locality or hometown, they should undertake a journey for this. In the former days, people would travel for months and withstand great difficulties to learn even simple matters pertaining to Islām. They would express such happiness and joy if they could learn just one matter, just as a worldly person would, if he had to obtain a kingdom.

Abu Sa'eed Khudri (RA) narrates that *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) said: "A Muslim is never satiated with knowledge until he reaches Jannah."

It is narrated from Abu Darda (RA) that a person who does not regard travelling to distant places in the pursuit of knowledge as *jihād*, such a person has deficiency in their understanding.

It is narrated by 'Abdullāh bin Zubair (RA) that *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) said:

A person who goes out in search of knowledge for fear that he will die a *jāhīl* (ignoramus) or a person who goes out to revive the *Sunnah* for fear that the *Sunnah* will be destroyed, then his example is similar to a *mujāhid* (warrior) who has come out in the path of Allāh. That person whose actions have kept him behind, his lineage will certainly not be able to make him progress.

‘Abdullāh bin Mubārak (R) was asked: “Until when will you pursue acquiring knowledge?” He replied: “Until death.”

It is the saying of a pious person: “A person is only an ‘*Ālim* until he is a student. He becomes a *jāhil* when he bids farewell to his quest of knowledge.”

Imām Zahabi (R) writes that when he went out in search of knowledge for the very first time, he remained on this journey for seven years. He traveled from Bahrain to Egypt by foot. At that time, he was twenty years of age.

#### ◇ 2.24 – Be Prepared to Strive in Your Seeking of Knowledge

Allāh says in the Qur’ān: “Those who strive for me, I will definitely show them the straight path.” [‘Ankabūt: 69]

We should make a concerted effort in our search for knowledge by being persistent and not wasting valuable time.

There is an Arabic saying: “That person who looks for something and makes an effort will definitely acquire it.”

Imām Shāfi‘ee said: “After making an effort, man is able to accomplish any difficult task just as a closed door is opened after some effort.”

#### ◇ 2.25 – Be Dedicated in Your Learning

It is written in the biography of Imām Muḥammad (R) that even after his studies, he continued remaining engrossed in his learning. Muḥammad bin Sama’ā (R), who was one of his special students would say that Imām Muḥammad (R) used to be so engrossed in his learning that if a person had to greet him, then due to his engrossment he would start making *du’ā* for him instead of replying to the greeting.

His grandson says that after Imām Muḥammad (R) passed away, he once asked his mother:

“What did my grandfather do when he was at home?” She pointed to one side of the room and said: “He used to stay in this small room surrounded by a heap of books. I never saw him speak whilst engrossed in his studies.”

Imām Shāfi‘ee (R) said:

Once I spent the entire night by Imām Muḥammad (R). He passed the whole night in such a manner that he would study for some time and then he would lie down. He would then arise and continue his studies. At the time of *Fajr* he performed his prayers.

It has also been recorded that Imām Muḥammad (R) used to sleep very little. When some of his friends asked why he slept so little and why he endured so much difficulty, he replied: “All the people are sleeping peacefully with the thought that if a *mas’alah* (matter) crops up then we will ask Imām Muḥammad. If I also sleep and I avoid studying, then there is a fear of destroying *deen*.”

Shaikhul Hadeeth Moulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā (R) used to eat only one meal a day (the afternoon meal). He never partook in an evening meal. He used to say:

I had a very compassionate sister. At night, when I used to be occupied in my studies, she used to place morsels of food into my mouth. In this way, no disruption was caused to my studies. Now that she has passed away, there is nobody to show me that (type of) affection anymore, and neither am I prepared to endure any loss to my studies. Thus I left out eating at night completely.

## ◇ 2.26 – Firmness, Striving, and Tolerance Reaps Success

The seeker of knowledge should tolerate any difficulties and hardships that they experience in their quest. This is an invaluable and precious blessing from Allāh. They should keep the lives and examples of the Prophets (AS) and pious predecessors (RA) in front of them. Had they not been so dedicated, it is difficult to comprehend how our wonderful religion would have reached us.

Jābir (RA) narrates that *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) said: “That person who dies whilst seeking knowledge, (with the intention), of reviving Islām, will be just a rank lower than the Prophets.”

Abu Hurayrah (RA) and Hadhrat Abu Dhar (RA) narrate that *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) said: “If a student passes away whilst studying, he passes away as a *shaheed* (martyr).”

Imām Mālik (R) has stated: “It is not possible to acquire this knowledge without tasting the sweetness of poverty and hunger in its quest.”

Imām Shāfi‘ee (R) explained his condition during his student days. He said:

I had become an orphan. My mother sent me to the *madrassah* but we did not have anything to give to the teacher. It was my good fortune that whenever the teacher left the classroom then I would look after the students. In this way, I completed my Qur’ān. Thereafter I would attend the gatherings of the scholars in the *masjid*. Whenever I heard a *hadeeth* or *mas’alah*, I memorized it immediately. My mother was so poor that she had no money to even buy paper for me. Out of desperation, I used to look for some bones. If I found any, I picked it up and used it to write on. When it was covered with writing, I used to keep it safely at home in an old earthenware jar.

The pious scholar, Hazrat Nizāmuddeen (R) was five years old when his father passed away. His mother, who was a very devout and Allāh-fearing woman, arranged for his studies. Most of the time there used to be poverty in the home. When there was no food in the house, his mother used to say: “Today we are the guests of Allāh,” He says:

I used to get extremely happy when I hear these words. One day, a servant of Allāh brought some grain to our house. For several days, we continuously prepared *roti* from this grain. I became very perplexed and was waiting in anticipation for the next occasion my mother would announce that we are once again the guests of Allāh. Eventually the grain got finished and my mother announced that today we are the guests of Allāh. On hearing this, I became so happy that I could not explain it.

Then there is the famous incident of Hadhrat Raipūri (R):

During his student days, one year of extreme cold had passed where he had no warm clothes, blankets, or duvets to protect him from the cold. His intense shyness prevented him from expressing his condition to anyone. After *Maghrib* prayer, he would take his books into the *masjid* and sit in front of the geyser until after ‘*Ishā* prayers. When all the *musallees* were gone, he used to close the doors of the *masjid* and lie down in one corner of the *saff* (row). Thereafter he would take the mat into his hand and wrap himself up until he reached the other corner. The entire mat would cover him. That used to be his bedding as well as his covering. For the rest of the night, the wind would blow on his head and feet. Towards

the end of the night, he would roll over towards the other end until the entire *saff* was re-opened.

There is so much that we can learn from the examples of our predecessors (R). In today's time, we find ourselves to be too complacent in our comfortable zones that we hardly feel the effect of striving towards knowledge. We would see students going to the extent of demanding their comforts. They will bring a stop to the teachings at the *madrasah*, disrespect their teachers because they are not permitted to pass their time in the *madrasah* according to their own wishes. Sometimes the most simple and obscure hassle would frustrate them. If there is a delay in the food or if the gravy is too thin, then upon this they would begin to behave in such a way as though the Day of Reckoning has arrived.

The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "Stay away from living a luxurious life. Verily the (true) servants of Allāh do not love such a life."

Moulānā Rūm (R) says: "Eventually the adornment of one's body and one's clothes will detach you from your *deen*."

### ◇ 2.27 – Overcoming Hazards and Obstacles<sup>89</sup>

Always remain aware that, as you embark upon reading the Qur'ān, *Shaitān* will create every possible hazard and obstacle to prevent you from attaining the great riches of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān is the only sure guide to the Straight Path to Allāh; to walk that path is man's destiny. When Adam (AS) was created, he was made aware of the hurdles and obstacles man would have to surmount in order to fulfil his destiny. All his weaknesses were laid bare, especially his weakness of will and resolve and his forgetfulness (as mentioned in Sūrah Tā Hā, verse 115). It was also made

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<sup>89</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*, Basic Prerequisites by Khurram Murād

plain how *Shaitān* would try to obstruct him at every step of his journey:

“I shall surely sit in ambush for them all along Thy Straight Path; I shall, then, come on them from between their hands and from behind them, from their right and their left. Thou wilt not find most of them thankful.” [al-A'rāf: 16-17].

Obviously the Qur'ān, the 'Guidance from Me', is your most powerful ally and help as you battle all your life against *Shaitān* and strive to live by Allāh's guidance. Hence, from the very first step when you decide to read the Qur'ān till the last when you try to live by it, he will confront you with many tricks and guiles, illusions and deceptions, obstacles and impediments that you will have to surmount. *Shaitān* may pollute your intention, make you remain unmindful of the Qur'ān's meaning and message, create doubts in your mind, erect barriers between your soul and the world of Allāh, entangle you in peripheral rather than central teachings, tempt you away from obeying the Qur'ān, or simply make you neglect and postpone the task of reading it. All of these dangers are fully explained in the Qur'ān itself. It is with the consciousness of these perils and dangers that your tongue should, in obedience to the Qur'ān 'When you recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from *Shaitān*, the rejected' [al-Naḥl, 98] say, “*A'ūthu billāhi minash-Shaitānir-rajeem.*”, meaning, “I seek refuge from the *Shaitān*, the outcast, rejected.”

## ♦ 2.28 – Joining a *Hifdh* Program That Suits You Best

There are a number of programs or options available for the one wanting to memorize the Holy Qur'ān, some yielding better results than others. Amongst them are:

### ♦ 2.28.1 – Fulltime at a Boarding School

This is the most ideal and best choice for a person wishing to memorize the Qur'ān. There are less (if any)

distractions and you will be so focused on your memorization that it may result in you completing the memorization of the Qur'ān over a shorter period of time.

#### ◇ **2.28.2 – Fulltime at a Daytime Institution**

Some institutions only operate for certain hours of the day. Whilst this program is also very effective, there is some disadvantages due to the fact that the student goes home on a daily basis and have to learn his lessons there (in most cases without supervision) which can result in one being easily distracted with activities in and around the house.

#### ◇ **2.28.3 – Part-time Hifdh:**

The two options above will obviously not work for a person attending fulltime daily programs (like secular school) or who has work commitments. It would then be best to enroll in a part time program. This can be done either in the afternoons (after school) or by attending evening classes. Amongst the disadvantages here is that because of time-constraints you would not be able to progress as well as you would if you attended a fulltime program. Generally, your attention span will also be less because you might be tired by the time you get to focus on your memorization. But herein also lay many rewards as result of your commitment to memorizing.

#### ◇ **2.28.4 – Part-time on Your Own:**

This option is the trickiest and requires a lot of discipline. The key ingredients to make this option work are to be consistent and determined. You may memorize small portions every night on your own and read it to a qualified teacher at the end of the week.

Regardless of the choice you make, it is important that you keep the following in mind. The institution or option you choose must allow you sufficient time to revise the lessons you have already memorized. It might

be that if you choose to memorize the Qur'ān part-time, you would want to join a fulltime memorization program at a later stage - this is perfect, but if you are following a fulltime program and want to switch to a part time program it will prove to be most detrimental for your *hifdh*. The best in this case is to complete the memorization of the Qur'ān first and continue with a part-time program only when your revision is solid.

### ♦ 2.29 – Memorize with a Proficient *Shaikh*

It is extremely important that you memorize the Qur'ān without mistakes. If you were to memorize the Qur'ān on your own, you might err in the recitation of some verses and if you memorize it like that (with those mistakes), then it will be difficult to correct them. It is very common for one to make mistakes even when one looks in the *mus'haf* (Qur'ān). Reading often races the eyesight, and one may overlook one's mistakes without even realizing. We should never be totally dependent on merely reciting from the *mus'haf*, and this is why Jibreel (AS) used to come to the Prophet (SAW) to teach him (SAW) the Qur'ān.

It is recommended to recite your lesson to a competent person before and after you have memorized it. From the most precious of advice which can be given to whoever wishes to gain perfection in the recitation of Qur'ān, is that they must recite it to a teacher who is *hāfidh* (memorized the entire Qur'ān) and has *itqān* (perfection in recitation). Reciting the Qur'ān to a *Shaikh* is a means of avoiding errors and keeping one's mind constantly alert. The ultimate best is to attain *ijāzah* and *isnād* (chain of narration) from the *Shaikh*. This is a *Sunnah* (tradition) given by the predecessors (RA) to the *khalaf* (RA) (those that came after them) as inheritance - and *isnād* is from the specialties of this Ummah.

It is also essential that you choose a teacher suitable to your nature - some students require moderate

teachers whilst others require teachers who are more firm and strict.

### ◇ 2.30 – Your Teacher is Your Guide

By now you would have realised that the enthusiasm you feel inside yourself to memorize the Holy Qur'ān is not from you, but from Allāh. For He chooses who He wills to honour with the protection (*hifdh*) of His Book. Likewise, the *Shaikh* that teaches you the Qur'ān has entered into your life not by coincidence, but for a decisive reason. Just as he or she was chosen to protect the Holy Qur'ān by their memorization, it was also decreed that it be passed on to you. So after realizing this, it is important that you follow their guidance and advice regarding your *hifdh*. Not only have they already memorized the Qur'ān, but also faced and overcame the same challenges that you are facing.

It is a fact that transforming bronze and metal into gold through the process of alchemy is not the work of everyone, and neither does everyone possess this knowledge. To learn this art takes a very long time and the first condition is to remain a slave under an expert in this field. In the same way, the art (and knowledge) of transforming the masses into scholars is not possessed by all and sundry and can only be found with those experienced in the field.

The student should not decide for themselves when they are ready to learn new lesson, or how much new lesson they should take, or how much revision is required for them to recite for the day, etc. In former times, the students would leave all matters pertaining to their studies for their teachers to decide, resulting in them being successful in their endeavours. However, when students start to decide for themselves what, how, and when they want to study, they are deprived of knowledge.

When Imām Bukhāri (R) started to learn the discipline of prayer under Muḥammad bin Ḥasan (R), he

(Muhammad bin Hasan), suggested to him: “It is more appropriate for you to study *hadeeth* because I find that you have an affinity for *hadeeth*.” Imām Bukhāri (R) accepted the advice of his teacher and as a result, the world then witnessed Imām Bukhāri becoming a leader of the Muslims in the field of *hadeeth*.

From this incident, we understand that if a student wishes to succeed in their sphere of knowledge, they should not make decisions on their own, but they should rather consult with their teacher.

### ♦ 2.31 – The Importance of Consultation

*Rasūlullāh* (SAW) was commanded in the Qur’ān to do consultation with others even though there was no person more intelligent than him. He (SAW) would consult his companions to such an extent that matters pertaining to his personal life would also be discussed through consultation.

‘Ali (RA) said: “There is no person who was destroyed after making consultation.”

There is a famous saying that men are of three types:

1. One is a perfect person.
2. The second is half a person.
3. The third can be categorized as a person who is non-existent.

The perfect person is one, who despite being capable themselves still consults with others. The half person is one, whose opinions are correct but does not consult others, and the third person is one, whose opinions are incorrect and yet does not feel the need to consult others.

Imām Ja‘far Sādiq (R) had advised Sufyān Thouri (R) to make consultation with those people whose hearts are filled with the fear of Allāh.

Having consultation regarding the aspect of knowledge is necessary and no person can advise you

better than a good teacher can. Feel free to speak to them about your uncertainties and consult them regarding the areas you need assistance with (it does not have to be limited to your memorization and studies). Your teacher is like an illuminating light, directing and easing the way for you. Do not ever doubt or dispute their judgment and direction.

### ♦ 2.32 – Respect for the Teachers of Qur’ān

Imām an-Nawawi (R) quotes another renowned scholar, Ibn Ghāzi (R), as saying:

By understanding the virtue granted to the reciters and scholars of the Qur’ān and all rewards bestowed upon them, one can only but honour, revere them, and aim to assist them in their worldly needs. One who understands this will automatically behave as respectfully in their presence as he would in the presence of the Prophet (SAW) as they are known as the heirs of the Prophets.”<sup>90</sup>

Showing respect to the teacher, the Qur’ān, your parents, instruments of learning (pens, books, etc) are fundamental to the successful memorization of the Holy Qur’ān (or for any other forms of study). A student will never thrive if one is disrespectful towards the one who teaches them. ‘Allamah al-Manawi (R) said:

Truly, knowledge is not attained except through humbleness and through listening. Humbleness of a student to his teacher is an honour; humility to him is a mark of respect, and the lowering of a student to his teacher brings pride and glory.

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<sup>90</sup> *An Introduction to Qur’ānic Etiquette* - Shaikh Ismail Londt

Al-Sulaimi (R) said, “No-one (of the students) used to approach Ibn Musayyib (R) to ask him a question until they sought his permission just as they’d seek the ruler’s permission.”

Al-Shāfi‘ee (R) said, ‘I used to turn the pages gently in front of Imām Mālik (R) so that he wouldn’t (even) hear it shuffling.’

And Rabee’ (R) (student of Imām al-Shāfi‘ee (R)) said, ‘By Allāh, I never attempted to drink water whilst al-Shāfi‘ee was looking (out of respect).<sup>91</sup>

Students should regard the respect of their teachers as incumbent upon them.

Abu Sa‘eed Khudhri (RA) narrates that *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) said: “Seek knowledge with determination and dignity. Be humble and submissive to those from whom you acquire knowledge.”

Ibn Wahb (R) used to say that what he attained through respecting Imām Mālik (R), he did not attain that much from knowledge.

One should not speak unnecessarily in the presence of one’s teacher. Attention should rather be paid to what the teacher has to say. To speak excessively in their presence, amounts to disrespect. If one does not understand something, one should ask one’s teacher respectfully.

Husain (RA) advised his son that in the company of the teacher, he should make an effort to learn, instead of speaking.

Imām Abu Yūsuf (R) said:

It is *wājib* (compulsory) for a person to be courteous and polite to his teacher. He should tolerate his harshness and severity. If one’s teacher had to correct or admonish him for doing something wrong, then it is necessary to thank him (the teacher) for it. If he explains some subtle

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<sup>91</sup> *Faidh al-Qadeer* by al-Manawi (3/253)

point to you which you already have the knowledge of, do not make it obvious that you are aware of it.

The pious people have advised:

Sit with respect in front of your teacher. Do not sit in line with him even though he requests you to sit, and then too refrain. However, if you are going to cause him grief by not sitting, then there will be no harm in doing so. Speak to him with a great amount of respect. Do not use words like 'why' and 'we don't accept what you are saying' (etc).

Once, Imām Aḥmad (R) was lying down due to some illness. In the middle of a discussion, someone made mention of Ibrāheem bin Taḥmān (R). On hearing this name, Imām Aḥmad (R) immediately sat up. Thereafter he remarked, "It is inappropriate that the names of the elders are mentioned, whilst we are sitting and relaxing."

It is also necessary for students to respect the children and associates of the teacher.

In *Ta'leemul Muta'allim* there is an incident narrated by the author of *Hidāyah* about a great 'Ālim who was among the scholars of *Bukhāra*. He says that once whilst delivering a lesson, he (the scholar) suddenly stood up. When asked the reason for doing so, he replied: "My teacher's son was playing outside with the other children. Whilst playing, he came towards the *masjid*. I stood up out of respect for him."

Allamah Sha'rani (R) writes that a significant sign that reveals the weakness of a student is that they are found to be disrespectful to their teachers. They look away from their teacher when the teacher is talking to them. They fail to show respect to their teacher in their presence or in their absence and is unmindful of the teacher's position and status. The student questions and rejects the sayings of their teacher because of their weak understanding or due to outside influence. After

acquiring the necessary knowledge from their teacher, they debate with them in a negative manner. If their teacher passes away, then the student desires the position, rank, and even the possessions of their teacher. They quarrel and engage in discussions with their teacher's children concerning these matters and regard themselves to be more worthy of these things than them.

Pay attention to what your teacher is saying, even if it is repeated many times. Seek the various shades of meanings within the repetition.

It is recorded in *Ta'leemul Muta'allim* that if a person hears something for the thousandth time and they do not show the same amount of respect as they showed when heard for the first time, then that person is not from among the people of knowledge.

Uphold honour and respect in the presence and absence of your tutors. Some students display great sincerity and affection in the presence of the teacher by talking in sweet tones and doing good things for them, but in their absence they portray a different attitude. Such students will never get the true benefit of knowledge, nor would they be able to correctly serve the *Ummah*.

### ◇ 2.33 – Further Etiquettes Regarding Respect for a Teacher

- Request your teacher's permission before speaking to them.
- Speak to them in a kind voice.
- Always walk behind them.
- Avoid sitting in their place.
- Make an effort to understand their way of thinking and act in accordance with their wishes.
- If at any time you see that the teacher is upset, then at such a time do not question them. Speak with them on some other occasion.

- Do not call the teacher out of their room or class. Rather wait for them to come out and then speak to them.
- Never compare your teacher with another teacher. Remember that each person is different and that that we are unique in our ways and approaches. If you acknowledge that the way your teacher conducts themselves is good for you, then you stand a much better chance of benefiting from them.

Ibn Abbās (R) said:

Most of my knowledge was attained from the Anṣār. I used to wait outside their homes in the afternoon sun. If I wanted, I could have merely informed them and they would have come out of their homes immediately. However, I considered their comfort. Only when they would emerge from their homes, would I ask them.

Never allow others to backchat, backbite, or speak ill of or to your teacher. Always protect their honour in their presence and absence.

A sincere and genuine teacher is also to show respect and reverence to the student. A certain *Shaikh*, by way of the following, gave an example of a perfect teacher - student relationship; the teacher is like a pitcher of tea that must first bow itself in front of the cup in order to pour the tea. In the same way, the student must also come with a receptive mind (an empty cup) so that they will be able to absorb as much knowledge and true benefits from the teacher.

### ◇ 2.34 – The Success of a Student Lies in Serving the Teacher

Every student should regard the service to their teachers as a means of success in both the worlds.

Further, in this book (Section Seven - Some tips for teachers), it is mentioned that teachers should (preferably) not take any service from their students - as this is best for them. However, students should not wait for their teacher to tell them what to do. They should serve the teachers out of their own will, whilst regarding this (opportunity) to be a good fortune for them.

‘Ali (RA) used to say, “I am a slave to that person who has taught me even one letter. If he wishes, he may sell me and if he wishes he might set me free. Alternatively (preferably) he may enslave me.”

Imām Abu Haneefa (R) used to clean out the seeds from the cotton at the home of his teacher, Hammād ibn Salāmah (R). He bought the milk, vegetables and used to perform similar chores around the house. At that time, who would have imagined that the servant in the house of Hammād would one day serve the Muslims of the whole world!

One of the kings of *Murū* used to show the utmost respect to Imām Fakhruddeen (R). He would mention on several occasions, “All this reverence and respect is a result of the service I rendered to my teacher, Imām Fakhruddeen. For thirty years I cooked his meals, and never once did I partake of it.”

Imām Abu Yūsuf (R) always made *du‘ā* for his teachers. He used to say that whenever he performed any *fardh* or *nafal* prayers, he always remembered to make *du‘ā* for his teachers.

Ma’an bin Isa (R), a great *Mufti* and researcher, was a student of Imām Mālik (R). He received this position because of the service he rendered to his teacher. When Imām Mālik became old and needed the aid of a stick to lean on, he instead was (seen) leaning upon the shoulders of Ma’an bin Isa.

### ◇ 2.35 – The Danger of Incurring the Anger of Your Teacher

Abu Umāmah (RA) reports that the Prophet (SAW) said: “The carrier of the Qur’ān carries the flag of Islām. Whoever honours him, verily, he honours Allāh, and whoever disgraces him, upon him is the curse of Allāh.”<sup>92</sup>

If, Allāh forbid, you showed disrespect to your teachers or were rude to them, then immediately, with total humility, ask their forgiveness. One can never obtain any benefit from one's teacher, if he harbours any ill feelings for him.

There have been students (from my own observations) that were eternally lost because of earning the displeasure and resentment of their teachers. Some of them could never memorize the Qur’ān (or have completely lost it) even after many attempts to continue or regain its memorization. They, who were once able to recite the Qur’ān beautifully and efficiently from memory, were reduced to having to recite the Qur’ān (discreetly) from a *mus’haf* during *Tarāweeh Salāh*.

The only way to prevent this (disgrace) from happening is to seek a good *du‘ā* from your teachers (parents and elders included) and to ask their forgiveness if any harm or hurt was done to them intentionally or unintentionally.

### ◇ 2.36 – Complete Your Memorization with One Teacher

It is best to memorize the Qur’ān with one teacher. This is so because each teacher has a different way and approach to teaching. Students find it generally difficult to adapt to new methods of learning.

However, if there is benefit in the student leaving and going elsewhere, then it is the duty of the teacher to allow them to leave willingly.

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<sup>92</sup> Hadeeth verified by the Dārul Iftā of Dārul ‘Ulūm Zakariyyā

In *Ta'leemul Muta'allim*, it is recorded that those students who continue changing their teachers (or institutions of study), lose the blessings of their knowledge.

Nowadays, students find it difficult to remain in one institution. By the time they complete the memorization of the Qur'an (or any other form of study) they have already attended numerous institutions. In most cases, the reason for this is that they would consider their amenities and comforts more important than the seeking of knowledge. Once the students come to know that there is greater comfort in another institution, they pack their bags and leave immediately.

### ♦ 2.37 – Paying of Fees

Just as with all other persons in the community, teachers need to sustain themselves and their families, and it is only right that they earn a decent wage. No price or fee can compensate for the imparting of Islamic knowledge, nor is it also justifiable (in my opinion) to charge a fee for the rendition of religious services. However, it is important that the teacher be remunerated (appropriately) for their time spent in this regard. The regular payment of *madrassah* fees will result in the teacher being able to focus more energy on their teaching, thereby providing a better service to the community. Your contributions can be considered as money spent in the path of Allāh, for which there lays great rewards. Enquire if there are any other ways that you can assist the teacher (or the institution) in this regard and make it your duty to serve the institutions of knowledge.

### ♦ 2.38 – Taking the *Du'ā* of Your Teacher

Always seek the *du'ā* of your teacher, parents, elders, and of the pious and upright people, as this is one of the main causes that will assist you in your memorization of the Holy Qur'an.

There are two ways of obtaining the *du'ā* of the teacher. One is when you ask them to pray for you and they do so when performing their regular prayer or when the opportunity arises for them to do so. The other way is when you do an act that pleases your teacher, which will result in them saying a silent prayer for you in their heart (sometimes without them even realizing). This is the best kind of *du'ā* a student can achieve, as it comes with so much sincerity, joy, and contentment from the teacher towards the student that Allāh will most certainly accept it, *insha'Allāh*.

There are many ways to achieve this kind of happiness and satisfaction of your teacher. It is important to be an ever obedient and hardworking student, to speak with kindness towards the teacher, to make their tasks easier for them, to assist in their worldly needs and requirements, to do errands for them without them asking, and to serve them and be of service in any way possible. Always be punctual with your lessons and try to be neat and presentable at all times. These are some of the qualities of a true student, who will not only attain the prayers of their teacher, but of all the living creatures as well, as the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said:

If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allāh will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure for the one who seeks knowledge. The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man (or woman). The superiority of the learned man (or woman) over the worshiper is like that of the moon on the night when it is full over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither Dinar or Dirhams - only

knowledge - and he (or she) who take it, takes a big fortune.”<sup>93</sup>

Make sure that you never attain their anger or his ‘other side’. Never let them remind or instruct you more than once. The pleasure of one’s teacher is the stepping-stone to success. One glance of pleasure from the teacher may be sufficient to take the student to the highest pinnacle of achievements.

### ♦ 2.39 – Keeping Contact With Your Teacher

Once, someone asked Imām Bukhāri (R), “What is your heart’s desire?” He replied, “I wish that my teacher, ‘Ali bin Madeeni (R) was alive so that I could go and sit in his company.”

One pious person said, “Don’t address your teachers with disrespect otherwise your students will speak disrespectfully to you. It is the right of the teacher that after you complete your studies, you should continue to meet him in gratitude.”

Moulānā Shah ‘Abdurrahmān related the following incident to his students. He said:

When I left home to study in *Sahāranpūr*, I met all my teachers in my hometown before leaving but I was unable to meet a teacher from whom I had studied my elementary kitaabs. When I came to *Sahāranpūr*, I was surprised that I could not understand my lessons whereas I was regarded to be amongst the (most) intelligent students in the class. I pondered over the situation and eventually Allāh guided me to write a letter to my teacher and ask his forgiveness for not having met him before leaving (for my studies).” My teacher replied: “I felt that you did not come to meet me because you regarded me as insignificant.

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<sup>93</sup> Abu Dāwūd Fadhliil ‘Ilm (1)

However, I see from your letter that this is not so.” Thereafter, he made lots of *du’a* for me.” Shah ‘Aburrahmān further mentioned that is only due to him showing respect to his teachers that he was able to convey knowledge to others (and thus Allāh used him in the service of *deen*).

From amongst the worst things you can do is to sever ties with your teacher after you have completed the memorization of the Qur’ān. Always keep in contact with him to seeking his blessings and prayers. Request his advice (not only on Qur’anic issues) during and after your period of study. This will undoubtedly assist and give you confidence in whatever you decide to do after your studies.

#### ♦ 2.40 – Respecting the Tools Aiding You in Seeking of Knowledge

Just as it is necessary for a student to respect the people of knowledge, similarly is it necessary for them to show respect, and reverence to those items that aids in the seeking of knowledge.

The scholar, Shamsul ‘Aimmah (R), says that showing respect to (the tools of) knowledge plays a major role in acquiring it. His condition was such that he never touched his books without *wudhū* despite him having a (breaking of) wind problem. Once, whilst studying, he needed to renew his *wudhū* approximately seventeen times.

A student should not stretch their feet towards the Qur’ān, his books, etc. They should always keep the books of Islamic knowledge higher, or on top of books dealing with other subjects. They should carry their books with respect. They should not throw his pen, books, or other items when passing it to others.

Imām Halwāni (R) used to say that he attained knowledge by virtue of respecting it. “We never even touched a blank piece of paper without *wudhū*”, he said.

Yūsuf bin Husain (R) said, “Through respect, insight in knowledge is facilitated. With this knowledge one is able to correct one’s actions and with good actions one obtains wisdom.”

#### ♦ 2.41 – Be Punctual for Lessons

Make it a point to be punctual for your lessons and try your best not to miss a single lesson. Our predecessors have set very high standards with this regard. It is recorded in the biography of Imām Abu Yūsuf (R) that he remained in the service of Imām Abu Haneefa (R) for many years. Imām Abu Yūsuf mentioned:

One of my sons passed away. I could not be present and neither could I take part in the burial. I entrusted the responsibility of the *kafan* and burial to the neighbours and relatives out of uneasiness that I will miss out a lesson by Imām Abu Haneefa - the grief of which will never end.

Imām Sa’lab (R) says that for fifty years continuously he remained in the gatherings of Ibrāheem Harbi (R) and was never absent.

Sadly, today, we have increased our social activities so much that we do not have time for anything else. Our lessons are sacrificed for our useless pursuits and we get so easily distracted with futile things. We fit in our studies around our worldly enjoyments and interest- instead of the other way around.

Imām Yahya (R) was studying in *Madeenah* under Imām Mālik (R) when an announcement was made that an elephant had come into the town. The elephant, being a very strange animal to the ‘Arabs, caused such a stir that many students immediately left their lessons and ran out. Yahya, however, remained seated peacefully. Imām Mālik remarked:

There are no elephants in the country that you live in. Why don't you also go to see it?" Yahya replied: "Imām, I left Andalus to meet you and learn from you. I did not leave my home town to see elephants." Imām Mālik was very pleased when he heard this reply and gave him the title 'The Sage of Andalus.'

#### ◇ 2.42 – Choose Your Company Carefully

Abstain from people of different (and confusing) ideologies and do not associate with such students and people who, instead of striving for knowledge, lead a carefree life. Avoid bad environments or surroundings that are not conducive for people of the Qur'ān.

Once a pious person advised a student saying:

Stay away from backbiting and do not ever mix with students who engage in indecent and vile talk. That person who engages in useless talk wastes away his time as well as yours. To stay away from sinful people and to sit in the company of the pious is also a type of *taqwa*.

#### ◇ 2.43 – Have a Companion to Assist You in Continuing the Hifdh

It is advisable to choose a righteous companion to help you in memorizing the Qur'ān and to create an honourable competition in Hifdh between the two of you until your goals reach a high rank and you start to feel that there is someone competing and preceding you in this good act.

A hāfidh should not rely on memorizing individually. It would be most recommended that this companion be a precise hāfidh and fine listener that would then be able to alert you to possible subtle errors, as well as prompting you when you forget or makes mistakes. One of the benefits of having someone like this is that it will be an encouragement for you in memorization and

continuation, and it will increase conviction in yourself with what you have read.

#### ♦ 2.44 – Encourage Others to Memorize the Qur’ān

This is what is confirmed in psychology, if a person does something and he convinces someone else about it, then it is like taking a firm stance without retracting from it and their behaviour increases their confidence in what they do.

You may start by assisting and teaching others to read the Qur’ān.

The following was written about the scholar, A’tā Khurāsāni, “If he could not find anyone to teach, he would go to the poor and teach them.”

#### ♦ 2.45 – Consider the Welfare of Others

Shaqeeq Balkhi (R) said: “There are three things upon which if you do not practice, you will never gain any benefit, even though you may read eighty trunks of books:

1. Do not have love for this world because it is not the abode of a Muslim.
2. Do not befriend *Shaitān* because he is not the friend of a Muslim.
3. Do not cause harm to anyone because this is not the occupation of a Muslim.

‘Abdur Raḥmān bin Qāsim (R) said: “I stayed for twenty years in the service of Imām Mālik (R). I spent eighteen years learning *adāb* (etiquette, respect) and *akhlāq* (good character) and two years acquiring knowledge.”

The memorizer of Qur’ān should respect their friends and colleagues and be mindful of their rights. They should not cause them any harm.

If your colleague recites something incorrectly, you should not laugh at them. Perhaps it was read

incorrectly due to some misunderstanding or because they did not have the (correct) knowledge of it. By laughing at them you will cause them harm and pride will be created within you. You will think that you are better than them, which is a destructive sickness.

If a fellow student (or any one else) does not understand something, then you should endeavour to assist and explain the matter to them in quiet. Do not regard them as inferior and unworthy. Do not taunt them for their deficiencies. There is great benefit in assisting others, which will also be the cause of blessings and ease in your seeking of knowledge.

As far as possible, assist those who are poor and try your best to see to the needs of those around you whilst keeping the incidents of compassion and goodwill amongst the Sahābah (RA) and the pious predecessors (R) in mind.

In one battle, a companion (RA) of the Prophet (SAW) was seriously wounded and collapsed due to his injuries. Another companion (RA), who was the cousin of the wounded one, went out in search for him. He found the injured companion experiencing the throes of death. In this condition, the companion requested some water. When the cousin brought water for him, he heard another companion calling out for water. The injured companion asked that the water be given to the other person first. As the cousin proceeded towards the second companion, a third person that was also wounded called out for water. The second person indicated that he preferred that the third person should be given water before him. Unfortunately, by the time the cousin reached the third person, he had passed away. He quickly ran back to the second person and found that he had also passed away. He then went back to his cousin, only to find that he, too, had passed away.

This was the level of compassion and brother-hood amongst the companions (RA) of the Prophet (SAW). They gave their lives whilst giving preference and consideration to others.

#### ◇ 2.46 - Dedicating a Specific Time for *Hifdh*

From the efforts that will aid you in the memorization of Qur'ān is that you dedicate a specific time towards *hifdh* and you inform those around you that you will be busy during this time so that you can spare your undivided focus on memorizing the Qur'ān during the pre-set times.

It is important that you set out a routine for the day whereby you reserve a fixed time for your memorization or recitation of the Qur'ān. This fixed time must be scheduled to a time of the day when you do not expect any interference or disturbances that would result in you having to prioritise any other work over the Qur'ān. Never leave your memorizing for the last minute. Regarding effective time management, 'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar (R) said to Mujāhid Bin Jabr (R):

When rising in the morning, do not convince yourself to delay matters to the evening, and when having things to do in the evening, do not leave it for the following morning. Take (make good use) of your health before your sickness and of your life before your death for you know not, Oh slave of Allāh, what is (written for you) for tomorrow.<sup>94</sup>

#### ◇ 2.47 - Prioritize the Qur'ān First, and Other Matters Afterwards

It is preferred to do the memorization of the Qur'ān on a fulltime basis, rather than part-time. Participating in other studies or extramural activities that might impact on your study time is not advised, unless you are absolutely sure that it will not interfere with your *hifdh*. This is however highly unlikely, because memorizing the Qur'ān requires full commitment and special focus. As for the student who does *hifdh* on a fulltime basis and

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<sup>94</sup> *Tirmidhi*

resumes their secular studies upon completion, it is a proven fact that they have the ability to excel in any kind of study (to the top of his class), even if they missed a few years of school.

The person that memorizes the Qur'ān part-time should not feel discouraged. You may memorize the Qur'ān after school or after work and still achieve success. Never give up, rather try to memorize small portions consistently each day. Remember, the striving person gets double the reward.

It is a significant point to note that the person who was sent as a mercy unto mankind (SAW), did not memorize the Qur'ān overnight- he (SAW) only began memorizing at the age of 40 and the period of revelation spanned 23 years.

#### ◊ **2.48 – Consider Your Time as Valuable**

Beware of becoming occupied with unnecessary and useless activities, even during holidays and free time. Always have a copy of the Holy Qur'ān or other books of knowledge closeby during your leisure moments or when traveling. This is more beneficial than spending your time engrossed in idle thoughts, fictious novels, watching television, etc. Value your time and manage it according the requirements of your memorization.

#### ◊ **2.49 – Learn the Rules of Recitation Prior to Starting Memorization**

Never embark on the memorization of the Qur'ān until you have attained proficiency in its recitation and perfection in the rules of *tajweed* (art and science of recitation) so that when you do memorize, your memorization will be free from technical mistakes.

Says Khurram Murād: An hour a day of sustained learning for a month or so should be enough for an educated adult to acquire the minimum essential basic skills in this respect.

No one can be absolved of trying sincerely to learn to read the Qur'ān correctly. But while you are learning, the fact that you cannot do so should not be a reason to forsake your reading. A non-Arab may never master the art of correct reading. Or, you may have no opportunity to learn. The Prophet (SAW) was aware of such difficulties when he told Jibra'eel (AS): 'I have been sent, Jibra'eel, to a people who are unlettered, among whom are old women and old men, boys and girls, and men who have never read a book'.

You should, therefore, remember his (SAW) reassuring words in this respect, though do not make them an excuse to shun or slacken your efforts to learn.

One who is skilled in reading the Qur'ān is with the noble, virtuous angels (AS) who bring down the revelation; one who falter while reading it and finds it hard to read correctly, will have a double reward (for reading and for exerting).

#### ♦ 2.50 - Adhering to One *Mus'haf* (Copy of the Qur'ān)

It is essential whilst doing your *hifdh* that you stick to one particular print of the Qur'ān. This will aid you tremendously when you visualize and recall the positions of the words, verses, and chapters from memory. Try to keep the same copy of Qur'ān throughout your memorization, as this will assist you in remembering your mistakes.

#### ♦ 2.51 - Reciting the Qur'ān Audibly

It is best to read with a moderate audible voice - not with high volume or extremely low volume. The advantage of reciting aloud is that one tends to read more clearly and will detect any mistake one makes easily. Reading aloud increases the strength of your memorization.

On account of this, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef said the following:

When I review, I record my recitation on CD and listen to it again and again. The students that read the loudest in class are all the strongest students. Why? Because they can hear themselves the most.

When I was in Qur'ān school, the boy beside me read so loud. I asked the teacher to ask him to read more quietly. He said a most powerful statement that became my motto: 'No, you read louder!' I did, and it benefited me unbelievably.<sup>95</sup>

Be considerate if you are reciting in a *masjid*, for it is then better that you read in a subdued voice (where you can hear yourself) so as not to disturb others involved in worship or prayer.

#### ♦ 2.52 – Reciting with Melodic Tones

One should recite the Qur'ān in a melodic and beautiful tone at all times. Reciting melodiously conforms with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) and his command when he (SAW) said: "Whoever does not chant the Qur'ān (recite it melodiously) is not of us."<sup>96</sup>

It is pleasing to the ears, providing incentive to continue with the memorization. It helps in making one's memorization firm and strong. The tongue will always return to a specific tone of voice, and would thus detect a mistake whenever the balance or harmony in one's recitation becomes disordered. The reciter's tongue will not comply with him in making a mistake even when he is unmindful. You should, however, not get too carried away with reciting beautifully that it would result in the transgressing of tajweed rules.

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<sup>95</sup> *Tips for memorizing the Qur'ān* by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef

<sup>96</sup> *Saḥeeḥ Bukhāri*

### ♦ 2.53 – Memorize at a Suitable Pace

There are various paces of recitation; amongst them are:

- *Hadr*: normal talking speed
- *Tarteel*: slow, for reading and reflection
- *Tajweed Tahqeeq*: like *tarteel* but with greater care for the purpose of teaching and learning.<sup>97</sup>

Memorize your lesson in a slow pace whilst taking careful note of implementing the rules of *tajweed*. Never read fast. The disadvantage of memorizing (or revising) in a fast pace is that it will become difficult for you to adjust the lesson when you want to recite in a slow or normal pace. However, if you learn it in a slow pace, it will be easier for you to recite it in a faster pace. The Qur’ān should never be recited in a hurry or with such a pace that causes the rules of *tajweed* to be disregarded.

### ♦ 2.54 – Gradual Progression in *Hifdh*

You must have gradual progression in *hifdh* al-Qur’ān. Do not hasten in memorization until you are able to do so. Learn at a pace that is reasonable for your personal learning style and memorization capability. You may choose a portion that you are able to consistently memorize every day and stick to that limit. By doing this, you can make everyday a victory.

### ♦ 2.55 – Be Consistent

Take small steps every day, even if it is as little as memorizing five small verses from the Qur’ān. Do your best to make this a consistent effort, so that you will not fall back on your goals. A good way of illustrating the advantage of consistency is by the following example:

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<sup>97</sup> *Ulūm Al Qur’ān* - Ahmad Von Denffer

A person who memorizes six lines on one day, then five lines on another and three lines on the next day would have covered 22 lines in four days. Another person who memorizes five and a half lines regularly over a period of four days will also cover 22 lines.

The key difference is, that due to the first person's inconsistent memorization, it will take him longer to stabilize and adjust to an increase in lesson, whereas the second person will become comfortable with an increase much quicker and will therefore be able to adapt without experiencing much difficulty.<sup>98</sup>

This will also result in his revision becoming much stronger.

Imām Abu Ḥaneefa (R) once said to Imām Abu Yūsuf (R), “You were weak minded, but your effort and consistency has caused you to progress.”

#### ♦ 2.56 – Recording your Progress

Recording your progress is a great way to prompt yourself to achieve better. After completing a *juz*, make a note of the date you started and ended the *juz*, the amount of days you were busy with it and the amount of lessons you took to complete the *juz*, etc. That will motivate you to do better with the next *juz*, *insha'Allāh*.

#### ♦ 2.57 – Reading the *Tafseer* (Explanation) of the Verses You Wish to Memorize

From the things that assist you in *ḥifdh* is that you read the *tafseer* of the verses that you want to memorize. Understanding its meaning will make the verses easier to remember.

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<sup>98</sup> Example taken from ‘*Becoming a Hafiz*’ by Ḥāfidh Ibrāheem Sibda 2008

Keep in mind that the ultimate reason why you are memorizing the Holy Qur'ān is to achieve a higher level of spirituality. It is only with reading the meanings and pondering over it that you can attain this spirituality.

The author, 'Abdurrahmān bin 'Abdulkhāliq, said: "Understanding is the Road to Memorization."<sup>99</sup>

### ♦ 2.58 – Have Conviction in the Message of Qur'ān

One should have the total conviction that the words of the Holy Qur'ān are the absolute truth and that our recitation and memorization will lead to our salvation. Hence, there can be no salvation by contradicting it.

That is why even the Messenger (SAW) is instructed to proclaim his own faith, "Say: I believe in whatever God has sent down in this Book' [al-Shura: 15].

In his (SAW) faith, all believers must join him, "The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him by His Lord, and all believers too' [al-Baqarah: 285].

You must, therefore, always remain conscious that each word that you are reading, reciting, hearing, or trying to understand, has been sent for you by Allāh.<sup>100</sup>

### ♦ 2.59 – Act Upon It

There is no benefit in memorizing the Qur'ān if your actions contradict its teachings.

Once 'Aisha (RA) was asked about the characteristics of the Prophet (SAW), and she said, "His character complied with the Qur'ān."

So the Qur'ān is a complete instruction for a meaningful and successful life. And the worst person is the one who knows the Qur'ān and turns away from it.

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<sup>99</sup> *The Golden Rules for Memorizing the Holy Qur'ān*- Rule no 6

<sup>100</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*- Basic Prerequisites by Khurram Murād

A pious person said: “Just as a lamp does not give light without being lit; in the same way knowledge without practice has no benefit.”

Ma’rūf Karkhi (R) used to say that do not acquire knowledge for the sake of explaining exciting things to people that whatever you heard, without you practising on it, you mention it to others. Knowledge should be sought only for practising upon it. By the *qasam* (taking oath) of Allāh, if only people seek knowledge for the sake of practise then they would gulp it down like bitter medicine and forget about excitement and pleasure.

Moulānā Thanwi (R) writes that nowadays students have the thinking in their minds that only after completing their studies will they start practicing on their knowledge. This is an evil whisper of *shaitān*, the consequence of which will be that one will never get the ability to practice for the rest of one's life.

Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. At the time of learning something, one learns that for doing a certain act there is reward or sin. This has a special effect on one's heart. If one takes advantage of this opportunity and (at that time) makes an effort to practice on it, then this effect remains. Otherwise, it is removed from the heart and is not easily attained thereafter.

Whilst studying, if every encouragement or admonishment found on every page of the Qur’ān and *hadeeth* has no effect on your heart, then how can there be any hope that after you leave *madrasah* (or complete you studies) these words will have the desired effect?

When you have initially regarded that this is not yet the time for practice, then O beloved students of the Qur’ān, do not have hope that on the completion of your studies, what you have studied will have an effect on your hearts and minds thereby shaping your character and actions.

Nowadays we find that students even think that it is permissible for them to do those things that are not permissible for others to do.

## ◇ 2.60 – Pray With What You Have Memorized

You will never experience a more rewarding feeling than being able to recite your day's lesson during the *sunan*, *nawāfil* (superogatory) and compulsory prayers. This will assist in giving ground and confidence to your *hifdh*.

## ◇ 2.61 – Persisting in the *Athkār* (Supplications)

Also amongst the aiding causes in *hifdh* is that you perform morning and evening *athkār* and that you read the supplications that Allāh has made a cause to protect you from the plots of the *Shaitān* (devil), for example when the Prophet (SAW) would enter the mosque, he would say, 'I seek refuge in Allāh the Most Great in His Noble Face and lasting authority from the wretched *Shaitān*.' And he (SAW) said: 'If he says that, then he'll be protected for the rest of the day.'<sup>101</sup> i.e. whoever says that, Allāh will protect him from the *Shaitān* for the entire day, Insha'Allāh.

The following are a few supplications from the Qur'ān that will assist you in your memorization.<sup>102</sup>

### ◇ 2.61.1 – A Supplication for Acquiring Forgiveness

When seeking forgiveness from Allāh so that your sins do not stand in your path of memorizing the Qur'ān, read the *du'ā* that was made by Prophet Adam (AS), "*Rabbanā dhalamnā anfusanā wa illam taghfirlanā wa tarḥamnā lanakūnanna minal khāsireen.*"

[Translation] "O Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you do not forgive us and do not have mercy on us, we will most certainly be from among those who are doomed." [Sūrah A'rāf: 23]

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<sup>101</sup> Reported by Abu Dāwād from Ibn 'Amr – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'* (4715)

<sup>102</sup> Taken from *Abundance of Mercy* by Moulānā Muḥammad 'Abdullāh Darkhwasti, published by Madrassah 'Arabia Islamia, South Africa

### ◇ 2.61.2 – A Supplication for Every Difficulty and Need

When you experience any difficulties (like memorizing your lessons) or for any other need, the *du‘ā* of Prophet Yūnus (AS) is extremely beneficial.

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said that when a believer add the *du‘ā* which Prophet Yūnus made while in the belly of the fish, their *du‘ā* will surely be accepted. *“Lā ilāha illā anta sub’hānaka innee kuntu minadh-dhālimeen.”*

[Translation] “There is no god but You, Glory to Thee: I was indeed wrong!” [Sūrah Anbiyā: 87]

### ◇ 2.61.3 – A Supplication for Attaining Your Goal and Ambition

In order to attain all one’s goals and ambitions in this world and in the Hereafter, for the protection of one’s life, wealth, and honour, read verse number 154 from Sūrah ‘Ali ‘Imrān (the complete verse).

When you reach the part *‘Qul innal amra kullahū lillāh’* (Say, all matters belongs solely to Allāh), think of the purpose for making the *du‘ā*. That is, either for increases of knowledge, for marriage, intelligence, memory, or for whatever purpose you are making the *du‘ā*.

### ◇ 2.61.4 – A Supplication for Strengthening the Memory

In order to strengthen the memory, the following verses from the Qur‘ān should be recited thrice every morning and evening:

*“Sub’hānaka lā ‘ilmalanā illā mā ‘allamtanā. Innaka antal ‘aleemul hakeem.”* [Sūrah Baqarah: 32]

[Translation] Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.”

“*Rabbish rahlee sadree, wa yassirlee amree, wah’tul ‘uqdatam-millisānee, yafqahū qoulee.*” [Sūrah Tāhā: 25-28]

[Translation] My Lord, expand for me my breast (with assurance), and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech.

Then add: “*Allāhuma nouwwir qalbee wa zid quwwata sam‘ee wa baṣaree wa hifdhee.*”

[Translation] O Allāh, enlighten my heart, and increase my hearing, my eyesight, and my memory.

### ♦ 2.61.5 – A Supplication for Treating Forgetfulness

Ibn Taimiyya (R) recommended that the following *du‘ā* be recited if a person is forgetful or overcome by forgetfulness. This *du‘ā* is also beneficial if one is unable to understand a particular verse from the Qur’ān.

“*Yā Haiyyu yā Qaiyyūm. Lā ilāha illā anta birahmatika astagheeth.*”

[Translation] “O the One who is alive! O the One who upholds everything! There is none of worship but You. It is through Your mercy that I am asking for help.”

Similarly, if a person recites this *du‘ā* seven times before delivering a lecture, studying, or reading a book; he will receive the inspiration to (efficiently) deliver the lecture and will be able to understand (or know) what he previously did not know from the book.

### ♦ 2.62 – Have a Positive Attitude Towards Memorizing the Qur’ān

Always motivate yourself by thinking positively about your memorization. It may be that on certain days you would experience some difficulty with memorizing your lessons and that it would make you feel despondent or even frustrated. Never allow this to get to you. Remind yourself constantly that Allāh is listening to your recitation; that He chose you for the purpose of memorizing the Qur’ān, that He listens to the pleading

and crying in your *du'ās*, and that He will reward you for each and every letter that you are struggling with. Remember that it might be difficult in the beginning, and as you continue it will definitely become easier for you. Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef gives an example of two very different people and how they look at the challenges of life:

Person 1: Oh man, that is a killer. I cannot do that. This time I just give up. Looks like I am finally whipped. It will never amount to anything. I am tired.

Person 2: Awesome, that was the kind of challenge I have been waiting for. Yā Rabb, I am going to make you proud of me. I am going to give it my best. I am going to pump 110% of my energy into every part of this challenge!

Guess which one will succeed in their memorization of the Qur'ān? That is right, the second one. Why? Because the second one has the right attitude.<sup>103</sup>

### ♦ 2.63 – Beware of Preoccupation with Memorization, Leading You Away From Recitation

Be wary that memorization does not keep you busy from actually reciting from the *mus'haf* (Qur'ān) because recitation is the fuel for memorization. Looking into the *mus'haf* confirms the correctness of your *hifdh* and allows you to read the Qur'ān with contemplation and thought until your heart and limbs live with every verse, *Insha'Allāh*.

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<sup>103</sup> *Tips for memorizing the Qur'ān* by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef

### ♦ 2.64 – Penalize Yourself for Shortcomings

If you fall short from your memorization or daily recitation of Qur’ān, then penalise yourself with something from the *mubahāt* (permissible), for example by fasting, night prayer and charity.

### ♦ 2.65 – Learning Aids

In today’s time we are fortunate to have CD and MP3 players, digital Qur’ān’s, cell phones, and similar devices that can aid you with your memorization. Listening to recordings creates a greater urge and fervour to learn and will also familiarize you with the proper and beautiful method of recital.

Choose a proficient *Qāri* (reciter), like Shaikh Muḥammad Siddeeq Minshāwi (R), and Shaikh Khaleel Khusary (R), etc, those who recite at a suitable pace (slower than *tarāweeh* recitation) and try to imitate their style. Using these instruments is convenient, so if you are not reciting the Qur’ān you can listen to it wherever you go.

Please note that whilst the using of learning aids can be of great assistance, it can never take the place of a competent teacher or *Shaikh*.

### ♦ 2.66 – Living Healthy

“A daily run, a diet rich in almonds and other healthful foods and a stimulating environment — all may keep aging brain cells in shape. Two hundred students at an American school were helped through their exams by eating bananas at breakfast, break, and lunch in a bid to boost their brainpower. Research has shown that the potassium packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.” (Kathleen Fackelmann, USA TODAY).

Getting enough sleep, exercising frequently, and participating in outdoor activities will greatly assist in acquiring optimal brainpower for memorization. Care

should however be taken that these activities compliments your studies (and not interfere with it).

Avoid having a large meal before memorizing- this will result in you feeling lazy or sleepy. Learning on an empty stomach (excessive hunger) will cause distractions and will minimize your focus. Rather eat something light that will provide your brain with the necessary nutrition it needs for memorizing.

Modern day scientists are increasingly finding evidence that underlines the importance of following a healthy and balance lifestyle and the essential effects it has on the human body and brain. In fact, these ‘discoveries’ only substantiates the pearls of wisdom that flowed from the lips of our Prophet Muḥammad (SAW)- which are so detailed that many books was already published on the subject.

In short, fresh fruit, plenty vegetables, dates, honey, raisins, and almonds or some of the beneficial foods that energises the brain. Fasting and the constant use of the *miswāk* are some of the elements that increase memory. Of the discouraged habits, overeating and excessive sleeping are common causes of ill health. Among the harmful substances that enter the body, it is most detested for a *hāfidh* to smoke or be in the company (inhaling the smoke) of those who smokes.

‘Ali (RA) narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said, “Verily your mouths are the pathways of the Qur’ān, so cleanse them with *siwāk* (*miswāk*).”<sup>104</sup>

This advice from the Prophet (SAW) not only indicates the importance of using the *miswāk*, but it also shows the value and significance of the mouth of a believer for the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān. It is therefore not befitting for the Qur’ān reciter to consume or indulge in intoxicants and other substances that is considered prohibited or *ḥarām* for Muslims (including provisions from unlawful sources).

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibn Majah*

## ◇ 2.67 – Taking an Afternoon Nap

Try to make it a daily habit to have a short nap during the day. A powernap will be a great benefit towards your memorization.

If you are not used to sleeping during the day, or even if you not feeling tired, just lie down for a few minutes and cover yourself as if you are going to sleep.

If you are working or doing some other fulltime activity and you're daily routine does not allow you sufficient time to for a nap, sit quietly for a few minutes with your eyes closed (preferably during your break time) and just relax your mind. You will experience countless benefits if this becomes a daily occurrence.

## ◇ 2.68 – Be Cautious of What You Eat

It is important for the seeker of knowledge that they eat from the permissible and be careful regarding prohibited and doubtful food.

Allāh says, “O Messengers eat from the pure food and do good actions.” [Sūrah Mu'minūn: 51]

You will notice that in this verse ‘eating pure food’ has been mentioned before ‘doing good actions’. This is because ‘pure food’ has a positive effect on a person's actions, health, and state of mind.

*Rasūlullāh* (SAW) used to make the following *du'ā*, “*Allāhumma innee as'aluka rizqan tayyibā, wa 'ilman-nāfi'ā, wa 'amalan mutaqqabbalā.*”

[Translation] “O Allāh I ask you for pure sustenance, beneficial knowledge and actions that will be accepted by you.”

From this *du'ā* we understand that without *halāl* sustenance, one cannot obtain beneficial knowledge and without this, one's actions will not be accepted.

Overeating is also considered as *harām*. A pious person used to say: “Eat so much that the food will carry

you along. Do not eat so much that you have to carry the food along.<sup>105</sup>

### ◇ 2.69 – Stay Away From Bad Stimulants

We often use stimulants like energy drinks, coffee, etc to keep us awake and alert - especially if we are studying late at night. Research has shown that coffee is not only addictive, but it also worsens mental performance. One study showed that moderate and high consumers of coffee (more than one cup a day) had higher levels of depression, anxiety, and other medical problems, as well as lower academic performance, than abstainers.

The latest study (released at the time that I was writing this book) conducted at Tel Aviv University in Israel has found that:

A staggering 91.7% of children can link their headaches to caffeine intake in the form of cola drinks. Dr Shevel, Chairman of the South African division of the International Headache Society explains, “Caffeine is both a diuretic and vasoconstrictor, this means that it causes dehydration which sets off headache and it also impacts the arteries that result in migraine.”

The study tested thirty-six children over a period of five years and found that the average amount of cola guzzled by adolescents was an inconceivable 11 liters a week. Participants in the study were encouraged to achieve gradual withdrawal which led to complete cessation of all headaches in thirty-three of the thirty-six children.

Shevel advises that children who suffer from headaches due to drinking caffeine should reduce their intake gradually as this will help them not to experience any withdrawal headaches. Caffeine is

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<sup>105</sup> *Stages of Acquiring Knowledge* - Mufti Mahmūd Hasan Ganghoji, Published by Jamiatul ‘Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

also a highly addictive substance and causes children to become hyperactive. Parents and pediatricians need to encourage children to try healthier drinks. “Drink water, there is nothing better for you,” Shevel concluded.

If you want to stay in top mental health (and in the best state of mind to memorize the Holy Qur’ān), restrict your intake of (caffeine related) stimulants, including coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, and chocolate. The occasional cup of tea or coffee is unlikely to cause a problem and may even be beneficial due to the high polyphenol content, which acts as an antioxidant.<sup>106</sup>

### **Learn the Qur’ān Before It Is Lifted From the Pages and the Hearts**

Beloved brothers and sisters, strive and endeavour to memorize the Book of Allāh before there comes upon you the day which the Messenger, the truthful (SAW) has informed us of - and that is the day when the Qur’ān will be lifted from the pages and the hearts.

It is reported by Hudhaifah (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said:

Islām will wear away just as a piece of garment wears away until it will be unknown what fasting is, what prayer is, what the religious rites are and what charity is. The Book of Allāh will be lifted overnight, no verse of it will remain on the earth and there shall remain groups of people, old aged men saying: ‘We found our fathers upon this statement: *Lā ilāha illallāh* (There is no god but Allāh), so we too say it.’ Silah (RA) said to him (Hudhaifah): ‘What will ‘*Lā ilāha illallāh*’ do for them when they don’t know what fasting, prayer,

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<sup>106</sup> Information taken from [www.healthymuslims.com](http://www.healthymuslims.com) and [www.vocfm.com](http://www.vocfm.com)

rites and charity is?’ Hudhaifah turned away from him, so he repeated it three times, and each time Hudhaifah would turn away from him. Then on the third, he Hudhaifa turned to him and said three times: ‘O Silah! It will save them from the Hellfire!’<sup>107</sup>

And ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (RA) said, “Surely the Qur’ān will be taken away from amongst you, taken away in one night so it will be removed from the hearts of men such that there shall remain nothing of it on the earth.”<sup>108</sup>

Ibn Taimiyyah (R) said, “It will be lifted near the End of Time, removed from the pages so there’ll be neither a word left in the hearts nor a letter left in the Books.”<sup>109</sup>

The successful memorization of the Holy Qur’ān is not dependent on your age, nor do you need status or wealth to memorize the Words of your Lord. The memorization of the Qur’ān is for anyone who is prepared to become a better person and cleanse his heart through his striving.

Allāh says in the Qur’ān, “He who forsakes his home in the Cause of Allāh, finds in the earth many a refuge and abundance. Should he die as a refugee from home for Allāh and His Messenger, his reward becomes due and sure with Allāh: and Allāh is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” [an-Nisā: 100].

Connected to the *tafseer* (interpretation) of this verse, there is a *hadeeth* wherein the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said, as narrated by Hasan al- Basri (RA):

It has reached me that whoever dies and has not completed the memorization of the Qur’ān, he will be taught the completion of the Qur’ān in His

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<sup>107</sup> Reported by Ibn Mājah and al-Hākim from Hudhaifah – *Saḥeeḥ al-Jāmi’* (8077)

<sup>108</sup> Reported by al-Tabarāni and Ibn Hajr said: Its chain is authentic but it’s mouqūf (Fath al-Bari13/16)

<sup>109</sup> *Majmū’ Fatawa Ibn Taimiyyah* (3/198-199)

grave until the Day of *Qiyāmah* when Allāh will raise him amongst the family of Allāh.”<sup>110</sup>

It is reported from Abu Mūsa al-‘Ash’ari (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) has said, “From the Magnitude of Allāh is hounouring the elderly person and the memorizer of the Qur’ān without bearing enmity towards him, and honouring a just ruler.”<sup>111</sup>

So from this we can see that by making a firm intention to preserve the Qur’ān by memorizing it (even if it is small portions at a time) it will be the cause of us being honoured as memorizers of the Holy Book and the Family of Allāh.

I ask Allāh to bless us with *hifdh al-Qur’ān* and for us to act upon what is in it. I ask that He raises our rank in Paradise by the Qur’ān, grants us the companionship of the leader of mankind (SAW) and that He blesses us with seeing His Noble Face, indeed He has all the Power to do that. May the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon our Prophet Muḥammad (SAW), his family, his righteous companions, and his pious followers, Ameen.

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<sup>110</sup> Hadeeth verified by the Dārul Iftā of Dārul ‘Ulūm Zakariyyā

<sup>111</sup> Abu Dāwūd - Hadeeth verified by the Dārul Iftā of Dārul ‘Ulūm Zakariyyā

## SECTION THREE

### Starting Memorization of the Holy Qur'ān

#### ◇ 3.1.1 - The Best Time

Imām al-Nawawi (R) says:

The best of recitations is that which is done in the prayer, as for what is outside of the prayer then the best is reciting by night – and the last part of the night is better than the first. Recitation between *Maghrib* and *'Ishā Salāh* is *mustahabb* (recommended). As for recitation during the day, the best thereof is to recite after *Fajr Salāh* although there is no dislike in reciting at any time or reciting during the times when *nafl* (superogatory) prayer is impermissible.<sup>112</sup>

These are the most beneficial times as some of them are periods of peacefulness and contentment of the heart and restfulness, and some of these time periods are not usually considered busy periods of the day for work or activity.

The best time to learn the new lesson is when one's mind is quite relaxed and at ease. Generally this is at the time of after *Fajr Salāh* until the time of *Duhā* and after the *Maghrib Salāh*.

It can also depend on you as an individual. Determine your own concentration period and analyze your typical day. If you see that there are certain regular periods when your mind is more receptive and alert than other times, or there are fewer demands upon you at a certain particular time - then choose this time for Qur'ān. Avoid memorizing late at night or when you are feeling sleepy or tired.

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<sup>112</sup> *al-Darimi* (3329) and *al-Aajuri* (25)

### ♦ 3.1.2 - The Best Place

There is no doubt that the best place for the memorization of Qur'ān and other acts of worship are the houses of Allāh (*masājid*), and after, that places that are clean from *najāsah* (impurities) and far from work (business) and disturbing sounds. It is preferred that the place is without many pictures, decorations, and distractions. The more enclosed the place is - the better - compared with open spaces, trees, and gardens. The atmosphere for light reading is different from the atmosphere for focused memorization because wide spaces, sceneries, and trees, etc distract the mind and focus. Whatever is suitable for light reading is not always appropriate for serious concentration and focus. Memorize in a well-ventilated area with adequate lighting.

### ♦ 3.1.3 - Setting the Scene

Setting the scene for memorization includes the following:

- Self-composure: Have the correct intention in mind and a desire for reward from Allāh.
- *Wudhū`* (ablution): if you already have *wudhū`* then refresh it if possible. It is always best to start with fresh *wudhū`*.
- Comfortable seating: Sit in a manner that you feel comfortable with. Do not sit on a platform that is too hard or too soft. Do not sit leaning or lying against an object. Use a Qur'ān desk of appropriate height. In relation to this, the following has been recorded: "Your eyes follow a specific direction depending on what you are thinking or doing. If you are lying, your eyes go left. If you are remembering something visual, like where you left your keys, your eyes will look upwards. When you memorize, the direction of memorization is right and left, not downwards.

The mistake I see people make is that they put their *mus'haf* low on the ground and then try to memorize. In order to fully harness the power of your mind, you must keep the *mus'haf* at eye level, and not dip your head.<sup>113</sup>

- Face the *Qiblah* (direction of prayer towards *Makkah*) and sit in a state of submission, tranquility, and respect.

You should, says al-Ghazāli (RA), have *wudhū*, be soft-spoken and quiet, face the *Qiblah*, keep your head lowered, not sit in a haughty manner, but sit as you would before your Master.

Al-Nawawi (RA), in his *Kitāb al-Athkār*, adds some more: the mouth should be cleaned thoroughly, the place should be clean, the face should be oriented towards the *Qiblah*, and the body should exhibit humility.<sup>114</sup>

#### ◇ 3.1.4 - The Best Mental Attitude

Your mental condition must be settled and calm. Basically, your mind should be clear and at ease, not caught up in sorting out problems or thinking of what else you have to do. You should be ready to concentrate even if it is for only 15 minutes.

#### ◇ 3.1.5 - Where Do I Start?

It is advisable to start your memorization with the smaller chapters (from *Sūrah al-Nās* upwards) as these chapters are 'easier' and more familiar to you, and they are also often recited in prayer. It will therefore be an ideal start so that you can get into the mode of it. Thereafter, you may either start from *Juz 1* or continue with *Juz 29*, etc.

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<sup>113</sup> *Tips for Memorizing the Qur'ān* by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef

<sup>114</sup> *Way to the Qur'ān*, Participation of the Inner Self by Khurram Murād

## **Memorization of the Qur'ān is Divided Into the Following Three Sections:**

- 3.2 - The new lesson (also known as *sabaq* or *dars*)
- 3.3 - The recent lessons (also known as *sabaq dhor* or back lessons)
- 3.4 - Revision (also known as *murāja'ah* or *dhor*)

### **◇ 3.2 - The New Lesson**

#### **◇ 3.2.1 - Warm-Up**

Begin the “warm up” process (for want of a better expression). It is the preparation where you read over the lesson a few times before starting the memorization process, whilst looking inside the Qur'ān.

This is a fundamental component in preparing the self. You will find that many teachers do not allow the student to memorize the lesson unless the student is absolutely fluent in its recitation. This is to prepare them psychologically and mentally for memorization. Recite accurately, listening to yourself without haste or rush.

#### **◇ 3.2.2 - Focus**

Here begins an important stage; you really have to doubly focus on the verses. Imagine that your eye is a camera lens, and that you want to capture the words with sound and image.

#### **◇ 3.2.3 - Action**

Open your eyes well. Clear your mind from any distraction. Look at the first few words of the lesson and read in an audible voice with *tajweed* (the correct rules of recitation). Read (whilst looking at the words) accurately and with concentration. Read the words three or more times until your mind takes it all in. Close your eyes and picture in your mind the places of the words

and read them. If you succeed in reading them completely without any mistake, then repeat it three or more times.

#### ♦ 3.2.4 - Repeat

Then open your eyes a second time. Read the words from the *mus'haf* (Qur'ān) to confirm the correctness of your memorization. If you are certain that you've memorized it correctly, close your eyes again and read another time.

Once you are completely confident that you have correctly memorized the first few words, you may continue adding the next word (or maybe three or more, depending). Follow the above process until you have reached the end of the verse.

#### ♦ 3.2.5 - Next Verse

After that, move to the verse immediately following it and begin with the same steps as outlined with the previous verse. If you cannot manage the entire verse, then divide it into several parts corresponding to correct and sound stops and normal meanings. Then repeat and repeat many times until it is engraved deeply in your memory.

Sometimes you will encounter certain verses that you already know because they appeared somewhere else in the Qur'ān. You may then continue to the following verse or next part of the verse, as you already know the oft-appearing ones. But before you continue, make double sure you checked each word in the verse because in many cases the verse appear to be the same but has a slight variation from the verses that you memorized in another part of the Qur'ān.

#### ♦ 3.2.6 - Connection Process

Begin now to connect the two verses together. Read the first verse followed by the second. Repeat this

process many times, but no less than three or five times. As you proceed to memorize the rest of the page or *Sûrah* (chapter), you should perfect it by connecting its verses together with your tongue flowing easily through them. You should be able to recite the verses without having to think or go through trouble remembering them. Reciting these verses should become as easy for you as the flow of water. When the verses are well linked and perfected, you should be able to recite them almost as fluently as one recites *Sûrah al-Fātiḥah*. This only occurs through repeating these verses frequently and reciting them often. When you think that you know the lesson, continue to revise it again and again. Repetition will reinforce your memory.

Note: During the process of recall and repetition, be careful not to divert your gaze to objects around you such as written notices on the walls, posters, artwork, décor, or a whirling fan, etc.

### ♦ 3.2.7 - Length of New Lesson

It is advisable to start memorizing small portions at a time (maybe between five lines to half a page) then gradually increasing it to one page. The average lesson of a fulltime *ḥifdh* student is between one and a half to two and a half pages per day. It is best to memorize small portions consistently.

Regardless of the length of the lesson, the *ḥāfidh* should firmly retain the lesson in their mind with its verses well linked together. You should not move to another lesson until you are able to recite the lesson perfectly without making any mistakes.

In this way, you will chisel in your mind an engraving that is impossible to disappear, with the permission of Allāh. Try the steps carefully and you will definitely find that this technique will work for you, *insha'Allāh*.

Note: The above method of memorization is called 'Rote learning', a learning technique that focuses not on understanding but on memorization by means of

repetition. Amongst the other techniques and ways that will assist you in recalling and remembering your lessons are to follow.

### ◊ 3.2.8 - Linking Verses With Associations

This method is known as 'Mnemonic Learning'. Mnemonics rely on associations between easy-to-remember constructs that can be related back to the information that is to be remembered. If, for example, you are memorizing *Sūrah Shams*; after memorizing the verses, create a construction that will cause you to easily remember the sequence of the verses. You may take the English translation of certain keywords and link it with the verses you memorized, eg: Sun (*shams*), Moon (*qamar*), day (*nahār*), night (*lail*), etc. These four words in that order will then be your formula to easily remember the first four verses of *Sūrah Shams*.

This technique can be used to remember verses throughout the Qur'an without difficulty. Instead of using the translation of certain words to create your formula, you may use any type of construct that will assist you in recalling the verses. Some *huffādh* (Arabic plural for memorizers) were successful in memorizing and remembering the verses in accordance with numbers. One of them is Ustādh Maḥdi Fāṭimiyān of Irān. He explained (when he was asked on how he managed to memorize it in that way) that when he memorized the Qur'an, he created his formula with the verse number, chapter number, and page number, which he linked to the verse he is memorizing. Each verse would then equal a verse number, chapter number, and page number. So when he recites the Qur'an, he calls up his formula in his mind (the same way you would picture the position of the words when you recite from memory) and that would aid him in remembering the verses and its sequence. The amazing part of learning it like that is that if someone would ask you the verse number, you

would also be able to give the chapter number and the page number - or any other way around!

### ♦ 3.2.9 - Writing It Out

You may well remember that during your school days if you did something wrong, your teacher might have asked you to write 'I will not do this – and - this again' one hundred times on the board. While the anguish that your hand and arm went through seemed fit enough for the wrong you did, the wisdom behind it was that you would really remember never to do the wrong (ever) again.

Putting information in writing does aid in the memorization thereof as a result of the effort that gets put in during the process. Writing out verses of the Qur'an as part of *hifdh* may seem unconventional or unusual, but it is a common practice in Sudān and other African countries.

### ♦ 3.2.10 - Cramming

You will find that some students do exceptionally well in reciting their new lessons after memorizing it but are not able to recall it as effeciently when the lesson becomes part of their back lessons. This is because the information has been memorized and stored in the short term memory. In academics it is called cramming; working intensively to absorb large volumes of informational material in short amounts of time. It is often done by students in preparation for upcoming exams. It also occurs when you are studying for a particular timeframe, eg, to know your lesson for tomorrow morning. Cramming is discouraged by educators because the hurried coverage of material tends to result in the poor long-term retention of it. Short-term memory is where you put everyday information that is not really worth remembering. Only when you make an effort to remember something repeatedly do you transfer that information into the other kind of memory - long-term memory. This is the type of memory used

when we want to store information in a more permanent way. This is either done by linking memorable information (like associating it to events, people, your surroundings, etc) or by repetition.

Ever try to remember a new phone number? How many times do you have to repeat it before you remember it? If you're learning something new it's harder to remember. It takes constant review and going over to remember specific information before you can actually retain it. Once something is transferred from short-term to long-term memory, we say it has been memorized.<sup>115</sup>

### ◇ 3.2.11 - Chunking

According to some mind scientists, one's working memory has a limit of more or less seven items. In other words, a person can only productively work on memorizing up to seven items at a time.

Subsequent research has shown that learning proceeds more easily if a large list is divided into chunks of about five to seven items and each chunk (portion) is mastered before the next chunk is taken on.

So when you learn or revise a group or 'chunk' of verses, repeat them over and over until it is mastered and successfully memorized. While it is relatively easy to master a single letter or a one-line verse, it is obviously more difficult to master a page-long verse or several lines (at one time). So this is where the idea of chunking can help you in your memorization.<sup>116</sup>

Regardless of whatever method or combination of methods you use to memorize and retain the Qur'an, remember that you must be consistent in it. If you struggle the first few times, guaranteed the next time you will find it easier. Nothing will be achieved without effort.

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<sup>115</sup> Taken from [www.wikipedia.com/cramming](http://www.wikipedia.com/cramming)

<sup>116</sup> *An Applied Linguistics Approach to Improving the Memorization of the Holy Qur'an* by Muhammad Yāseen Alfī. King Saūd University, Saūdi Arabia

Allāh, Most High said, “Indeed, with (after) hardship (will be) ease.” [Sûrah Inshirāh: 4].

Do not think too much continually about your lesson before you recite it. This may cause unnecessary stress and frustrations. Try to be as relaxed as possible before you recite it to a teacher.

### ♦ 3.3 - The Recent Lessons

All the lessons that were freshly memorized are to be linked together as ‘back lessons’ or *sabaq dhor*. This portion, which may range from three quarter to one - and - a quarter *Juz*, must be revised and recited every day without fail.

Whenever you completed the memorization of a lesson, that specific lesson will automatically become part of your back lessons. A good method of learning your back lessons is as follows:

Revise (learn) your most recent lesson five times, then you go over the previous lesson four times, the lesson before it three times, the lesson before it two times and the lesson before that can be revised once. Try to do this on a daily basis. It may be that some lessons will require more revising in order for you to know it fluently.<sup>117</sup>

If you made mistakes during the memorization of your lesson, make sure that you have re-learnt it correctly when you recite your back lessons.

### ♦ 3.4 - The Revision

Allāh's Messenger (SAW) said, "Verily, the example of a possessor (in memory) of the Qur’ān is like a possessor of tied camels. If he watches over them carefully, he

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<sup>117</sup> Example taken from ‘*Adābul Muta’allimeen* - Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul ‘Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

would keep them; if he lets them break loose, they would run away from him."<sup>118</sup>

No sooner would a memorizer leave what they finished memorizing, even for a short while, than it starts slipping away from them – they quickly forget it. Thus, it is necessary for one to follow up what one has memorized in a constant and careful manner.

A *hāfidh* of the Qur'ān should have an allocated portion of revision that is consistently recited every day. Some students are allowed to recite only a quarter or half of a *Juz* per day (or portions of it known as *maqra's*) at their *hifdh* institutions. I do not agree with that, nor do I concur that students must first complete the Qur'ān with new lesson and do the revision afterwards.

The most ideal amount of revision to be recited every day, in my opinion, is five *aj'zā* (Arabic plural for *Juz*). If that is not possible, then three, or at least two *aj'zā* should be recited daily.

Know that revising the Qur'ān does not stop when you have completed its memorization - revision is a lifetime commitment! If your Qur'ān is not strong at the time of completing, it is necessary that you immediately join a revision program. Do not take any chances, for if you do not make your Qur'ān solid at this important stage, you will have a problem in retaining it for the rest of your life.

A certain scholar was asked: "How did you manage to retain and preserve this knowledge, whereas your companions have forgotten it." He said, "My companions distanced themselves from healthy revision after studying, whereas I persisted with it (revision)."<sup>119</sup>

You may revise portions of the Qur'ān during your prayers, whilst sitting in the mosque, sitting in the bus or car, etc.

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<sup>118</sup> *Mishkātul Maṣābeeh* - 2189

<sup>119</sup> 'Adābul Muta'allimeen - Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul 'Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

Mufti Sa‘eed Aḥmad related the following regarding persistence with revision:

After lessons, if I could not find any student to make revision with, I would sit in front of the wall and then, addressing the wall, I would repeat my lessons. I would imagine that my addressee had not yet understood the lesson, thus I would repeat it. In this manner, I would repeat the lesson several times until I would memorize it.<sup>120</sup>

Only with constant revision, and consistent watch, would you retain what you have memorized of the Qur’ān and protect it from slipping away.

#### ♦ 3.4.1 - Making Mistakes

Mistakes are unavoidable - they are bound to occur. When you make a mistake during your recitation, make a note in the margin (neatly) so when you revise the *Juz* again, you may learn it properly. You may use colored pencils to indicate the type of mistakes, example: red for tajweed and green for memorization mistakes, etc. Try not to make the same mistakes again.

To decrease the rate of mistakes you make, you may set a limit of allowed mistakes per *Juz* or per quarter of the *Juz* - if you make more than the ‘allowed’ amount of mistakes, then you will either repeat the weak quarter or the entire *Juz*.

#### ♦ 3.4.2 - Watching for Analogous Verses of the Qur’ān (*Mutashābihāt*)

You will find that various parts of the Qur’ān resemble each other in meaning, wording, or repetition of verses. The Qur’ān consists of more than six thousand verses. Of those, approximately two thousand carry some

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<sup>120</sup> ‘*Adābul Muta‘allimeen* - Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul ‘Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

sort of resemblance to others. The resemblance varies from total equivalent, to a difference in one letter, a word, or two, or more.

The best way to master this element it is to take special note of the resembling verse and indicate the place of the corresponding verse in the margin. If, for example, you are reciting *Juz* 19 and you encounter a verse similar to a verse in *Juz* 1, you may neatly write in the margin: ‘*Juz* 1’ or *Juz* 1 and 7’ (if it appears in *Juz* 7 as well), then you page to the verse in *Juz* 1 and you write in the margin ‘*Juz* 19’ or *Juz* 19 and 7’. When you recite the verse of *Juz* 19 from memory, try to picture all the verses resembling the one you are reciting in your mind while you are reciting it. In this way, you will strengthen your alertness with this regard.

A good *hāfidh* of the Qur’ān should direct special attention to the verses that resemble each other in wording. The excellence of your memorization depends on the watchfulness of these verses.

### ◇ 3.4.3 - Mastering ‘Confusing’ Sections in the Qur’ān

Reading specialists agree that reading passages can differ greatly in the degree of their difficulty or ‘readability’. In fact, written material can actually be measured for structural, semantic, topical, and stylistic ease or difficulty. This degree of readability can also be seen in the Qur’ān.

A study that was conducted to identify which type of verses is normally easier to remember or forget revealed the following: short verses from short chapters were the ones that most students were able to memorize most easily. Following this, were stories of the Prophets (AS). The verses that the students memorized least well were (especially) long verses and verses containing resembling verses.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *An Applied Linguistics Approach to Improving the Memorization of the Holy Qur’ān* by Muhammad Yāseen Alfī. King Saūd University, Saūdi Arabia

These sections are usually more confusing or complex for the non-Arabic speaking memorizer to retain and recall correctly. Mastering this component is actually a challenge for the *hāfidh*.

An example of these types of sections can be found in the second and third quarter of *Juz 19* - the '*Kathabats*'. An effective way to learn these parts is to read over its meaning. In this particular case you will find that the Qur'ān speaks about the former nations and the various punishments and retributions that were meted out to them as a result of their actions and disobedience to the Messengers (AS) of their time.

Divide the sections in accordance with its meaning (in this case, it will be the story of each Messenger (AS)) and learn them separately. Once you are familiar with the first 'story', you may move on to the story regarding the people of the next Messenger (AS) whilst taking careful note of the similarities and differences between the verses in the two stories. In the same way you can compare it with the following story and so forth. Link the stories together while you work out a formula that you can use to remember the sequence and content of each story; for example: your formula in this case may be '*Ebrāheem* (RA), *Nūh* (RA), *Hūd* (RA), *Sālih* (RA), etc. Before you recite the section, you will call up the formula in your mind and this will allow you to remember each story in its sequence and avoid confusing the verses between the stories.

Another example of a part in the Qur'ān that students of Qur'ān find particularly very challenging is found in the last quarter of the fourth *Juz* (*Sūrah Nisā*, verse 11- *Yūseekumullā*).

Again, select keywords from the text that will allow you to remember the rest of the verses, eg:

*Yûsee, Yûseena, Tûsûna, Yûsâ.* Learn/ memorize the verses and associate it with the above keywords so that these words can be the formula to the recalling of each section of the verses.

Many times, the secret to retaining the confusing section successfully is to ascertain the ‘pattern’ of the verses and to associate links that will remind you of the correct places and sequence of the verses in the particular sections.

There are times, however that there is no pattern to be found and the only way to learn it is to create your own by means of associating it with links. An example of this is from *Sûra Nûr*, verse 61 (*laisa ‘alal a’mâ*).

Read the translation of the verses - it contains a list of people (family members) who you are not allowed to marry. This can be very confusing for the non-Arabic speaker to memorize. Link each word (mother, father, etc) to the equivalent person in your own family. When you recite/ memorize the words, picture each member of your family at the time of reciting. This will make the recalling process much easier, insha’Allâh.

#### ◇ 3.4.4 - Learning Forgotten Juz

It is often said that learning a *Juz* for a second time is more difficult than it was the first time. The person who forgot parts of the Holy Qur’ân is in a very dangerous situation. They may be counted among those who abandoned the Qur’ân.

The moment you sense that a certain portion that you memorized is becoming weak, try to focus on that portion immediately. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will be to re-memorize.

Depending on how much you remember of the *Juz*, break it up into smaller portions - maybe quarters, three pages, etc. Now you read the first page whilst looking

into the Qur'ān. If you happen to be stuck at one or more places while reciting, then repeat the page until you can read it absolute fluently without any hesitations. Do not rush. Close your eyes now and recite it aloud to yourself. If you cannot manage a whole page, then start with half of the page. Recite again whilst looking inside the Qur'ān and see if you made any mistakes. Repeat until you know it perfectly. Move on to the next page and repeat the same procedure until you covered all the pages in the portion. Now you link the pages together. First read over the entire portion by looking inside the Qur'ān and then try reciting it from memory. Ask a friend to listen to you, if possible. This should assist you in recapping the forgotten *Juz*, *insha'Allāh*.

#### ◇ 3.4.5 - The Golden Secret for Becoming a Good Hāfidh

The Golden Secret for becoming an outstanding memorizer of the Holy Qur'ān is to endeavour to recite the Qur'ān as much as possible.

The ultimate goal and pleasure of a *hāfidh* is to become a 'walking Qur'ān' - a person who can recite the Qur'an easily from memory while walking, driving, or even in his sleep!

The recitation of the Qur'ān will come so natural to you that you will only realize afterwards that you have been reciting so many portions of the Qur'ān correctly while doing something else.

This would also mean, that when you attain this type of fluency in your Qur'ān and when some of the thousands of resembling verses from the Qur'ān - two or more of it comes to mind, you will automatically choose the one fitting the portion of the Qur'ān you are reciting.

There can be no better feeling than this.

## SECTION FOUR

### Preparing to Recite the Qur'ān in *Tarāweeh*

All *hufādh* know that reciting the Qur'ān on a public platform is not easy (especially the first time). It takes guts, confidence, composure, and self-confidence. It sometimes happens that when you come up for the second unit (*raka'āt*) of *ṣalāh*, you go blank - you can't remember the last verse that was recited in the first unit. Or while you are reciting, you're tongue slips and everyone in the *masjid* competes to rectify you (especially *Sūrah Yāseen* and the other famous chapters). Or sometimes you get so confused in your recitation that you cannot move forward, yet you know the lesson perfectly. From the worst things that also happen are that you get stuck and no one is able to rectify you. Yet, the public thinks it is so easy!

The leading of prayers can be an extremely daunting or intimidating task for the *hāfidh*.

Professor Muḥammad Alfi describes the scenario as follows:

A prayer leader, for example, may be under severe strain and tension, not only because of the size of the group (he can reach as many as a million individuals or beyond) praying behind him, but because of the emotional build-up before and throughout prayers, especially in the month of *Ramadhān*. There are of course other problems, for example, volunteers praying behind who may erroneously prompt the leader without invitation, thinking that the prayer leader had made a mistake. Occasionally other interruptions occur, children interrupting, time intervals required by the prayer ritual when the prayer leader has to stop his recitation and pick up again from where he left off, and so many distractions from our high

tech world, such as watches beeping, cell phones ringing, etc. In spite of (this), we find that neither our present curriculum in teaching, learning, and memorization of the Quran, nor our continually changing time-demanding lifestyles, prepares our learners -- nor does it lead to the automaticity level expected or required.<sup>122</sup>

#### ♦ 4.1 - Preparing Your Lesson

The preparation to lead *Tarāweeh* should not start during *Ramadhān*, but months before. Make sure that you know your Qur'ān solid by the time of *Ramadhān*. Try to get a partner who can listen to your lessons as if you are reciting in *Tarāweeh Salāh* - you recite whilst he stands behind you, ready to correct you if you err.

Divide the portion of Qur'ān that you will recite in accordance with the amount of units (*raka'āts*) you have. Always keep the recitation in the second unit shorter than that of the first unit – e.g., if you are going to recite one and half page in the first unit, then recite maybe half page in the second. Take special note of the verses from which you are going to resume your recitations from, or arrange the lesson for each unit to such verses that you will easily remember as 'starting verses'. Now read over/learn the lesson for each unit individually. Or you may read the lessons of every two units together.

Close the Qur'ān and stand as if you are reciting *Tarāweeh*. Make sure you are in a place void of distractions and noises. Recite as loud as you can whilst picturing the place of each individual word in your mind. Perform all the actions of *salāh* if you want (*rukū'*, *sujūd*, etc). Do this until you are completely confident regarding your lessons. If it is possible, try to perform some of your preparations at the *masjid* where you are going to lead

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<sup>122</sup> *An Applied Linguistics Approach to Improving the Memorization of the Holy Qur'ān* by Muhammad Yāseen Alfī. King Saūd University, Saūdi Arabia

the prayer so that you can get used to the environment and the sound system before hand.

#### ◇ 4.2 - Eating Discipline

Be balanced with your eating at the time of *iftār* (breaking fast). Beware of gas (fizzy) cool drinks, fatty and oily foods, and foods with excessive coconut content (or foods that might get stuck in your throat), etc. Do not overeat. Drink some honey-water before you leave for the *masjid*.

#### ◇ 4.3 - At the Time of *Tarāweeh*

Be relaxed on your way to the *masjid*. Do not stress over whether you know your lesson, or how many people will be in the *masjid*, or what if so-and-so is there or not there.

The time for you to lead the *salāh* has approached. Step calmly into the prayer area, and when everyone is settled, you proclaim: “*Allāhu Akbar*”. From this moment you close your mind to your surroundings. You start reciting, knowing that Allāh, the Most Great, is listening to you. Adapt your voice to the sound system without raising your voice excessively (as in screaming), or too softly that it becomes inaudible or muffled. Stay calm, confident, collected, and very importantly: be yourself. Do not imagine you are *Imām* so- and- so who is reading in front of the Holy *Ka’bah* with millions of people following you. Recite the Qur’ān in the tune and manner with which you always recite it. Take note of the rules of *Tajweed* and do not rush. Pause after you recite *Sūrah Fātiḥa* and picture the lesson that you are about to recite. Do not recite until you can picture the words in the places that they appear in the *musḥaf* as if it is in front of you.

#### ◇ 4.4 - What Happens If I Get Stuck?

It is natural to make mistakes- everyone knows that. There is a difference between the mistakes of someone who has memorized the Qur'ān expertly and the mistakes of the one who is taking a chance on the *mussallāh*. Everyone knows that too.

So when you err or get stuck, pause and listen attentively to the *Imām* or any other person correcting you. Again, take your time. Listen carefully until the person has completed the verse as you try to picture it in your mind. If you are unable to comprehend him or if the verse is unclear to you, wait for him to repeat it again. Continue in a composed manner.

If you still are unable to manage to carry on with the recitation, try to go back a few verses and attempt the verse again. If that does not work, recite any short chapter, (eg, *Sūrah Ikhlās*), and continue into the *rukū'*. Commence again from the 'starting verse' (or any other convenient place) in the next unit (*raka'āt*).

So, in short, ease, speed, reading skill, and keeping your cool are absolutely important when you prepare yourself to lead the congregation in *salāh*.

## SECTION FIVE

### Guidelines on Becoming a *Qāri* (Reciter)

There are many recommendations and advice as guidelines for a person who wants to become a proficient public reciter. Talented reciters normally develop their own 'home grown' habits and techniques, which varies from person to person. The following are potential steps that will assist the up-and-coming *Qāri* (we assume that the potential *Qāri* has completed, or is busy completing the memorization of the Qur'ān, and is aware of the responsibilities and expectations that goes along with it).

#### ◇ 5.1 - Intention

Before we go into the finer details of becoming a *Qāri*, it is of utmost importance that you check and test your intention for reciting the Qur'ān.

My dear brothers and sisters, I have seen and experienced many reciters who (apparently) recite the Qur'ān solely to gain their mention among the people and to increase their worldly gains and status thereof. There is a growing trend amongst the *Qurrā* (Arabic plural of reciter) around the world that if they are requested to go out and recite the Qur'ān at a function, they will first lay down certain 'requirements'. Amongst the common 'necessities' are: the host must first agree to pay the fee determined by the reciter (the charge can go up to \$2,000 US dollars per recital)<sup>123</sup>, the *Qāri* has to travel (fly) on first-class or business class, his choice of accommodation, meals, and transport must be met, etc.

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<sup>123</sup> The payment of salaries has always been a debatable subject. My humble opinion is that those persons who specialize in the sciences of the Qur'ān and subsequently teach and recites it to others as a full time occupation whilst not receiving any form of income, they are allowed to receive a decent salary in lue of their services to the Muslim community. This salary should be enough to cover their basic needs as required - and not like the type of extravagant amounts as charged by some of today's Qur'ān reciters and teachers.

Other than this, they further demand that they be treated like royalty and honoured and respected as such.

Reciters of the Qur'an (and all believers) should remember that honour, status, and respect should not be sought after in this world, nor should they expect it from the people. All respect, honour, and praise is for Allāh alone, and He promises to elevate and raise the status of the true Muslims in the Hereafter. As for those who seeks and expects it from the people in this world, Allāh promises a swift and severe retribution.

*Rasūlullāh* (SAW) has said: "Every action is based on its intention and every person will receive according to their intention."<sup>124</sup>

If a person performs an action with a good intention, solely for the pleasure of Allāh, only then will they receive the reward for that action. If there is any worldly motive, then they will be deprived of any rewards.

Allāh mentions in a *Hadeeth Qudsi*: "That person who joins Me with someone else (in his intention) when doing any action, I separate myself from that person as well as the work he is doing. I accept only those actions which are done solely for Me."<sup>125</sup>

In one *Hadeeth*, it is mentioned that in *Jahannam* there is a valley from which *Jahannam* itself seeks protection from four hundred times daily. This valley is especially for the *Qurrā* who read to show off.<sup>126</sup>

Yazeed ibn Abi *Habeeb* (RA) mentions that Rasūlullāh (SAW) was asked: "What is a hidden desire?" He replied: "It is when a person seeks knowledge with the desire lurking in his heart that people must praise him."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *'Adābul Muta'allimeen* - Moulānā *Aḥmad Bāndwi*, Published by Jamiatul 'Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

## ◇ 5.2 - Adhering to an Established Qur'ān Reciter

The ultimate and best way to learn the art of public recital is to seek guidance from a recognized and qualified *Shaikh* who has experience or familiarity with the sciences of *Qirā'āt*. The *Shaikh* would be able to harness your natural strengths and talent while guiding you to overcome your shortcomings and weaknesses.

## ◇ 5.3 - Listening and Imitating the Famous and Established Qur'ān Reciters

Acquaint yourselves with the names and styles of prominent *Qurrā*, both locally and abroad. Try to collect as many recordings of them as possible. The recordings of most of the prominent *Qurrā* are available for download from the Internet. These reciters have already established their unique ways of reciting through many years of experience. Imitating the recitals of the renowned *Qurrā* makes it much easier for you as a beginner to benefit and learn from their experience whereby you can eventually grow in developing your own style.

## ◇ 5.4 - Choose Your Reciter Carefully

Avoid imitating a *Qāri* just because you are awestruck by his recitation. Your favourite reciter (that you enjoy listening to) is not necessarily the ideal reciter for you to imitate. Choose a *Qāri* with whom you can identify with in terms of voice, breath, and style - a *Qāri* whose voice capability, length of breath and style is in your range.

## ◇ 5.5 - How to Imitate a Reciter

Listen to a few recordings of the reciter and select a recording that is short and easiest for you to follow. Play the recording wherever you go, whether you are in the room, car, work, etc, until you are familiar with the *Qāri's* voice. Imitate one verse at a time. Listen to

yourself, and play the recording again. You can even record yourself and match your recital to that of the *Qāri*. Continue in this manner until you have completed the whole 'piece'. It is advisable to have a partner (who has an ear for *Qirā'āt*) to listen and assist you while you are practicing.

#### ♦ 5.6 - Adhering to One Reciter at a Time

Now that you are able to imitate one 'piece' of the reciter and you have confidently recited it in public a few times, you may continue with another 'piece'. *Qurrā* generally are starkly different to each other in terms of style and recitation technique. So in order to get best results from your recitation, it is recommended that you follow one *Qāri* at a time until you manage to master a number of recitations of the *Qāri*.

#### ♦ 5.7 - Moving On

You may now try to imitate other reciters until you are eventually able to create your own 'pieces'. It takes years of practice in order to establish yourself as a proficient *Qāri*. Reciting on public platforms will aid you tremendously in becoming an experienced reciter. Try to recite in gatherings along with other *Qurrā*. It is common that the styles of the various *Qurrā* rub of on each other when they listen to each other or share experiences with one another.

#### ♦ 5.8 - Following a Healthy Lifestyle

As already mentioned before, it is highly essential for a *hāfidh* of the Qur'ān to follow a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle in order to assist them in the memorization of the Qur'ān. In addition to this, the *Qāri* needs to focus on certain elements that will optimise their recital skill, performance, and technique.

Many *Qurrā* are disciplined and have constrained themselves to very specific diets. The strictness thereof

varies from reciter to reciter, but among the typical practices are: no cold beverages, to eat at least one to two hours before recitation, no strong or spicy foods, to drink lots of water, etc. Some of the Egyptian *Qurrā* are known to actively participate in sporting activities like swimming, wrestling, and bodybuilding. In short, it is fundamental that the vocal cords, lungs, blood flow, body, and mind of the *Qāri* are always in an optimal condition for him to be able to recite on his best.

### ♦ 5.9 - *Maqāmāt*

Whilst there is much debate regarding the origin of *Maqāmāt* (Arabic melodic tones), its implementation, and the permissibility to use it for Qur’ān recitation, it is known that the art has existed for centuries in the Arab and Middle Eastern cultures (sometimes by different names) and that it is also used in religious (nasheed, *ibtihāl*, etc) and non-religious chants as well.

A search on the Internet resource site, Wikipedia, reveals the following definition of *maqāmāt*:

The Arabic *maqām* is a melody type. Each *maqām* is built on a scale, and carries a tradition that defines its habitual phrases, important notes, etc. Generally speaking, each *maqām* evokes a different emotion in the listener.

The use of *maqāmāt* is prevalent in the recitations of most of the established *Qurrā* throughout the world - especially the *Qurrā* from Egypt, Irān, Irāq, Malaysia, and Indonesia, who use these tunes to enhance the recitation by expressing the meanings of what is being recited. For example, should a reciter wish to recite a verse pertaining to *jahannam*, or the punishment of Allāh, he would recite in a sad tune (*maqām*). If he were to recite verses describing the bounties of Allāh, he would recite in it a tune that would compliment the meaning of his recitation.

It is also known that most of the *Qurrā* learn the *maqāmāt* by listening and without with the assistance of musical instruments or in music classes.

#### ♦ 5.10 – The Beard Issue

The reciters of the Qur’ān are flagbearers of Islām, inheritors of the Prophets (AS) and the protectors of Divine Revelation. It is only appropriate that they should follow the ways, lifestyle, and mannerisms of the Prophets (AS), and the noble predecessors (R) in their inner and outer manifestations.

The wearing of a beard is a hallmark of every Prophet (AS) who walked the earth, and it is a tradition highly recommended by the Prophet (SAW) in numerous *ahādeeth*.

The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: “Trim the moustache, allow the beard to grow and oppose the fire worshippers.”<sup>128</sup>

On the other hand, those reciters who do not wear beards and who do not (apparently) manifest the outer qualities (in terms of dress, etc) should not be shunned or be judged upon negatively because of their external appearances.

Mufti Radhā-ul Haq (one of the most senior authorities of Islamic Jurispudence in South Africa) rendered the following *fatwah* in relation to the topic:

It is best to listen to the recitation of a *Qāri* who is pious and practices on *deen*, so that people may take effect from his piety and purity. However, it will also be permissible to listen to the recitation of the *Qāri* in question. It will not be impermissible to listen to his recitation because of the absence of a beard.

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<sup>128</sup> Sahih Muslim, 622

Furthermore, regarding seating him on the *mimbar* and then welcoming and praising him being against the teachings of *Sharee'ah* according to some, citing the *hadeeth* as proof: "When a sinner is praised, Allāh becomes angry and His throne shakes", can be answered as follows:

1. The *hadeeth* is extremely weak<sup>129</sup>
2. Even if the *hadeeth* is accepted to be sound, it will be difficult to extract the meaning that it is a sin to praise a good quality found in a sinner<sup>130</sup>

A *qāri* is normally praised and honoured for their excellence in reading and not for their wrongdoings and shaving his beard. There is a principle in Islamic Law that states when a ruling is directed towards a person based on a certain action (and circumstances and corresponding elements) of his, then the reason for that ruling will be that action, i.e. if that action ceases to exist, the ruling also becomes null and void as well. Similarly in this case if a person is praised because of his wrong, then this angers Allāh and causes His throne to shake.

Furthermore, there are numerous examples contained in the *ahādeeth*, where a sinner or even a disbeliever was praised and honoured because of his good qualities (amongst those cited in the *fatwah* are):

1. It is mentioned under the commentary of the *hadeeth* that when a noble person of a group

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<sup>129</sup> *Faidhul Qadeer*, Volume 1, page 441 / *Takhreejul Irāqi 'alal Ihyā*, Volume 3, page 156

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume 1, page 441

comes to you, then honour him. Excluding a sinner or disbeliever from this text is not correct and a sign of ignorance.<sup>131</sup>

2. *Nabee* (SAW) honoured Hadhrat Adi bin Hātīm (RA) prior to him accepting Islām because of him being the son of Hātīm Tāi.<sup>132</sup>

3. *Nabee* (SAW) addressed Hercules as “The great leader of Rome” in his letter to him.<sup>133</sup>

4. It is mentioned in a *hadeeth* that Allāh assists and helps *deen* by means of a sinful person.<sup>134</sup> This *hadeeth* clearly elucidates the fact that work of *deen* can emerge from a person who is not pious.

In essence, it will be permissible and sometimes better to praise these *Qurrā*, who shave their beards, because of them being experts in the field of recitation of the Qur’ān, and because of other good actions they may be doing. It is possible that because of this respect and honour, they become practicing Muslims. And Allāh alone knows best.”<sup>135</sup>

## ♦ 5.11 – Inspirational Advice from Prominent Egyptian *Qurrā*<sup>136</sup>

The bounty of listening to the Glorious Qur’ān is from amongst the greatest bounties that Allāh has bestowed upon the Muslims. The ‘*Ahlul Qur’ān*’- Family of the Qur’ān (amongst them the reciters, memorizers, and scholars) are the best and choicest from all the creation.

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume 1, page 241

<sup>132</sup> *Seerat ibn Hishām*, Volume 4, 580

<sup>133</sup> *Bukhāri*, Volume 1, page 5

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume 3, Page 604

<sup>135</sup> Dārul ‘Ulūm Zakariyyā, Faculty of Iftā- 5/11/2008

<sup>136</sup> All quotations in this section was taken (with the kind permission) from *Qurrā of Egypt* by Moulānā, Qāri ‘Abdullāh Is’haq, jointly published by Zam Zam Publishers and Madrassah ‘Arabia Islāmiā.

Especially those who have encompassed all the rules of recitation and possesses good character as well as beautiful and amazing presentation.

The Egyptian reciters are known for their prominent and leading status with regards to the excellent recitation of the Holy Qur'ān. We might therefore be further encouraged on our journey of the Qur'ān by exploring their ways and following their valuable advice.

#### ◇ 5.11.1 – Sincerity in Recitation

Shaikh 'Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) was once asked as to how he inspires the people with his recitation. He replied that why should it not be so, if the reciter reads from the heart directly towards the heart of the listener.

Shaikh Sayyid Mutawalli mentions, “the real reason for my fame is that I keep Allāh in front of me whilst reciting His Book. When a reciter is sincere for the sake of Allāh, the Qur'ān, and for the people, then (only) then will he find acceptance.”

#### ◇ 5.11.2 – Reciting for the pleasure of Allāh

Shaikh Aḥmad 'Ali Banna (R) said regarding his father, Shaikh Maḥmūd 'Ali Banna (R):

My late father used to read from his heart, purely for the pleasure of Allāh. He once went to Germany where very few people used to gather in the mosques to listen to his recitation. One day, an Egyptian (there) asked him: “O Shaikh, we have seen you reading in front of thousands of people back in Cairo, and here in Germany the numbers of Muslims are very small so the crowds are small too. How do you feel about this?” He replied: “I have a message to convey from Allāh. Whether there is one person or a thousand, it makes no difference to me.

Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiq (R) did not leave out any Arab or Islamic country, or any such place where there are Muslims, but that he goes there to benefit the population with the gift of the Glorious Qur’ān that Allāh has bestowed upon him. He was conscious of Allāh when reciting, he feared Allāh, and recited the Qur’an as it ought to be recited. His aim was always to please Allāh before pleasing the people.

### ♦ 5.11.3 – Attachment to the Service of Qur’ān

Shaikh Maḥmūd Khaleel Husri (R) was so attached and dedicated to the Glorious Qur’ān that towards the end of his life, he bequeathed that one third of his wealth be given towards the service and propagation of the Glorious Qur’ān.

Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiq (R) mentions: “I thought that if I tread on the path of the Glorious Qur’ān, I will become a *Qāri* from amongst the *Qurrā*. Therefore, I handed myself over to the Qur’ān and served it like how a slave would serve his master.”

### ♦ 5.11.4 – Reciting for Heavenly Rewards

Shaikh as-Sayyed Siddeeq al-Minshāwi (R) (the father of Shaikh Muḥammad Siddeeq Al Minshāwi (R)) neither agreed nor accepted any remuneration for his recitals during his entire life.

He once recited at a commemoration ceremony of a prominent person of Qina (in Egypt). As he was departing at the end of the commemoration, the brother of the deceased placed something in his pocket. Shaikh Siddeeq did not bother to see what it was. Upon reaching his home, he emptied his pockets and found that it was a ‘Mallim’, (a Mallim is the smallest monetary unit in Egypt, = 1/1000 of a pound). Very soon the person who put this into his pocket came to his house seeking his forgiveness for this terrible mistake. He

explained that he had a gold coin with this small coin in his pocket and mistakenly placed the wrong coin in the pocket of the Shaikh. Shaikh Siddeeq refused to accept the gold coin, and recited a verse from the Qur’ān- the meaning of which is: “Say, nothing comes to us but which Allāh has written for us.

The great *Qurrā* of the past are known for showing tremendous respect to their teachers.

From close observation, Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) was known to be a very charitable man. One of the famous *Qurrā* once confided that Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (used to) recite the Qur’ān every Friday at the Imām Shāfi’ee Masjid. He never accepted remuneration, but was obliged to accept the few pounds offered by the *Masjid* as a gesture of gratitude for his invaluable service. The Shaikh secretly distributed the sum amongst the poor and often pays further sums for the microphone and the electric system of the *Masjid*.

#### ◇ 5.11.5 – Regarding the Character of a Reciter

It is recorded about the character and habits of Shaikh Mustafā Ismā‘eel, that:

He was a legend, a gentle, soft natured, and soft-spoken person. He possessed a very high character. He maintained his self-esteem. He used to say ‘It is very important that a reciter of the Glorious Qur’ān looks after his self-esteem and honour’. He was great amongst the greatest of people, yet very humble. He was a very systematic and particular person. He always dressed neatly and in an orderly manner. He had expensive taste and always used the best of things. He used to quote the verse from the Qur’ān: (“But as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim it”- Sūrah Dhuhā)

and say: “I do not mise on myself, I spend to my hearts desire.”

The *Shaikh* of *al-Azhar*, Shaikh Muḥammad Sayyid Tanṭāwi said regarding Shaikh Abdul Bāsiṭ (R):

I used to benefit generally from him because he was a man of knowledge. He was obviously a master in *tajweed* and *makhārij*. His face was always radiant and pleasant. He used to spend a lot in charity, secretly and openly. He possessed the most wonderful character.

Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) was a very modest, kind, simple, and a softhearted man. He never forgot his friends however rich or poor they may be. Fame, fortune, and adulation of millions and the honours showered on him by kings and princes of the Muslim people did not change this great man. He remained a pious, humble, and lovable person.

Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiqi (R) mentions:

I have many memories with Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R). I travelled with him to many countries of the world. He always portrayed the picture that he was travelling to me, whereas I used to be travelling with him. This was due to his noble character. He was a very civilized and humble man with a good character.

#### ♦ 5.11.6 – Reciting the Qur’ān Perfectly

Al Hājj ‘Abdul Hameed, the brother of Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) mentions: “Amongst the things that urged Shaikh ‘Abdul Basit to recite the Qur’ān was the affection and love of the people towards him when he recited the Qur’ān with perfect pronunciation and a sweet voice.”

### ◊ 5.11.7 – Relationship with their Teachers

Shaikh Maḥmūd ‘Ali Banna (R) mentioned: “Actually, the present day system of nurturing has affected this generation and has spoilt them greatly. This nurturing is different from the nurturing we received. When we saw our teacher in the street, we would go down the other street so that he should not see us. We had a lot of respect and awe for our teachers. This kind of awe makes a person stand out later in life.”

Shaikh Sayyid Mutawalli said:

When I was twenty years old, my fame had spread to all the neighbouring provinces. I used to be invited to recite in the commemoration programs of great people with other famous *Qurrā*. Not once did I feel overwhelmed when reciting with the great *Qurrā*. This was because I had learnt at the hands of one of the most famous *Hifdh* teachers, and that was Shaikha Mariam (RA). I am still proud of the fact that she was my teacher.”

### ◊ 5.11.8 – Relationship with Other Reciters

Shaikh Mustafā Ismā‘eel (R) respected his elders and showed love to those younger than him. He never uttered any such words by which a rift or friction would be caused between his contemporaries. Whenever anyone asked him about them, he would say: “May Allāh increase the sustenance of everyone.”

Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) had a good relationship with all his peers and had nothing but kind words for all. He was very fond of Shaikh Muḥammad Rif‘at (R). He also developed a good relationship with Shaikh Mustafā Ismā‘eel (R), loving his mannerism and admiring his style.

Shaikh Muḥammad Maḥmūd Tablāwi said:

My relationship with the late Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) was a good one. There were many

occasions when I was invited to a gathering with Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt. His attitude towards me was always warm and welcoming. He used to give me preference and would ask me to recite before him. I used to decline and insist that he read first. He would then finish off in adequate time so that I may have a fair chance to recite. All this was because Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt knew that he had established himself in the hearts of people and that Allāh is the giver of sustenance- and no one can steal from another person’s sustenance.

Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiq (R) used to imitate the great *Qurrā* who he used to hear over the radio and at the various gatherings when he was young. He regarded them as the ultimate. He held them in high esteem (as if they are angels) because of his intense love for them. He says:

I had this picture of Shaikh Abul ‘Ainain Sha‘eesha’ in my mind, but when I saw him, I was very surprised. I thought these people were not like us; they must be another creation! When I met Shaikh Abul ‘Ainain, I told him: “The reality is other than I thought. I thought that you had the beauty of Yūsuf (AS)! We both laughed at this.

Shaikh Ruzaiq (R) used to miss the generation of *Qurrā* who passed on before him. Whenever he discussed them, he began tearing. When asked as to why he cries, he said:

I feel like an orphan after the demise of Shaikh Ḥusari (R), Shaikh Mustafā Ismā‘eel (R), Shaikh Maḥmūd ‘Ali Banna (R), and Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt (R) - and in actual fact, I am an orphan. So do not ask me why I tear when I speak of them. They recited the Glorious Qur’ān for the sake of the Qur’ān. Nowadays, it is not

the same. You will see *Qurrā* competing with one another. Why should I not cry when there is a time that I will never forget?

Once I read at a gathering with Shaikh Husari. After the program, he remained seated on one side until he saw me. He called me over and told me that he was waiting for me so that he could take me (home) in his car. I said to him: “Respected Shaikh, do not worry, I will take a taxi and go home.” He said: “Why do you want to pay for a taxi when you have a car of your own?” I asked: “Where is my car?” He replied: “My car is your car, Shaikh Aḥmad.” So I went with him and he left me right at the doorstep of my building. If he could help it, he would have driven into the building till the door of my apartment.

#### ♦ 5.11.9 – Respecting the Ways of Other Reciters

Shaikh Mustafā Ismā‘eel (R) said: “Every *Qāri* has his own colour and style, and has a place in the eyes of the masses. Listening is like food; someone likes eating trotters while others like eating roasted meat, whilst others relish soup... May Allāh honour everyone.”

Regarding one of his contemporaries, Shaikh Muḥammad Rif‘at (R), Shaikh Mustafā Isma‘eel mentioned, “Indeed Shaikh Rif‘at used to interpret the meaning of the Glorious Qur’ān in his recitation. He had reached that point in the recitation of the Qur’ān where no one can reach.”

Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt (R) was once asked:

Who is the best reciter?” He replied: “A reciter is a person who reads and recites the Qur’ān according to its rules. He cannot do otherwise. In that, all the reciters are the same. Then follows the voice, and that is where the difference comes. Listeners make a choice. It is not the reciter who

is greater; it is the choices that vary. All those who recite the Qur'ān should be respected because of their recitation and not for their voice. Respecting the recitation is respecting the Qur'ān.

#### ◇ 5.11.10 – Relationship with Their Children

When Shafeeq 'Ali Banna (the son of Shaikh Mahmūd 'Ali Banna (R)) speaks of his father, he perspires as if he is speaking in front of his father, although years have passed since his father has passed away. All the children of Shaikh Mahmūd 'Ali Banna (R) have good character and are respectable people. They are following in the footsteps of their father in their respective walks of life. This is how the '*Ahlul Qur'ān*' (Family of the Qur'ān) nurtures their children with good and blessed qualities. If Shaikh Mahmūd 'Ali Banna (R) had to reprimand his children for anything, he would never say more than one word or he would give such a smile that showed his anger. This was enough for them to understand what their father wanted from them. He was very just with all his children.

Shaikh 'Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) instilled kindness, softness, and good character in the hearts of his children. All of his eleven children have memorized the Qur'ān.

#### ◇ 5.11.11 – A Qāri Displays a Good Temperament at All Times

Shaikh Muḥammad Maḥmūd Tablāwi relates an incident when someone phoned to invite him to read at a commemoration function in one of the far off provinces. When he reached there, he found that the particular address did not exist at all and realized that it was a hoax. He was (already) invited to Mansūrah, Port Said, and Zaqaḏeeq on such hoax calls.

The same occurrence happened to Shaikh 'Abdul Bāsiṭ (R) also. He once said:

A person phoned me and said, "Tomorrow we have a commemoration ceremony here in Tanta;

will you be able to make it, Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt?’ I told him: “Yes, it is fine. I have no other obligations.” He finalized everything with me and gave me a detailed address. When I went to Tanta, I found out that the address he gave me was that of a church! I laughed and said to myself, “My luck!”

Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiq (R) used to iron out the problems that the *Qurrā* have amongst them. If any two *Qurrā* have a difference on any given situation, he would find a suitable solution that would please both parties. He would undergo sacrifices and forego his rights to please others. He stressed that the people of the Qur’ān must have honour, dignity, and the position that the Qur’ān demands from them.

#### ♦ 5.11.12 – The Effect of the Qur’ān on the Life of a Future *Qāri*

As Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt (R) was preparing to recite live on Radio for the first time, the people of his hometown gathered at the residence of the only person who at that time owned a radio (around six o’ clock on a very cold morning). Amongst those present in the crowd was a young lad known as Aḥmad Ruzaiqi (R).

As Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsīt read, the crowd sat as if there were birds perched on their heads. Everyone was quiet, praising the son of their town in their hearts. After the recitation, Shaikh Aḥmad Ruzaiq walked away from there, the direction of his life changed completely. He headed (straight) to the Qur’ān school instead of the secular school (that he had to attend). Upon reaching the *Madrasah*, he sought permission from the Shaikh to sit in his lesson. This is how he began memorizing the Qur’ān. He stayed absent from school for about a week without anyone at home knowing about it. Thereafter, the school sent a letter to his father informing him of his

son's absenteeism. His father was surprised because his son left every morning to go to school.

When Shaikh Aḥmad returned home that day, his father asked him, "Where were you? Were you at school or not?" Shaikh Aḥmad replied to his father in such a way that no one could expect from a child. He said: "Why don't you ask me why was I absent until today?" "Because I always thought that you were at school, but today I received this note informing me of your absenteeism," replied his father. Shaikh Aḥmad related to his father as to what has transpired. His father then hugged and kissed him and made a lot of *du'ā* for him.

#### ◇ 5.11.13 – Imitating the Styles of Other Reciters

Shaikh Maḥmūd 'Ali Banna (R) said:

The most important thing for a *Qāri* is that he (or she) must be a very good memorizer and well versed with *tajweed*. Also, he must have a beautiful voice and the ability to imitate, because by imitating these great *Qurrā*, he will capture the hearts of the people immediately. And soon a time will come when he will develop his own style of reading and he will be recognised for his style. It is of utmost importance that he enrolls in a Qur'anic school of his choice, where his heart is inclined to, where he hears his teacher's reading and he follows their style. I am not of the opinion that one should imitate someone else his entire life. It is necessary to develop ones own way of reading.

#### ◇ 5.11.14 – The Lifestyles and Habits of the *Qurrā*

Shaikh 'Abdul Bāsīt (R) loved eating different kinds of foods but was very fond of meat. He never drank anything cold and preferred tap water saying that cold water harms the voice cords. He loved swimming and

made it a point to sleep two hours in the afternoon. Overall, he slept for about nine hours a day.

◇ **5.11.15 – Becoming a Qāri Requires Dedication and Hard Work**

Shaikh Muḥammad Maḥmūd Tablāwi says,

My gift became apparent by the age of seven, and I had the option to take admission into *al-Azhar* (and study some secular studies) like the rest of my colleagues. Rather, I opted for the difficult road which requires courage, strength, power, truthfulness, and which takes a long while to reach the goal. Those who are in a hurry often never reach their goal. That is why, since childhood, not once (have) I tried to become famous and let myself be known. I first worked hard. I memorized the Glorious Qurʾān thoroughly, mastered *tajweed*, and worked on my voice. I was always aware of the fact that Allāh has bestowed me with a great gift (the Qurʾān) and I knew that I had to look after it. I therefore took it upon myself to listen to and revise what I heard from the great *Qurrā* (that recited) over the Radio and to learn the proper way of executing the proper rules of recitation. I began as a small *Qāri* (and had the opportunity) to recite at many gatherings. This was the beginning of my life as a *Qāri* - and it was before the age of 15.

He says further,

Since I became a *Qāri* of the Qurʾān, one who would recite at gatherings and functions, I was very desirous of developing my own style. This was not achieved overnight; rather it took a lot of effort and sacrifice on my part. I did not allow the remuneration to become a hinderance between me

and my recitations of the Glorious Qur’ān. There were times when I used to walk a distance of over five kilometres to participate in these gatherings. Later the time came when I used to go riding on a donkey. The sky does not pour down gold and silver. The path to loftiness is not paved with roses and flowers. It is inevitable for one to slip and falter time and again in the initial stages, getting pricked by thorns and feeling the pains at times - and smiling other times. This is the system of life. The one who laughs all the time will never be as successful as the one who cries and then laughs. The latter appreciates the value and sweetness of good fortune because he has tasted the bitterness of crying (hardships).”

♦ **5.11.16 – Advice by Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ ‘Abduṣ-Samad (R)**

Shaikh ‘Abdul Bāsiṭ was asked the following questions:

1. **What is your advice to young upcoming Qurṛā?**  
I advise them not to imitate. They must strive to be natural; they must be original and create a method of their own.
2. **Is it necessary for a Qāri to know the meanings of the Qur’ān?**  
It is imperative for him (or her) to know the meanings of the Qur’ān so that he could bring out the meanings when he recites.
3. **How much wealth do you have?**  
I am ordered to keep my domestic matters in privacy.
4. **But if you convert your privacy into figures?**  
Then you will not be able to count it. My treasure is the Book of Allāh.

## ◇ 5.12 – Some Voice Caring Tips<sup>137</sup>

### ◇ 5.12.1 – How to Care for Your Voice

Taking care of your voice is the most important preventative measure for having a healthy voice for a lifetime. This involves properly hydrating your body with at least (eight glasses) of water a day, using adequate support from your abdominal muscles when you speak or recite, and avoiding vocally abusive behaviors such as throat clearing, coughing, yelling, screaming or prolonged loud talking.

Eating a healthy diet, exercising your body and your voice regularly, and getting enough sleep are also important factors in vocal health. Managing your stress level can also help in maintaining vocal health. Be careful of taking over-the-counter medications such as aspirin products (Aleve, Motrin, Advil, Aspirin, and Excedrin) as they are blood thinners and can put you at greater risk for sustaining a vocal fold hemorrhage (bleed). Other medications such as antihistamines can be very drying to the voice. Caffeine is a diuretic and actually removes fluid from your tissues (including your vocal fold tissue!) Minimize your intake of (caffeine related) beverages, and drink an equal sized glass of water for every caffeinated beverage you drink to counteract the drying effects. (This is in addition to the eight glasses of water you should already be drinking).

### ◇ 5.12.2 – Exercise Increases the Range of Your Voice

You can expand both your upper and lower range through developing your technique and vocal flexibility with a trained voice teacher supervising your

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<sup>137</sup> This complete section (unless otherwise specified) was taken from [www.vocalesentials.com](http://www.vocalesentials.com). Vocal Essentials was founded by Kate A. Emerich, an internationally recognized clinician in the area of voice disorders, specializing in the care of the injured speaking and singing voice.

recitation<sup>138</sup> and directing you with specific range expanding exercises. Your range is somewhat limited to your own laryngeal physiology. You should never try to push your voice to recite higher or lower than what is comfortable.

### ◇ 5.12.3 – Watch Your Weight<sup>139</sup>

The voice may be affected by (you) being overweight. The body may tire, and anything that fatigues the body can affect the voice. Generally, the pitch becomes lower. It is much easier to speak lower as you become fatigued by the excess weight. Breathing becomes harder, so you work harder for breath support - and at the wrong pitch. Though being overweight can induce a voice problem, or add to it, the weight need not cause or contribute to voice difficulty. It depends upon the individual, the circumstances, and how the voice is used. Weight is but one factor that affects the voice.

### ◇ 5.12.4 – The Difference Between Talking and Reciting

Your speaking and reciting voice are created from the same exact anatomical structures. The respiratory system (lungs diaphragm and abdominal muscles), laryngeal mechanism (vocal folds, laryngeal cartilages, muscles and nerves) and the supraglottic tract (the spaces above the vocal folds, including the back of your throat, mouth, nasal passages and sinus cavities) all work to produce the beautiful sounds you make. Speaking doesn't require as much airflow (breath) as reciting, but you still need to support the speaking voice. Reciting involves the utilization of more of the supraglottic spaces for resonance, and the vowels are prolonged. Otherwise they are almost identical. You're

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<sup>138</sup> Please note that the word 'singing' has been replaced with 'reciting' or 'recitation' throughout the section.

<sup>139</sup> Dr Morton Cooper, [www.voice-doctor.com](http://www.voice-doctor.com)

speaking and reciting voice should sound almost identical in your speaking voice pitch range.

#### ◇ 5.12.5 – The Effects of Accents and Stuttering is Minimized When Reciting

When someone speaks with an accent, they produce the vowel sounds differently than the person identifying them as having an accent. When reciting, the vowels are prolonged and those differences are minimized.

People who stutter may have an easier time [reciting] because of several possible reasons:

- The support required in recitation keeps the continuous voicing and airflow components moving easily.
- There are no expressive challenges with recitation; the words are provided for them.
- Some feel that stuttering is a neurological disorder; the neural pathways involved in speech are disrupted somehow. [Recitation] involves more right-hemisphere brain functions vs. speaking, which is left-hemisphere dominated and may be easier to initiate and sustain than speech.

#### ◇ 5.12.6 – Controlling Your Voice When Experiencing a Sore Throat

You are better off using your normal voice gently and quietly rather than whispering. Whispering alters the manner in which your vocal folds close and vibrate, often compressing the vocal folds in the middle where your tissue is most likely to swell when you are sick. Whenever you have a sore throat, you should minimize your voice use if possible. If you are uncertain whether you are safe to use your voice, it is always best to see an Otolaryngologist who specializes in voice care.

### ◇ 5.12.7 – Warming Up Your Voice

It is always important to warm-up your voice before any kind of recitation or speaking. Gentle humming exercises, lip or tongue vibrations, and breath-stimulating exercises like Ya-ha-ha-ha-ha (1-3-5-3-1) with a release in between each note are good for warming up the voice. Your volume should stay around medium soft.

### ◇ 5.12.8 – The Cracking of the Voice During Teenage Years

The young male voice cracks because of substantial changes occurring in the larynx during adolescence. The vocal folds grow 4-11 mm and the tissue underneath the mucosa of the vocal folds (the lamina propria) develops. This process can begin anytime between the ages of 12 ½ and 14, and is usually complete by age 15.

### ◇ 5.12.9 – Breathing and Breath Control<sup>140</sup>

Breathing is the most natural thing we do every day. We inhale to bring fresh, oxygenated air into our lungs to replace the carbon dioxide that we then exhale. This process is fairly simple. We inhale and exhale on a regular rhythm. Each inhalation is about the same length as the exhalation and each cycle is about the same length as the previous one

In a performance situation, however, people sometimes interfere with this natural process. As a result, their delivery may become forced and unnatural and their voices thin and weak. Without proper breathing and breath control, the voice isn't as efficient or as effective as it could be.

Right now, become aware of how you're breathing. Don't try to change anything. Simply be aware of what

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<sup>140</sup> Breathing and Breath Control by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D.  
www.sayitwell.com

your stomach muscles and chest are doing. When you inhale, your diaphragm pushes out your abdominal wall, your rib cage expands and your chest lifts slightly. It's similar to what happens when you blow up a balloon. As you exhale the reverse happens; your abdominal wall and rib cage relax and your chest collapses a bit. If you're having trouble feeling the natural way of breathing, here are a couple of exercises to try:

- Blow up a party balloon. Feel the pressure on the abdominal muscles and diaphragm (the muscles you'll also use when you breathe to speak).
- Pant quickly. As you gradually slow down, notice how your stomach is moving. This is the same movement you should have when you inhale and exhale to speak.

When you breathe to speak or recite, the regular rhythm changes. You inhale fairly quickly and take in just as much air as you think you'll need for what you plan to recite. Then you exhale slowly and conserve the air, so that you don't run out until you're finished [the verse or part of the verse]. If you don't control the breath and do run out of air [especially at the point in the verse where you stop], you'll sound strained, weak, breathy, or gravelly.

Here are some exercises to help you "connect" with the breath.

- Sit and hold the legs of your chair to keep your shoulders down. Inhale completely on a slow, silent, five count. Hold for five. Exhale completely on five. Repeat until you can do it easily. (Stop if you get dizzy!) Increase to counts of six, seven, and eight.
- Lie on the floor with a book on your abdominal area. Make the book rise and fall as you breathe.

Now, let's add some sound to that breath. Stand. It's much easier to get a full, complete breath when you standing.

- Take a good, deep breath and sustain an "ah" sound on a single pitch that's comfortable. You should feel a slight tension in your abdominal muscles as they support the sound. Hold the "ah" for ten seconds. The sound should be clear and easy, without strain. Try it again for 12 seconds. If you can't go that long, drop out before you strain or gasp for air. However, keep practicing until you can hold for at least 15 seconds or longer.
- Take a deep breath and count slowly as far as you can without gasping. Repeat, trying to get a few more numbers each time. Aim for sixty. You can also use the letters of the alphabet or days of the week or months in a year, almost anything. Keep track of your progress. If you keep your articulation sharp and clear, this also makes a good warm up before you speak or [recite].

Breath support and control are essential for a good voice. Practice the exercises until you are naturally breathing correctly no matter where you are.

#### ◇ 5.12.10 – Finding Your Natural Pitch

You can find your natural pitch range for speaking by listening to how you spontaneously say the sound "mm-hmm". The top note of your "hmm" is a good place to start. Try sustaining the pitch of the "hmm" and move into a phrase you'd typically say. For example, "mm-hmm-mm-how are you?" If this pitch range differs substantially from the pitch you typically use when speaking, you are not at an optimal pitch and could be straining your voice to maintain that pitch. Other indicators of natural pitch can be your laugh or cough.

### ◇ 5.12.11 – The Difference Between a Vocal Fold and a Vocal Cord

The greater (current) understanding is that the "vocal cord" is really made up of muscle, three different layers of tissue in a structure called the 'lamina propria', and a layer of mucosa that moves in a wave-like motion over the lamina propria. This led to the change of terminology from "vocal cord" to "vocal fold", as the structure is more like a fold of muscle and tissue vibrating in a complex manner rather than a "cord" merely vibrating with air.

### ◇ 5.12.12 – Your Emotions Have an Impact on Your Voice<sup>141</sup>

Your emotions will most likely affect the quality of your voice. If you are depressed or gloomy, the pitch and tone of voice may drop. If you are happy, the voice may rise. However, some people suffering from allergies (may also be) affected by the weather. The voice mechanism may react to pollens and become constricted or falter.

### ◇ 5.12.13 – Reducing Tension<sup>142</sup>

Tension is the enemy of any performer. It often creeps up on us and makes our muscles react in unpredictable ways. We might become "tongue-tied" and stutter or stammer. We might not be able to think of a response during an interview or Q&A session. We might simply freeze up. Proper relaxation techniques can help to eliminate those problems.

We carry a lot of our tension, or stress, in our neck and shoulder areas. This is a particularly (great) problem because that is where (our) sound (originates).

Here are some exercises and activities to help reduce or eliminate tension. As always, don't overdo it and if

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<sup>141</sup> Dr. Morton Cooper, [www.voice-doctor.com](http://www.voice-doctor.com)

<sup>142</sup> Reducing Tension by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D. [www.sayitwell.com](http://www.sayitwell.com)

you've had recent health-related problems consult a professional.

- Yawning is not only a good warm-up, it's a good tension reliever. Get your whole body involved and streeeeetch.
- Shrug your shoulders. Get them up as high as you can, hold for a few seconds and then lower them. Repeat two- three times.
- Lower your chin to your chest and feel the stretch up the back of your neck. Hold for six- seven seconds. Lift and repeat two- three times.
- Lower your ear to your shoulder and feel the stretch up the side of your neck. Hold for five - six seconds and then slowly roll your head down to the center and bring it up to the other side and feel the stretch. Finally, return your head to center. **DON'T ROLL YOUR HEAD BACK.** You could damage your vertebra.
- Stand, clasp your hands behind your back, and lift gently. Hold for a few seconds and release. Repeat two- three times.
- Drop over from the waist and let your head just hang, like a rag doll. If you're standing, keep your knees slightly bent to take the pressure off your back. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds and let everything relax. Slowly rise to your original position. Watch your back!!
- Tighten every muscle in your body, from your face to your toes. Hold for about ten seconds and then gently release. Repeat two- three times. When you release, you're not only releasing those muscles

that you tightened on purpose, but also those which were tense when you started.

- Get away from your desk and take a brisk walk around the block or the parking lot. Take long strides, swing your arms, and breathe deeply.
- Take a short nap. Research indicates that naps aren't just for children anymore.
- Finally, get regular exercise. I know, I know, easier said than done as our lives continue to get busier. But it really can help. Try it.

#### ◇ 5.12.14 – Avoid Speaking Too Much

On the day of a recitation, if you speak too much, you will not be able to express yourself effectively. You do not feel it wearing down your vocal chords, just as a person with hypertension has no idea his blood pressure has gone up. Reducing how much you speak helps you in the long term. Uncontrolled speech is very harmful to your voice and does wear it down.<sup>143</sup>

#### ◇ 5.12.15 – The Expected Changes in an Elderly Person's Voice

Several changes can occur in the voice with the aging process. However, just as with the rest of the body, these changes can be stalled with regular exercise (for the most part). Typical changes due to aging include possible:

- Atrophy (weakening) of muscles and nerve tissues resulting in vocal fold bowing, stiffening, or arthritic arytenoid joints, causing incomplete vocal fold closure and subsequent breathy vocal quality.

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<sup>143</sup> Dwayne's singing page- Singing Q&A.

- Vocal fold tissue can thin and waste and vibrate less, causing hoarse and/or the vocal fold edge can roughen. Other changes can occur due to changes in hormone levels:
- Women can have a lowering of their pitch from the loss of estrogen in their body during and after menopause. This can be prevented or reversed with estrogen replacement therapy.
- Men's voices tend to get higher as they age, as their level of testosterone drops.

### ◇ 5.12.16 – The Negative Impact of Clearing Your Throat

Clearing your throat is very abusive to the vocal fold tissue, as you basically are grinding the vibratory edge of each vocal fold against the other. This causes swelling and irritation of the vocal fold in the middle of the vibratory edge, which then hits first before any other part of the vocal fold. Chronic irritation and swelling in this area can lead to the formation of vocal fold masses such as nodules.

The other aspect of the throat clear, as much as it feels like it clears off the mucous (or phlem), it only moves the mucous to the side of the vocal folds, and that mucous eventually makes its way back to the vibratory edge. This begins the viscous cycle of constant throat clearing. There are better alternatives to clearing away the excess mucous:

- A silent cough...say the word "huh" with oomph from your belly without voicing followed by a swallow (kind of like coughing, but without voice)
- Humming can move away the mucous
- A sip of water can move away the mucous
- A gentle cough with lots of air in front of it is still less abusive than a throat clear.

### ◇ 5.12.17 – The Importance of an Efficient Diet Plan

Every kind of food you eat, and even the times at which you eat, can affect your voice. Reciting on either an empty or full stomach is not good. Therefore, you have to be very cautious in this regard.

It is not advisable to eat immediately before you recite or at the time of reciting. This will result in you having to clear your throat constantly while reciting. Burping, hiccupping, and being unable to get enough air will also affect your performance.

How else can eating affect your voice? Well, starving yourself is a bad idea as far as eating and reciting is concerned. You should eat something (minimal) in order to prevent yourself from getting headaches or feeling sick when you recite. Your stomach might even growl and disrupt your entire performance.

The best advice regarding this is to eat a balanced meal an hour or two before you go recite. Avoid eating heavy foods. Eat things that will give you energy without making you feel tired or overly full. Eggs, for instance, contains a lot of protein and do not give you a heavy feeling.

You should avoid several foods before you recite. Dairy products can cause excess mucus to develop in your nose and throat. Coffee and junk foods are not a good idea. Try not to eat too much salt or spicy food. They can cause your throat to become inflamed. Avoid soda or anything that can cause too much gas build-up. Cold foods are also bad. They can cause constriction in your throat.

Eating and reciting is not as impossible as it sounds, though. Luke warm drinks, like herbal tea, or honey water can be good for your throat before a performance. Chicken, eggs, and fish are great foods for eating before reciting. Rice is another option. Even apples and almonds can be good for your body, as well as your voice.

If, at some point, your throat is sore right before a recitation, eating can become especially important. There are certain small things you can eat right before you recite. Honey and hard candy, for instance, can relax your throat muscles. You can also try gargling with baking soda or salt water, if you want to soothe your throat. Some Qurrā are known to use raw ginger.

#### ◇ 5.12.18 – Some Good Tips for a Generally Pleasant Voice

- Speak at a comfortable pitch and loudness with appropriate support.
- Speak slowly and clearly so people understand you, but not unnaturally slow.
- Smile! A smile can be detected as pleasantness in your voice

#### ◇ 5.12.19 – Projecting Your Voice

The first thing when dealing with the projection of your voice is to find out how the sound system works in the places you are performing. In some cases, you may not be able to hear yourself, while others hear you just fine. Or, the soundman may not know what he is doing. Or the sound system could not be working or adjusted properly.

As far as strengthening your voice, or more specifically, "projecting" your voice is concerned, there could a number of things your might be doing wrong. Some suggestions are:

- Make sure the passageway from the lungs to the mouth is clear and open. This can be done by pronouncing the English letter "Y" and holding the position of it.
- Work, work, work. With, and without a microphone.

- Try to practice in a room without a lot of items that soaks up sound.<sup>144</sup>

### ◇ 5.12.20 – Why Can Some People Smoke, or Stay Up All Night, and Yet Have a Good-Sounding Voice, While Other People Seem to Have so Much Trouble?

Not all larynges are created equally. Some people are genetically more prone to injury of the vocal mechanism, as in other parts of the body. Usually, however, that kind of destructive behaviour catches up with even the most robust of larynges.

Smoking burns the cilia that line the airways to your lungs. These cilia protect the surface they line from infection. In addition, without these cilia lining your airways, you will likely begin to experience retention of fluid in your lungs because the mucus created in your nose and elsewhere will continually slide down your windpipe.

You will find yourself short of breath not only because of fluid in your lungs, but because the smoke burns, turns black, and destroys your alveolar (the air sacs in your lungs). Less of them means less air, the exact thing you need to have to [recite].

Nicotine and other things you may be inhaling will have, as per the definition of "drug," affect your mental state, and you may not be able to convey the emotion or feeling you are trying to get across.

The length of time it will take for your vocal cords, and the other systems affected by smoking to be healed from their injuries depends on how long you have been smoking, how fast your body naturally heals itself, and what you do to help your body heal itself.

There is no food or drink that will automatically cure the damage done to your body, but quitting smoking will allow your body to begin to heal itself immediately. In order to help your voice along, try taking up some sort of

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<sup>144</sup> Dwayne's Singing page Q&A

aerobic exercise (running, walking, basketball, etc.) as it will help you gain or regain your stamina.

As for the nicotine itself, it will take a few days for it to be removed from your system and will take time, depending on how long you smoked, for your body to be used to working without it.<sup>145</sup>

#### ◇ 5.12.21 – Some More Voice Caring Tips<sup>146</sup>

- Drink lots of water. (Remember), eight glasses per day should be a minimum. Keep a bottle of water handy.
- Make sure your voice is warmed up before you recite. The length of time you need to spend will vary depending on the conditions and your individual voice. With practice you'll begin to find what works best for you. Include some breathing, relaxation, and articulation drills (tongue twisters) in each session. Start slowly and gently and don't ever strain.
- (Avoid) yelling or screaming (in response to the recitations of other reciters while you wait your turn). It puts too much strain on your voice.
- During what's called in the media the "cold and flu season," practice all of the standard cold-avoidance procedures. Stay away from others with colds, wash your hands frequently, make sure you're eating properly and getting enough sleep and exercise. Your vocal mechanism is very vulnerable at this time. Treat it carefully. Also, keep a positive attitude, it can't hurt!
- Before you recite, don't eat, or drink anything containing chocolate or milk. They'll coat your throat. Your voice won't be clear sounding and it would cause you to want to clear your throat.

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<sup>145</sup> Dwayne's Singing Page- Q&A

<sup>146</sup> Caring for Your Voice by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D. [www.sayitwell.com](http://www.sayitwell.com)

- Stay away from smoking areas. Inhaling of smoke and fumes will have a negative effect on your voice.
- Always keep a mint sweet in your pocket; it will come handy after your recitation.
- Finally, if you find yourself losing your voice, don't speak unless you must. Then speak quietly, but don't whisper. The technical reasons are too long to explain here, but soft speaking is kinder to your vocal cords.



## SECTION SIX

### Teaching Children Memorization of the Qur'ān

It is every parent's desire that their sons or daughters be excellent carriers and exhibitors of the Qur'ān. The importance of rearing a child with an Islamic upbringing and character can never be overstated. Moulānā Manzūr Nu'māni (R) says:

If the people with religious enthusiasm and noble intentions, giving due consideration to their needs in the Hereafter, dedicate their children to become the servants of Islām, (then) *insha'Allāh*, every person will experience some part of the grace and bounty which was granted to *Sayyidatinā* Mariam (A.S.), as mentioned in the verse, "Her Rabb accepted her (Mariam) with special acceptance, and granted her an exceptional upbringing." [Sūrah 'Alī 'Imrān: 37]

Whoever gives his child as *waqf* for the service of Islām with a true heart, entrusting his worldly needs to Allāh, and with much care arranges for his proper upbringing, then I am convinced there can be no better occupation which can earn the pleasure of Allāh."<sup>147</sup>

Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef commented: "Consider the following, While other children are playing games and eating bubble gum, your child could be memorizing thousands of pages from the book of Allāh.

How does this benefit them? Quite obviously, the child's mind is trained at such a young age to absorb information and facts. When the child who memorized

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<sup>147</sup> *Adābul Muta'allimeen* - Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul 'Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

the Qur'ān is put in a class with bubblegum chewing or Playstation absorbed children, there is little doubt who will be the head of the class. Is this not what every parent wants?<sup>148</sup>

### ◇ 6.1 - The Best Age to Start Teaching Children the Qur'ān

In respect of the above, Mufti Muḥammad Ibn Adam-an online scholar, stated as follows:

This will be a decision that is made by the respective parents of the child. If a child shows signs of excellence and has a great memory, it would be wise to begin teaching him Qur'ān even at an early age. (This is) especially (recommended) as memorization is very effective at a young age. There have been incidents in Islamic history, where a child is born having memorized many parts of the Qur'ān due to the fact that the mother had been regularly reciting the Qur'ān during pregnancy.

Some children may be good at grasping other things, such as good habits, knack of getting domestic work done, etc, rather than memorization. For them, it would be wise to learn the social conducts and behaviours of life, rather than the more nitty-gritty aspects of knowledge.

However, it is generally observed, that memorization is most effective when carried out at a young age. There are many examples where children as young as seven memorized the Qur'ān and that it did not have a harmful affect on them in any way. I myself (not boasting, may Allāh save me, but merely giving an example of personal experience) began memorizing the Qur'ān at the age of seven and with the Grace of Allāh Almighty,

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<sup>148</sup> *Tips for memorizing the Qur'ān* by Shaikh Muḥammad al-Shareef

I finished at nine, and I don't for one moment regret for having done so. The memorization at such an age becomes so firm that even if one is neglectful of revision (as I am, may Allāh forgive me), it does not become lost so easily.<sup>149</sup>

It is a known fact that babies are alert regarding sounds around them while they are still in the womb of their mothers. Once the baby is born, they instinctively recognize and respond to the sounds heard whilst in the womb, eg, the mother's voice.

This is an ideal time for the parents to increase in the recitation of the Qur'ān because not only will it have a calming effect on the baby, but it also eases the pains related to pregnancy. Being pregnant is a joy and also a perfect time to let your baby hear your voice reciting the Qur'ān. Be prepared to have little toddlers who want to be read to all day, everyday!

## ◇ 6.2 - How to Guide Your Baby to Love Reading Qur'ān:

Step 1:

Once you found out that you have a growing baby inside you, begin increasing the recitation of the Qur'ān or listen to Qur'ān CD's and MP3's as often as possible. Read the Qur'ān with full conviction that your baby is listening to your recitation and with the intention that your recitation will aid him/her in memorizing the Qur'ān.

Step 2:

Once your baby is born, continue reading the Qur'ān to them. They love hearing their mommy or daddy's voice. You will instantly see the calmness effect your recitation will have on the baby when you start reciting the Qur'ān.

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<sup>149</sup> www.themodernreligion.com - Darul Iftā

Step 3:

When your newborn progresses into infant and toddlerhood, reading to them will become even better. Read and show a particular Arabic flash card to them everyday. Show the same card over and over again until they can identify the letter/s in it.

Step 4:

Introduce your baby to sing Islamic rhymes and the recitation of simple invocations (*du'ās*). Play recordings of Qur'ān recitation in the car and at home as much as possible.

Step 5:

Invite your baby or toddler to join you to pray and take them along with you when you attend Islamic or Qur'anic programs.

Step 6:

Read Qur'anic stories for your baby and toddler at bedtime. Inform them about the Prophets (AS), the *Sahābah* (RA) and our pious predecessors (R).<sup>150</sup>

You should actively start teaching the child at a very young age (before five years) so that the child will at least know *Sūrah Fātiḥa* and the *Quls* by heart as well as the ability to recognize the Arabic alphabet.

Encourage the child to write the letters out, as this will assist them with the identifying process.

By the time the child start to memorize the ABC songs, they should already have memorized the Arabic alphabets and some short chapters, too.

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<sup>150</sup> Taken from [www.littlekittle.com](http://www.littlekittle.com) with some changes to the original

### ◇ 6.3 - Where to Start Memorizing

Start from the short chapters first- such as *Sūrah Al Fātiḥah* and the last ten chapters of *Juz ‘Ammā* (*Sūrah al-Nās*, *Sūrah al-Falaq*, *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *Sūrah al-Lahab*, *Sūrah al-Nashr*, *Sūrah al-Kafirūn*, *Sūrah al-Kouthar*, *Sūrah al-Mā’ūn*, *Sūrah Quraish*, and *Sūrah al-Feel*) in that order.

### ◇ 6.4 - The Best Way to Teach the Child

The technique will differ from child to child in accordance with their natural ability, but herewith follows a customary guideline:

#### ◇ 6.4.1 - For Ages 3 to 6

If the child does not know how to read then you should say the verse clearly to them. You may repeat it constantly, around ten to 15 times, or more. Break up the verse in several parts if it is too long.

Try not to continue to the next verse if the child did not completely memorize it yet. Keep focus on one verse at a time.

In order to assist them in memorizing the verse, you may teach them the meaning of that verse. You can explain the meaning using their surroundings in their daily life in their school or house.

#### ◇ 6.4.2 - For Ages 6+

By this time the child should have started to read Arabic and are able to identify the letters comfortably. Make sure that when they read from the Qur’ān that they are actually reading from the Qur’ān and not from memory.

It will become much easier for the child to memorize if they know how to read the Arabic. They would then be able to develop independence and you will only have to play a guiding role.

### ◇ 6.5 - Length of Daily Lesson

Regardless of the child's age, start with the least amount possible - perhaps one verse. If the child is doing well, then increase it very gradually - maybe with two verses at a time. Once the child can read Arabic very well then you may push them gradually to read at least one page a day.

### ◇ 6.6 - Encourage Them With Love and Constant Motivation

Children always look at their parents' reaction (for approval) when they do something - whether they do something good or bad. Therefore, encourage them constantly with sweet words, love, and affection. Convince them that they can memorize the Qur'an and make them believe that they are doing exceptionally well. Show them that you are proud of them and make a big fuss about their progress and achievements.

### ◇ 6.7 - Incentives

Motivating children with rewards and incentives may prove both good and bad to the child's development.

We can all understand how incentives can be good, but I am sure you are wondering as to why it can also be bad.

Well, if a child does well and you reward him on each occasion with something they like (e.g., a sweet), they would actually love doing a good behaviour because of the sweet they will get as the reward. So, every time they do the good behavior, they will expect a sweet in return. But what if one day there are no sweets - will they still do the good behavior? Through the constant rewarding of sweets, the child has developed an inclination not for doing well because of it being good, but because of the sweet they want. This type of motivation is called extrinsic or instrumental motivation - a motivation that is satisfied by praise, rewards, or recognition.

The other type of incentive discussed by educational psychologists, with regards to learning and memorization, is called intrinsic or intregal motivation. This is when something is being done and the person doing it is motivated by the enjoyment or love they have for it.

The motivation required for the memorization of the Holy Qur'ān should be intrinsic, not extrinsic. In the early stages of the memorization, or perhaps with younger learners, extrinsic motivation in the form of rewards can play a useful role. But it is important to bear in mind that in order to successfully memorize the Qur'ān, the learner needs a lot of time, patience, persistence, and mental struggle - and the best way to attain it is when the child enjoys (and loves) memorizing the Qur'ān. This, however, takes a great deal of time and skill on the part of the parent and teachers.<sup>151</sup>

The best way to motivate the child (whilst keeping the above in mind), is to be balanced in the way and manner we reward them. We need to (at the same time) explain to the child that good cannot be compensated with worldly materials, nor should he do good to be rewarded in this world. He should love to recite the Holy Qur'ān purely for the sake of Allāh.

### ◇ 6.8 - Girls Memorizing the Holy Qur'ān

The Qur'ān was revealed as a guidance, criterion, and divine message to all of mankind regardless of race, colour, creed, nation, or gender. Whilst there are certain restrictions regarding the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān by females (especially in public), there is absolutely no reason why females should be discouraged to memorize the Qur'ān or portions of it. Through the Grace of Allāh, there are an increasing number of *hifdh* schools catering for girls throughout the world. It is best to enroll your

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<sup>151</sup> Information taken from: *An Applied linguistics approach to improving the memorization of the Holy Qur'ān.* by Muhammad Yāseen Alfi. King Saūd University, Saudi Arabia

daughter at a girls-only *madrassah* or with a female teacher who would (needless to say) understand her emotional needs as she develops in a young woman. In this day and age, it is even more commendable to encourage young girls to memorize the Qur'ān in order to preserve its tradition and practice for coming generations, for indeed, every young girl is the potential mother of a nation. Just imagine the effect on our future children if their mothers have memorized the Qur'ān!

#### ◇ 6.9 – Make *Du'ā* for Them

One of the most prominent reciters from Egypt, Shaikh Maḥmūd 'Alī Banna (R) mentioned:

When I returned home and asked my mother if she was pleased to hear me reciting over the radio, she replied: “O my son, I used to make *du'ā* for you to be granted the divine ability and I cried when I heard you reciting, O Maḥmūd, O my son!” Mothers are a great blessing. I remembered the time when the radio used to play the recordings of my recitation, my mother used to listen to it. Then she would tell my brother, 'Abdul Hādi: “Switch off the radio, my son. Your brother has tired me, I get overwhelmed by every word he reads, I cannot take it.”<sup>152</sup>

After having four daughters, the father of Shaikh Sayyid Mutawalli used to make *du'ā* to Allāh that He grants him a son. The mother also made *du'ā* to Allāh to grant them a son so that she may make him a *ḥāfidh* of the Glorious Qur'ān and that he may be amongst the men who are serving the religion of Islām.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Qurrā of Egypt by Moulānā 'Abdullāh Is'ḥāq

<sup>153</sup> Qurrā of Egypt by Moulānā 'Abdullāh Is'ḥāq

### ◇ 6.10 - Fulltime *Hifdh*

I always ask the question that why is it when we enroll the child at school for the first grade, we never ask the child whether they want to be in school or not - but should we feel to send them to study some Islamic knowledge, we leave it to them to decide. Really, at that point of their lives they see more benefit in playing with their friends' whole day than going to school! On the other hand, some parents put their children in a *madrassah* with such force that they eventually develop hatred and dislike for learning the Qur'ān. The key aspect to avoid the child in becoming rebellious and to encourage them to enjoy memorizing the Qur'ān is to psychologically prepare them long before you introduce the idea of memorizing the Qur'ān to them. This must be done with utmost sincerity whilst striving to achieve the pleasure of Allāh, and not for purpose of show, status, and to seek other worldly benefits.

Children should be encouraged to memorize the Qur'ān fulltime when they start showing signs of eagerness and readiness towards memorization. This eagerness can only be achieved if you instill the love of the Qur'ān in the child from an early age. The best and most ideal time for the child to commence *hifdh* on a fulltime basis is when they become 12 or 13 years old. Children younger than this normally have very limited concentration, resulting in them being too playful, thereby becoming a disruption for the teacher and the rest of the students. On average, children start to develop some sort of maturity and sense of responsibility for *hifdh* around this age.

Teenagers (especially boys) who start memorizing after the age of 16 generally find *hifdh* quite difficult. This is largely because they are in a sensitive stage of their life where they can easily be distracted as a result of hormonal growth and related challenges. They should however not be discouraged in completing the

memorization of the Qur'ān even if it means that you must be a bit stern with them.

### ◇ 6.11 - The Role That Parents Should Play

Active parental involvement is central to the child becoming an outstanding *Hāfidh* of the Qur'ān. Your direct involvement is of two types:

#### ◇ 6.11.1 - Relationship With the Child and Their Qur'ān

A parent will remain the child's first teacher, role model, guide, influence, and most important person in their life. The manner in which you use your authority over your child can result in them performing their best in whatever they do. Always keep in mind that the child is a mirror of the parent, so directly or indirectly the child will always reflect the behaviour, habits, and tendencies of the parent.

Be aware that the day your child starts memorizing the Qur'ān, they are undertaking an extraordinary journey - a journey that may result in you being singled out and honoured by Allāh in front of the whole of mankind a journey that may result in your entry into the Garden of gardens, a journey which may result in your child, or children, being elevated through the stages of Jannah in front of your very eyes on a Day when they will join the ranks of the Angels (AS), the notables, the special people, the people of Qur'ān --- the family of Allāh!

My brother, my sister, if your heart is not pounding faster by now, then you do not comprehend the magnitude of this extraordinary undertaking for indeed, the greatness of the Qur'ān is even able to humble the biggest of mountains. *Allāhu Akbar*.

My brother, my sister, now is the time to mould your child in that mirror that will portray the best part of you on the Day of Reckoning.

Memorizing the Holy Qur'ān is easy, but the journey is not. It is a journey of commitment, sacrifice, endurance, patience, and tolerance. The *hāfidh* must be committed to the Holy Qur'ān during the day and the night. One will sacrifice their free time, playtime, and family time for the Holy Qur'ān. They will steadfastly endure this journey until the day they pass on from this world. They will patiently wait for the Day when their name will be called among the righteous, and they will be tolerant, respectful, kind, and gracious to all around them, because, after all – they are following the example of the greatest *Hāfidhul-Qur'ān* - Muḥammad (SAW)!

You, as a parent and mentor carry the responsibility to guide your children along this journey. So motivate them, assist them, advise them, remind them (constantly), reprimand them when necessary, and show them the best of behaviour by example. Use your authority over them in order to make them understand the value and responsibilities of the one memorizing the Qur'ān. Be careful that if you should reprimand them, you do it in such a way that will not result in them memorizing the Qur'ān out of fear, or for them to feel as if they are being forced to memorize the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān should be taught and memorized with love. Finally, be hopeful and pray that if Allāh did not give you the gift memorizing the Holy Qur'ān, may He give it to your children.

#### ♦ 6.11.2 - Relationship With the Teacher

Choosing a good school, *Shaikh* or teacher for your child is of utmost importance.

In most cases, your child will not be the only student memorizing the Qur'ān under the teacher, and while they are doing their best to guide your child, it is up to you to ensure that you are fully aware of your child's progress. Frequent communication with the teacher is essential for the progress of your child. Assist the teacher by advising about on your child's weak points.

Scrutinize your child's report and question the teacher if you pick up any discrepancies. Act immediately if the teacher complains about your child's behaviour, lack of attention in class, laziness, or disrespect to the teacher and others. Never take the part of your child - especially in front of the teacher or the other students. Remember, your child is the student and the teacher is the guide. Show the most utmost respect and reverence to the teacher and instil the same in your child. The teacher has already memorized the Qur'ān while your child is still studying, so even if the teacher is wrong (according to your judgement), always respect their opinion.

#### ◇ 6.12 - Some Guidelines for Parents:

- Try as much as possible to create an environment of Qur'ān in your home if you intend that your child is to become *hāfidh al-Qur'ān*. Do not be of those who suddenly wake up to the day the neighbour's son memorized the Qur'ān, and spontaneously force their child into a *madrassah*, expecting similar results.
- Children memorize quickly but forget easily. Always review their memorization.
- Each child is special and different.
- Memorizing Qur'ān is about learning and practicing good manners too.
- Memorizing is a long process.
- Memorizing the Qur'ān needs patience and a lot of practice.
- Encourage them to participate in memorization and recitation contests.
- Always make sure the child is aware that you are following his progress.
- Set specific time periods for the child to learn/revise his lessons and make sure that no other activities (television, outings, sports, etc) interfere with the set times slots.

- Monitor the child with regards to things that can distract them from their memorization (mobile applications such as Mxit, Facebook, computer games, etc).
- Try to arrange family activities around the child's hifdh program – instead of vice versa.
- Always show importance to the child memorizing the Qur'ān.
- Be actively involved with Qur'anic activities and encourage it in the home.
- Avoid taking your child early out of class or allow them to stay absent for unnecessary reasons.
- Notify the teacher or the institution if your child is going to be absent from class.
- Pay *madrassah* fees on time and always enquire on how you can assist the institution. The mere payment of fees also does not absolve you from your other responsibilities with regards to the memorization of your child.
- Play recordings of the prominent Qur'ān reciters as often as possible in the house and in the car.



## SECTION SEVEN

### Some Tips for Teachers

Teachers usually develop their own style and method of teaching the Qur'ān based on their experiences and what is more convenient for them. The following is an overview of some guidelines and reminders for those teaching Qur'ān:

#### ◇ 7.1 - Relationship With Your Student<sup>154</sup>

This section aims to present such practices that will encourage the development of students in becoming true servants of Islām. Tragically, in today's time, we find that our students and teachers choose to apply the ways of the modern universities and colleges that sometimes lack the special and spiritual connection with Allāh. The teachers are often considered as ordinary employees who are not worthy of the profound respect that is associated with the disseminators of the knowledge of Qur'ān. The teachers, on the other hand, do not always exhibit the same insight, vigour, and dynamism of the pious predecessors (R), thereby reducing themselves to career-driven opportunists whose interest only serves their pockets and worldly status. So, the enactment of these points is so essential, in my opinion, that I doubt the students would ever be able to benefit the community by being true flag bearers of Qur'ān, if these practices are not considered and applied correctly.

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<sup>154</sup> Most of the quotations in section 7.1 (unless indicated otherwise) was taken from *Etiquettes for Teachers* by Moulānā Siddeeq Ahmad Bāndhwi, Published by Jāmiatul 'Ulamā KZN, South Africa. References to the quotations can be obtained from the original work, which can be downloaded from [www.quranunion.co.za](http://www.quranunion.co.za).

### ◇ 7.1.1 – Teaching With Sincere Intention

It is without doubt, that if a person wants to be counted amongst those that the Messenger of Allāh (SAW) described in the famous *hadeeth* as “The best amongst you is he who learns the Qur’ān and teaches it to others”, they must teach with a sincere intention. The intention for teaching the Holy Qur’ān must be solely for the pleasure of Allāh with the earnest objective to assist the student in attaining his goals and aspirations.

‘Umar (RA) has stated that if you see an ‘*Ālim* who has love for this world, then treat them suspiciously in matters regarding religion. The reason for this is that whatever a person is inclined to, their attention will be directed towards that.

‘Ali (RA) was once engaged in a battle. He was about to kill an enemy when this person spat him on the face. ‘Ali (RA) instantly spared him. When he was asked the reason for his action, he replied: “Initially I was going to kill him for the sake of Allāh. After he spat in my face, I feared that I would give in to my *nafs* and kill him in anger.”

This is an excellent example of maintaining purity of intention in our efforts. The teacher must keep their heart clean and pure at all times. They should refrain from becoming upset, troubled, influenced, or inclined towards a student in such a way that would result in their opinion and decisions becoming unfair and prejudiced towards the other students. Do not try to impress the students or their parents. Teach the Qur’ān for the sake of Allāh.

### ◇ 7.1.2 - Teaching Without Seeking This World

Sāliḥ Murri (R) used to say: “Beware of sitting with an ‘*Ālim* who seeks the world, for verily they will put you into trails by praising knowledge with their sweet words. Thereafter you will fall into deception thinking that it is not necessary to make practice on what you have learnt

and that mere gathering of information is the object of this effort.”

Zunūn Miṣri (R) mentioned that they had seen from the condition of the people of the past that the more their knowledge increased, their love for this world and its contents decreased accordingly. Presently, the situation is such that the more a person attains of knowledge, the more their love increases for the world, and they enjoy the company of the worldly people.

Zunūn Miṣri says further:

I cannot understand how an *‘Ālim* inclined towards this world and its luxuries can ever remain firm on knowledge. True knowledge protects a person from this. Had he understood his knowledge correctly, he would not have practiced against it (his knowledge).

### ♦ 7.1.3 – Displaying a Good Character

Teachers who are incapable of rectifying the student’s evil habits by displaying good character themselves, are not worthy to be teachers. Generally, teachers do not pay attention to rectifying the wrongs within themselves thinking themselves to be perfect. Thus, we can imagine the *fitnah* coming from the one who is deficient, yet thinks themselves to be perfect. The person who is engaged in the effort of *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) should adopt a lifestyle that is closest to the lifestyle of *Rasūlullāh* (SAW) so that this effort will gain Allāh’s acceptance and assistance.

### ♦ 7.1.4 - Compassion for Your Students

A teacher must have compassion for their students in the same way a parent would have for their own children. The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said, “I am to you like a father to his child.”

It is the opinion of Imām Abu Yūsuf (R) that a teacher should treat their students with such love and kindness

that an observer would think that these are the teacher's own children. He also mentioned that one should avoid displaying anger especially in gatherings of knowledge.

#### ♦ 7.1.5 - Teaching With Kindness

Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R) used to say to his students when they visited him:

Welcome, Oh bequest of *Rasūlullāh* (SAW). Listen, *Nabee* (SAW) has said: 'Soon the world will become subdued to you and young people will come to you who will be thirsty for knowledge. They will desire to attain a deep understanding of *deen*. When they do come, teach them and treat them with kindness.'

A pious person once mentioned that a teacher has to be an embodiment of love and kindness. Nobody is prepared to listen to harsh words just as a sick person is not prepared to take bitter medicine.

Regarding this, Allāh says in the Holy Qur'an, "Had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have dispersed from around you." [‘Ali ‘Imrān: 159]

Teach with love, sincerity, and understanding whilst keeping in mind that each student is unique, special, and different in their own way. Be careful not to favour one student over the other - only hardworking students can receive special favours as incentives.

#### ♦ 7.1.6 - Desiring the Best for Your Students

It has been recorded in the biography of Imām Rabbāni (R) that a student was once sitting on a thin carpet reciting the Qur'an. The Imām reflected for a moment and felt that the carpet on which he was sitting was thicker and more luxurious than the student's. He immediately took the better carpet and placed it beneath the student.

### ◊ 7.1.7 - Considering the Welfare of Your Students

Moulāna Zuhûrul Islām (R), the founder of *Madrassah Islāmia* in Fatehpûr, India, came to know that one of the students from Bengal fell extremely ill. It seemed that he was in the final stages of his life. Moulāna Zuhûrul Islām went to see the student. On seeing the Moulana, the student's eyes filled with tears. The Moulāna consoled him and said to him: "Fear not, *insha'Allāh*, you will soon recover." Thereafter, the Moulāna went in prostration for a long time supplicating to Allāh: "Oh Allāh! If a life has to be taken, then Zuhûrul Islām's (my) child, Atiyatullāh, is present. This student is a foreigner. He lives here and is entrusted to me. Oh Allāh! Spare him and grant him good health." Within a short period, a message was sent to Moulāna Zuhûrul Islām that he should proceed to his home immediately because Atiyatullāh, his son, has fallen ill. By the time the Moulāna reached home, his son has already passed away. This was his only child. May Allāh give us understanding.

### ◊ 7.1.8 - Going the Extra Mile

Rabee' bin Sulaimān (R) says that his teacher, Imām Shāfi'ee used to say to him, "If I could dissolve knowledge into liquid and feed it to you, I would do so."

Sufyān Thouri (R) said under oath: "By Allāh, if the students cannot come to me then I will definitely go to them."

Once someone informed him that some students were studying without any specific intention. He replied, "Striving for knowledge itself is sufficient as an intention."

Shaikh Mustafā Ismā'eel (R) mentioned in his talks: "Shaikh Fākhīr (R) used to check on us at the *Madrassah*. I used to recite two *Juz* to him at a time. He was very vigilant and never allowed a mistake to go by. Not only did he suffice in listening to me in the

*madrasah*, but he used to make me walk with him in the street and read the Glorious Qur'ān to him."<sup>155</sup>

### ♦ 7.1.9 – Dressing Appropriately

Fair or not, we are often judged by our appearance; it's a nonverbal clue used by others to decide if and how they speak to us. Such things as the style of your clothes, how well groomed you are, whether your shoes are shined; all make an impression on people. You want to dress appropriately for the situation. When in doubt, dress up a bit.<sup>156</sup>

It is of utmost importance that as teachers of *deen* (or even as Muslims for that matter) that we are distinctively particular of our dress code. You may dress simple (and inexpensive), but make sure that your attire is neat and immaculate.

In the chapter 'Worn garments and the washing of clothing', Imām Abu Dāwūd (R) recorded the following *hadeeth*:

The Prophet (SAW) once saw a man with dishevelled and unkept hair and remarked: "Can this man not find something to neaten his hair with?" Then he (SAW) saw a man with dirty clothes and asked: 'Can this man not find something to wash his clothes with?'

### ♦ 7.1.10 – Your Vocal Image<sup>157</sup>

An often-overlooked aspect of communication is vocal quality. Just as the clothes you decide to wear gives others an impression of who you are, how you feel about yourself, the face you want to show the world, so does your voice. It's an important part of your "appearance" --

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<sup>155</sup> Qurrā of Egypt by Moulānā 'Abdullāh Isḥāq

<sup>156</sup> *Communicating Nonverbally* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D  
www.SayItWell.com.

<sup>157</sup> *Your Vocal Image* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D. www.sayitwell.com

your "image." What does your voice sound like? Is it high, thin, shrill? Or maybe flat, dull, or sloppy?

It has been said that how we say something is five times more important than what we say. Your voice directly affects the way people react to you.

Your voice can influence whether you're taken seriously or not. If you sound like a little girl, you'll often be treated that way.

It may also determine if you're considered intelligent or not. People equate sloppy speech with sloppy thinking.

It is important to remember that you've been talking the way you do since you were a few years old, so you may be trying to change habits of a lifetime. Consistent practice is going to help you be successful in having a more confident, credible voice.

Here are some things that you can do today to improve your sound:

- Reduce as much stress and tension as possible. We carry a lot of tension in our shoulders and necks and of course, that's where the voice is produced. You probably know lots of exercises to reduce stress, but may not think of using them to improve your voice. Try it and notice how much better you feel and sound.
- Make certain that you're breathing efficiently and effectively. The breath isn't supporting a voice that's thin, screechy or graveling out at the bottom. When you inhale, it's like you're filling up a balloon, your rib cage and stomach area should expand. When you exhale or speak, the air goes out of the balloon and your rib cage and stomach get smaller. Don't just fill the upper part of your lungs with air. That's like filling the gas tank only part way and expecting to go the full distance.
- Develop crisp, clear articulation without over-articulating. If people can't understand what you're saying they won't be able to appreciate your ideas.

- Remember the tongue twisters we chanted as children? "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck ..." and "She sells sea shells ...." Well, they can help your articulation as an adult. Keep repeating them as you increase the speed. Eventually you'll get tongue-tied, but that's okay. Start again and try to go a bit faster the next time. Look for a book of tongue twisters to help you work on all the sounds. Here's (another) favorite: "red leather, yellow leather." You really have to concentrate and get your tongue moving on that one.
- Finally, use more vocal variety. You can change the quality, rate, volume, and pitch of your voice to add interest and keep your listeners engaged. Your rate should be conversational as well as appropriate for the content. Some speakers try to add energy by speaking so quickly that they are almost unintelligible. If the words can't be understood, what's the point? If you know that you're a "rusher," practice speaking very slowly. Then when you begin to speed up during a conversation or presentation, you may get faster, but it won't be rushed.

Make certain that your volume is also appropriate to the content and the environment. The volume you use to speak to two (students) in a small (class) will be different from what you use to speak to 20 people in a conference room or 200 people in an auditorium.

Pitch is the easiest way to add variety. It's the highness or lowness of the voice. Some people use only 3-4 notes when they speak. We call them monotone. You should use a range of at least eight notes.

Try reading the newspaper using a LOT of pitch range. Really go "over the top." It will sound silly, but keep working at it. As you get used to hearing yourself speaking with a greater range of

notes, it will become easier to use them in everyday speech. Just as you won't speak as slowly as you practiced in the previous exercise, you'll tone down your range as well, while still keeping some of the increased variety.

This is just a taste of voice work, but you can already begin to put these ideas and exercises into practice to improve your vocal image. No one has a "perfect" voice and significant improvement can seem to take a very long time. But, remember, you're breaking habits of a lifetime and it's worth it. So, say what you mean and say it well!

#### **◇ 7.1.11 – Be Careful of Words and Actions Infront of Your Students**

The minds of young children are extremely absorbent. They tend to copy the ways and actions of their parents and teachers.

Besides being watchful of what you say infront of the students, be also cautious of what you do not say.

Research indicates that as much as 93% of what we communicate is done nonverbally. Believe it or not, your nonverbal behavior, which is everything you use to communicate other than the words themselves, is far more important than your verbal communication (the words you use).<sup>158</sup>

#### **◇ 7.1.12 – Learn How to Speak Effectively**

Words can also reflect attitudes. Think for a moment. Do you generally use powerful or weak language? Most of us use a mixture of the two and that is good. We adjust our words and language to the situation. However too many of us use an over-abundance of powerless language. For example, have you ever said, "I guess I

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<sup>158</sup> *Communicating Nonverbally* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D  
www.SayItWell.com.

thought that ..." or "I think that maybe we could ..."? If so, you've used a hedge that weakens what follows it. When you say, "I'm not sure I should bring it up, but ..." or "You can reject this if you want to, but ..." you are effectively negating what follows.

How could you turn those phrases into stronger statements? One way to sound more confident and authoritative is to replace the "I guess I thought that's ..." with a simple "I think that ..." and the "I think that maybe we could ..." with "We should."

The fillers that sometimes clutter up our language, also make our verbal communication much less powerful than it could or should be. Do you have a lot of "uhs," "you knows," and "ands" in your speech? If so, it is interfering with your communication. Here are a couple of ways to solve the problem.

To eliminate a bad habit, you first have to become aware that you're doing it. If you can, have someone listen to you and signal each time you say "uh" or whatever your problem word or phrase is. It will drive you crazy at first, but you'll eventually become aware that you're saying it. Only then can you eliminate it by changing your habit.

Another technique is to try speaking for just 15 seconds without the filler word or phrase. Time yourself and see if you can do it. It's harder than it seems. Once you've mastered 15 seconds, extend the time to 30 seconds, then a minute, and so on. Be warned, this can also be very frustrating, but eventually, you will have either greatly reduced the number of fillers you use or eliminated them completely.

The words you choose to use say a lot about you and how you feel about the world. Choose them with care.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Communicating Verbally* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D [www.SayItWell.com](http://www.SayItWell.com).

### ◇ 7.1.13 - Lend an Ear

In today's busy times, children often look at teachers as role models, guides, and even as 'alternative parents'. Make time in the day to listen to them. Allow them to open up, speak about their fears, ask questions, and to be themselves. Give them sound advice and try to satisfy their inquiring minds. If you discover something disturbing regarding their past or surroundings, try to deal with it as professionally as possible or ask advice from those more experienced with the related issue. Be careful also as to what you speak in front of them - your words might be interpreted wrongly and can lead to undesirable consequences.

### ◇ 7.1.14 - Mastering the Art of Listening<sup>160</sup>

Listening is a much over-looked communication skill. We think we know how to listen, but often we're just hearing rather than listening. Do you know the difference? When you drove to work this morning, did you have the radio on? If so, you were hearing the news or a talk show. You might or might not have been paying much attention. But, what happened when they played the traffic report that you'd been waiting for? You LISTENED.

Research indicates that we spend more time listening than we do talking. Unfortunately, most people use only about 25% of their native listening ability. Listening is hard work and takes practice, but it's a skill you can acquire just like any other.

You want to learn to listen actively. You can accomplish this by focusing on the other person's ideas or point of view and having a purpose for listening. Here are some suggestions to help you improve your listening ability:

- No matter who the speaker is -- your spouse, your student or (the parent) -- make certain that you

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<sup>160</sup> *The Art of Listening* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D. [www.sayitwell.com](http://www.sayitwell.com)

look at them. Looking at the floor or out the window gives a nonverbal signal that you don't want to listen to them. It also makes it harder for you to listen and focus. People don't trust those who don't look at them. Look in their eyes; observe their nonverbal behavior -- body language, eye contact, etc. These can help you judge the intent of the message they're sending and determine how you're going to respond.

- Keep your emotions under control. Don't get angry or overly excited at certain "trigger" words. We all have them. When you get caught up in emotion, you begin thinking about your response to the stimulus word rather than what the other person is saying. Instead, try to understand the other person's point of view. If you need to refute their argument, you'll be able to do so more effectively if you've listened clearly and unemotionally.
- Don't interrupt the speaker unless you need clarification. If you stop the flow of someone's ideas, you might not get the whole picture of what they're trying to say. Also, interrupting is rude. In general, we don't like interrupters, so some people may avoid you. Along these same lines, don't change the subject. This also alienates people, but more importantly, it doesn't help you stay focused on the communication at hand.
- Since you can listen faster than someone else can speak, don't waste that time daydreaming. Instead, spend it anticipating, analyzing, summarizing, and asking yourself questions such as: "Where is this person going with this discussion?" "Is what is being said clear?" "Do I agree?" "Is more information needed for me to make a decision?" This would also be a good time to take some notes to help you remember what's being said. In addition, it's a non-verbal way of letting the other person know that you're attentive and interested.

Here are some other things you can do to be actively engaged in the listening process:

- Use a variety of nonverbal responses such as sitting forward in your chair or standing with your weight forward.
- Nod your head to indicate that you are hearing what's being said.
- Use appropriate vocal responses such as "uh-huh," "really?" etc.

However, it's important not to fake it. It won't help you listen and it won't give the speaker the kind of feedback they need for the communication process to work.

When people find that you're a good listener, they'll be more likely to tell you things. This helps to keep you "in the loop." It also helps to solidify relationships with your students, their parents, and your colleagues. Good listening skills show that you're confident and open to new ideas, help you resolve conflicts and reduce friction when tempers flair. It also helps to keep the channels of communication open.

Since we're involved in listening three times more than we are in speaking, isn't it important to learn to do it well?

### ◇ 7.1.15 - Choosing in the Best Interest of Your Student

If a student requests a transfer to another teacher or institute and the circumstances warrants such a move, then you should willingly allow them to go. Do not force them to stay merely to make up numbers in the institute in order to create a false impression to the public.

A student is unlikely to benefit from a place where their heart is not attached. They will either become rebellious or will eventually run away from the institute. Both of these situations are harmful for the student.

‘Abdullāh Muzani (R) says that an indication that an ‘Ālim is serving Islām for name and fame is that they will initially encourage students to study under them. If per

chance any student consults them regarding a transfer to another teacher or institution, they take exception to this. If they are sincere, they will be pleased in all circumstances (whether the person studies under them or any other teacher).

For the sake of Allāh, remember that the object is to serve the Qur’ān with sincerity. If it is earnestly felt that it would be more beneficial for a student to remain by them, then the teacher should out of genuine concern present their opinion to the student by way of advice. Thereafter, if the student is still persistent in going, they should not be stopped.

#### ◇ 7.1.16 - Making the Lessons Easy for Your Students

The Prophet (SAW) mentioned, “You have been sent to make things easy and not to make things difficult.”

Allāh created His Messenger (SAW) with a noble temperament so as to make matters easy for his followers, as stated in the Qur’ān, “Allāh intends ease for you and He does not intend for you any difficulty.” [al-Baqarah: 185]

It is evident that Allāh has chosen ease for His servants. So similarly, those who are occupied in teaching and propagating Islām should adopt a soft, easy, and accommodating approach in accordance with the capabilities of the students and the confines of the available study times.

#### ◇ 7.1.17 - Grouping Students According to Their Capabilities

Intelligent pupils should not be grouped together with weak pupils. They should be taught in accordance with their capability and intelligence so that their time does not get wasted.

*Hifdh* classes must be formed in a manner that would ensure that each student would receive the best attention. Depending on the capabilities of the teacher, a class of 20 students can just be regarded as controllable.

Having about 15 students in a class is manageable, whilst teaching 12 students are most ideal.

#### ◇ 7.1.18 - Using Teaching Time to Benefit Your Students

From among the rights the student have over the teacher is that the teacher utilizes the student's available time to the full benefit of the student. The teacher should therefore be punctual and ready to serve the student at the predetermined times. The teacher should not busy themselves with their personal preoccupations (like having long telephone chats, entertaining friends, or doing other work) during the time of the student.

#### ◇ 7.1.19 - Using Best Methods to Teach the Qur'ān

Use a method of teaching that has been tried and proved successful by other teachers before you. Remember that the students' time is valuable and that you have been entrusted to make sure that the students memorize the Qur'ān in the best possible way.

Moulāna Manzūr Numāni (R) wrote that many of his fellow students studied under such teachers who taught only to fulfil their duties (with no eagerness and passion for teaching). Due to the inappropriate and unbefitting manner of teaching by these teachers, the students eventually dropped out after a few years without benefitting anything from the institute.

If the teacher teaches the students with enthusiasm dedication, and fervour, whilst using the best methods of teaching- surely, the students would then be inclined to complete their studies.

#### ◇ 7.1.20 – Hiding the Faults of Your Students

The author of *Raḥmatul-lil Muta'allimeen* wrote that if you wish to advise or rebuke a student for any misdeed (which if disclosed, they will feel ashamed of) then advise them individually in quiet. Thereafter, the same advice

can be given generally to all the students without exposing the identity of that student. In this way they will not be ashamed and others will also benefit from the advice.

This was the affection and careful nurturing the teachers adopted in the previous eras. Consequently, the students were prepared to sacrifice everything for their teachers.

#### **◇ 7.1.21 - Never Mention the Faults of Other Teachers to Your Students**

A teacher of Qur'ān should avoid speaking ill of other teachers, or of the subject they are teaching, unless the subject - matter or method of teaching is impermissible or of a genuine concern. This sickness of backbiting and storytelling has become very common among the teachers. Whoever has attained some degree of proficiency in a certain field tends to speak ill of people involved in the same or other fields of knowledge. The result is that no respect remains in the minds of the students for any kind of knowledge or any other teacher. Consequently they continue their studies only because of some external pressure. They remain in the institute not purely for the attainment of Islamic knowledge, but to use these studies as a stepping-stone to some other worldly occupation. They will then not pursue Islamic knowledge with the eagerness it deserves. They often end up mocking the teachers of religion and those that are studying at their feet.

#### **◇ 7.1.22 - Protecting the Institutions of Learning**

Refrain from speaking ill of the administration and school authorities in front of the students. If there are certain matters that need rectification, then in an honest and appropriate way, counsel those concerned so that they may correct it. It may even be appropriate to solve the matter through more senior and responsible people.

### ◇ 7.1.23 - Dealing with Difficult People<sup>161</sup>

We all know them. The ones who never have anything positive to say about anything. The ones who know it all. The ones who say "Yes" to everything and never seem to think for themselves. These are the people who make our lives and communication difficult. Sometimes we'd like to throttle them, but that usually isn't the best option! So, what are your options?

Well, you could simply ignore the situation and do nothing. This is the route many people take. Unfortunately, the difficult behavior usually gets worse over time and (everybody else) can become affected.

A more favorable option is to change your attitude about the person. When you see them differently, listen to them differently; you will begin to feel differently about them. You won't have the same reactions to them. Changing your attitude is crucial if you want to be flexible enough to be able to do the even harder thing -- change your behavior. This is the "biggy." When you change how you deal with someone, they have to change how they deal with you.

Part of being able to change your behavior, and as a result, cause others to change theirs, is to understand the other person. There are a variety of diagnostic tools to help you discover personality styles. With the results, you can determine which of the variety of communication behavior will be most effective in a particular situation.

In contrast, the difficult person will often latch on to one type of behavior, taking it to the extreme and rarely deviate from it. This is especially true when they're under stress. Understanding this will help you look for ways to communicate with these people in a more positive manner, prevent future conflicts and resolve any current problems before they get out of hand.

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<sup>161</sup> *Dealing with Difficult People* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D.  
[www.sayitwell.com](http://www.sayitwell.com)

For example, a "yes" person is often very people focused. He/she wants to please people and avoid confrontation. As a result, they'll make commitments without thinking about all of the other things that they have agreed to do. This leads to stress and resentment because they can't possibly finish everything. You can help them by first letting them know that you appreciate them and the work they've done. You want to strengthen the relationship with these people because relationships are very important to them. Once they feel comfortable with you and you've developed a sense of trust, they'll respond more positively when you help them learn to set goals and priorities.

It should go without saying that you aren't doing this to be manipulative. You're trying to communicate according to the Platinum Rule -- to communicate with others in ways in which they want to be communicated. Besides, people can tell when you don't "walk your talk" and it will be almost impossible to build the trust that you're striving for. If you're task-oriented and dealing with a people-person, you must be genuine when you take the time to talk and appreciate. It can't simply be one more item on your "To Do" list!

Sometimes we can all get fed up with the behavior of the difficult person; they can easily drive us crazy, make us angry or unhappy. At these times, we may say things that we later regret. No matter what the situation, it's important to treat each day and each communication with them as a 'Fresh Start'. It's sometimes hard, but don't allow lingering bad feelings to impact the communication you have with them today. This is a strong position, not a passive or weak one. You're not letting them get away with something, but allowing past communications to have no impact as you go forward striving for a more positive relationship.

Most of us can't change our communication style overnight; we're usually trying to change habits of a lifetime. However, you can set some goals.

First, observe yourself and the communication environment you're in. Are there certain people or situations that cause you to react in certain ways? Write down your observations. This is the awareness piece. If you don't know what the issues are, you can't fix them.

Then, set attainable goals. Remember, you're not trying to change the other person; all you can change is yourself. Write down your goals and keep track of your success or failure to implement them. This will help you see any patterns and correct those areas where you seem to be less successful. You will also be able to determine those areas where you've made progress. Once a new goal or behavior becomes habit, you can take it off of your list. For example, you might write down that you will treat each encounter with a particularly trying (difficult person) as a fresh start. At the end of the day, how did you do? Write it down. Try it for a few days or a week and then go to another one of your goals. Stay focused on the positive. Don't let yourself drift into a goal that says "I'm not going to ..." Instead, keep it more along the lines of "Today I will ..."

Improving your communication is one of the single most important things that you can do to handle difficult people. These techniques are effective not only in the workplace, but in all aspects of your life - family, friends, community, etc. Don't give up. Change is possible.

#### ◇ 7.1.24 - Improving Interpersonal Communication<sup>162</sup>

Interacting with (others) one-on-one, i.e. on an interpersonal level, is some of the most important communicating that we do. What we sometimes forget is that we aren't communicating TO another person, but WITH them. It isn't a one-way street. Communication is a process in which both people are sharing meaning, information, and feelings.

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<sup>162</sup> *Improving Interpersonal Communication* by Candice M. Coleman, Ph.D.  
[www.sayitwell.com](http://www.sayitwell.com)

Good interpersonal communicators must learn to adjust their communication style to the person and/or situation. What works in one situation with one person could be a major catastrophe in another. If you develop a wide variety of powerful communication behaviors, you can then choose the one that will be the most effective in each situation. For example, finding a way to calm an angry (parent or employer) requires different skills than motivating an apathetic one.

So, it's important to remember that the meaning someone else takes away from your interaction with them isn't in the words you say or your tone of voice or gestures. Meaning is in the way they perceive all of those things.

Did you know that you can influence other people's perceptions, but you can't control them? No matter how hard you try, each individual is going to interpret what he or she see and hear through the filter of his or her own experience. For example, think for a moment about the car you drive. Is it a sleek, fast, muscle car or a modestly priced family sedan? Whatever it is, you're sending a message. You might think that a dark blue Taurus tells others that you're trustworthy and have strong family values. However, your neighbor's perception might be that you're a very conservatism person who's afraid to take risks. In the same way, you might think that he's trying to relive his youth by driving a 1968 Thunderbird. You may both be right, but you may also be wrong.

Another aspect of perception is that we tend to believe and remember negative impressions over positive ones. Research shows that it doesn't matter what else you may know about someone, when you get a negative impression, you're more likely to believe it and remember it.

Although it sounds simplistic, focusing on the positive aspects of a person can help you avoid falling into the trap.

As you've seen, interpreting perceptions can be tricky. How do you discover if what you're observing is true? It's simple: ask questions! However, make certain that you're asking them in the right way. For example, if you asked a colleague, "What's wrong with you today?" you might get the defensive response, "Who said anything was wrong?"

Here's a tool that can help defuse those kinds of answers. It's called a Perception Check. With it, you aren't accusing and/or assuming that your interpretation of events is correct, you're showing that you're trying to understand.

Here's the process: describe the behavior you saw, give at least two possible interpretations, and then ask for clarification. For example: "I noticed that you didn't smile when you came in this morning and that you haven't said much all day." (Behavior) "Aren't you feeling well or is something bothering you?" (Interpretations) "You want to tell me what's going on?" (Clarification)

In this way, you're less likely to put the person on the defensive and you've left an opening for a dialogue. At this point, they can accept one of your interpretations, give you one of their own, or tell you to "get lost." In any event, you've given them the opportunity to share their feelings and ideas in a non-threatening way.

Another, technique is to structure your comments (especially when you have to reprimand someone) into the When You/I Felt model.

Suppose a colleague goes behind your back and shares a confidence that was meant for him/her alone? When you find out about it, what do you do? Accuse them of a lack of ethics? Not a good way to get along with your colleagues! Try this, state:

- When the behavior occurred
- The behavior
- Your feelings

For example, "Yesterday (when) when I discovered that you'd told the whole office about my problems (the behavior), I felt betrayed (your feelings)." Then keep quiet. Let them respond. This will open the way for a discussion of the issue, assuming, of course, that they're willing to discuss it. But, if you say, "Some friend you are! You told (everyone) about my problems. How could you?" You automatically put them on the defensive and the likelihood of meaningful communication has almost vanished.

Good interpersonal communication skills can help build bridges between people and tear down walls. They are good skills to learn.

#### ◇ 7.1.25 - Respecting the Property of Your Students and Institution You Serve

Teachers must be careful in utilising the property of their students or the school for their personal use.

Moulānā Aḥmad 'Ali Sahāranpūri once went to Calcutta for some *Madrasah* work. His level of taqwa (consciousness of Allāh) was such that when he went to meet one of his friends he paid the taxi fees with his own money even though the *madrasah* also benefited from their meeting.

Moulānā Khaleel Aḥmad Sahāranpūri did not speak of anything unrelated during class time. If an outsider came and needed to speak to him, he would move away from his place of teaching and speak to him. Thereafter, he would mention that the *madrasah* carpet must be used only for *madrasah* work.

The etiquettes exhibited by these servants of Allāh indeed serves as illuminating examples for us to follow.

#### ◇ 7.1.26 - Be Transparent in Your Ways

Always send reports to parents and be open for queries (from parents and the school's authorities alike) regarding the student's progress and behaviour. A good

teacher - parent relationship is important for the development of the child.

#### ◇ 7.1.27 - How to Advise Your Students

Students should be advised with subtle and ingenious means whilst using kind words and affection. Sometimes the teacher must use some smart psychology.

Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azeez Dehlawi (R) was once teaching in the *masjid*. A student, in spite of the need to perform the obligatory bath, came to the class out of fear that Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azeez (R) will be angry with him if he was late. Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azeez (R) came to know about the student’s condition (without the student knowing) and suddenly announced that he felt like taking a break from the lesson. He then said that they will go for a stroll and the students should take their books with them. This student also joined the rest of the class. Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azeez took them to the *Jamna* River and expressed his desire to take a bath. Subsequently all the students followed suit including the student who was in need of a bath. Thereafter, Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azeez (R) continued with the lessons.

From this incident we can imagine what effect this considerate and thoughtful act would have had on the student.

Make the students aware (at all times) of good respect towards the Qur’ān, their parents, elders, etc, and share with them stories of the Prophets (AS), *Sahābah* (RA), and the pious people. Remind them constantly of their purpose of study, the greatness of memorizing the Qur’ān, and their duties and responsibilities towards it.

#### ◇ 7.1.28 - How to Deal with Student’s Problems

Keep the ‘naughty ones’ close to you and counsel them constantly with kind words. Learn to understand them and try to use their energies in a positive way. Do this by giving them certain tasks of responsibility in the

class. Be watchful of bullying tendencies among the students. Every school experiences this. Be strict at all times. Never allow the students to get the upper hand over you.

If a student does something wrong, advise them in a kind and polite way. If this does not work, then reprimand and punish them accordingly. Should this fail, then inform the *madrassah* authorities or call in their parents or guardian. After this, if the student still fails to obey you, inform the parents that it is not feasible for the student to remain at the particular institution and that it would be in the best interest of all concerned that the student enroll at another institute. Perhaps they may learn better there.

#### ◇ 7.1.29 - Avoid Reprimanding When You are Angry

Never punish children when you are angry. An angry doctor cannot cure a patient. Similarly, an angry teacher who has a lack of self-control will be unable to discipline their students, and causing more harm than good.

‘Abdul Qādir Jilāni (R) said that as long as anger overcomes you; do not count yourself among the people of knowledge.

Be careful regarding the manner that you use to reprimand your students. It is a known fact that some of the teachers of the past (May Allāh reward them for their efforts and good intentions) were very harsh with their punishments. They used to discipline their students (sometimes) severely with a cane or from time to time even with their bare hands. I came across many people who acknowledged that if it were not for the type of disciplinary methods (heavy handedness) used by their teachers or parents, they would not have been where they are today (in terms of their education and character).

The manner with which you discipline a student depends on the nature of the particular student. Some students require a very strict approach, whilst others, if

you just raise your voice a little at them, they tremble or start to cry. So reprimand them according to their individual temperaments. (If you are disciplining with a cane) it must be used very cautiously and only if the situation really requires it (and if all other options have been exhausted). But before you do it, first consult with the child's parents and the laws of the country. Using a cane (or any form of corporal punishment) should be a last resort in all circumstances as there are other ways in bringing the best out of children. Keep the following *Hadeeth* in mind when you discipline your students:

“A wife of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) said: (The Prophet) never hit anyone with his hand (or any other object), neither a woman nor a servant (some of whom were children such as Anas).”<sup>163</sup>

#### ♦ 7.1.30 - The Greatest Test comes at the Time of Anger

On one occasion, Sufyān bin Uyainah (R) became angry with his students and uttered whilst in that state:

I have made a firm resolution not to teach you all for a month. On hearing this, one of his students remarked, “O Abu Muḥammad, show kindness, speak good words, take the path of your predecessors, and do good to those whom you are sitting with because you are a relic of the pious predecessors and you are responsible for the knowledge of Allāh and His Rasūl.” When Ibn Uyainah heard this, his anger subsided and he cried profusely. He then recited the following poem, “The town has become barren and is left without a king. I have had to assume leadership, which to me is quite distressing. Being the king is a great test for me.”

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<sup>163</sup> *Saheeh* Muslim: 1082

### ◇ 7.1.31 - Refrain from Beating or Hitting Your Students

If the child harbours the slightest form of hatred in his heart for his teacher, the child will never be able to derive any benefit from him. On occasion it happens that by the teacher hitting the student, the latter forget all that he has learnt. Some teachers even hit in the faces or beats in such a way that causes severe physical (and emotional) harm to the students.

One of the worst things a teacher can do is to instill fear in the students by means of heavyhanded reprimanding. Excessive beatings, slapping in the face, using abusive language and calling derogative names is by no means ways to teach the Holy Qur'an. This is totally illegal and criminal. These teachers must ponder over what will be achieved from this. If we could not tolerate such treatment when we were students - then how can we justify the same on our students?

Children should love to memorize the Qur'an; they must feel eager and happy to go to school. Memorizing the Qur'an must be the most pleasurable experience in their life.

### ◇ 7.1.32 - Reformation of Your Students

The Messenger of Allāh (SAW) said, "Every one of you is a shepherd and every one of you is answerable regarding his flock."

Teachers are appointed guides over their students and the students are considered as their flock. It is the duty of the teacher to prevent their students from adopting an evil character. Teachers who assume an unconcerned attitude towards the behaviour and actions of their students will undoubtedly be answerable for it. You should keep a check on every condition of all your students. It is unnecessary to spy on them. If, through some indication, you become aware of any faults then you should counsel, correct, and reprimand them in an appropriate way

Moulāna Manzûr Nu'māni (R) mentioned that if students were instructed with proper reformation towards Islamic guidance and discipline, and they happen to abandon their studies after four or even six years, then at least they would leave with some Islamic concern.

There is unfortunately very little evidence of this care and concern in our institutions nowadays. Even if the student spends up to 15 years in a *madrassah*, he sometimes lacks the signs of knowledge as would be expected. Some students do not realize their responsibilities at the time of qualifying. They have no conscience of the effect their negligent behaviour can have on the communities they are supposed to serve.

### ◊ 7.1.33 - Expelling a Student Should Be the Last Option

Nowadays, the attitude of the authorities at some institutions is that if they are not happy with a certain student, they will choose the easiest option, which is to expel them. These authorities are uninclined towards the reformation and best interest of the students and they are quick to expel the student for their own ease. The effect of this incorrect practice is that hundreds of students are deprived of the opportunity to reform, whereas with a little effort and by following the guidance of our Prophet (SAW), they could have been transformed.

No one regards a person to be intelligent if he cuts off his limb due to abscesses and boils erupting from them. The proper thing to do is to treat the boil and when it heals, utilise the limb. If the limb has been affected with such a disease whereby the whole body will be affected and the infection is incurable then it should be severed from the body so that the whole body can be saved. In the same manner if there is any evil or offensive habit in a student then, tactfully and with wisdom, efforts should be made to correct it. Thereafter, if no reasonable

method proves effective then the student may be removed as a final resort.

#### ♦ 7.1.34 – Be Open and Unafraid to Admit What You Do Not Know

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ud (RA) said:

O People say only that which you know. If you do not know anything then say: “Allāh knows best” because a distinctive feature of knowledge is that if a person does not know something, he should admit his unfamiliarity with the subject and offer to teach it later or have it taught by another teacher.

If a teacher does not understand a particular aspect then they should clearly state, “I am not aware (knowing) of this, but I will research it and explain it to you later.” Never regard this admission as below one’s dignity. After all, is there anyone in this world that can claim they know everything?

#### ♦ 7.1.35 – Take Responsibility for Your Mistakes

Once a person posed a question to ‘Ali (RA), which he (‘Ali) answered. Another person said, “O *Ameerul Mu’mineen*, the *mas’alah* is not as you have explained, but this is the correct explanation.” ‘Ali replied, “Without doubt, what you are saying is correct. I have erred.”

If a teacher realizes that they erred in some way, then they should rectify the mistake immediately.

If a student rectifies the teacher, they should accept the student’s opinion. This displays the virtue and integrity of the teacher - not their deficiency. This will result that the students’ confidence in the teacher’s piety, truthfulness, and reliability will increase.

### ◇ 7.1.36 - Taking Service From Your Students

The good fortune of a student lies in serving their teacher. However, the teacher should exercise great caution in this regard. Without extreme necessity, they should not take personal service from their students. If out of some pressing need, the teacher has some work done by the students, then they should compensate them in some way. Teachers should not take such service from the students that will either affect their lessons or prove burdensome to them.

It is recorded regarding Abul Aswad (R) (the scholar who established the rules for Arabic grammar) that he suffered a stroke towards the end of his life. This resulted in his hands and limbs being paralyzed. In this condition he would drag his feet and go to the bazaar to complete his work whereas thousands of his students were available to assist him if required.

Imām Bukhāri (R) also did his own work. When he built the guest quarters outside *Bukhārah*, he personally worked with the labourers. Once, one of the students mentioned to him, “What is the need for you to work when we are here?” He replied, “This work is beneficial for me.”

The entire day of the teacher is occupied in learning, practicing, and teaching the lifestyle of the Prophet (SAW). The leader of mankind (SAW) used to do his own work, milked the cows, sewed his clothes, and mended his shoes. He (SAW) never burdened others with his (SAW) own work despite the fact that his (SAW) companions would literally die for him (SAW).

Anas (RA) said that he had served the Prophet (SAW) for ten years. In that time, Anas was unable to serve the Prophet (SAW) to the extent that he (SAW) served Anas.

The important point to note here are that the rights that the teacher have over the student is known very well, but there is little concern of the rights of the student over the teacher. The reality is that if the teacher shows concern and affection to the students and fulfils

their rights as they ought to, then perhaps you would not find a single student who would not regard it as their good fortune to be of service to the teacher.

♦ **7.1.37 - Teaching is a Special Favour to the Teacher**

The author of *Rahmatul-lil Muta'allimeen* mentions in the section 'Etiquettes for Teachers' that if any student does something contrary to the teacher's temperament, it should be kept in mind that it is because of these students that they are afforded the opportunity to serve Islām.

The teachers of Moulāna Siddeeq Aḥmad Bāndhwi (R) used to say that it is a great favour of the students upon them that they are engaged in imparting knowledge and thereby serving Islām. Had it not been for the students, they could not imagine what occupation they would have been involved in. They acknowledged that besides being involved in serving Islām, it might have been difficult for them to even perform their prayers punctually. The teacher who forgives and treat the student with compassion will most certainly gain the closeness of Allāh.

♦ **7.1.38 - Teaching Qur'ān is the Best of Allāh's Bounties to You**

Reflecting again on the saying of Allāh's Messenger (SAW) that 'the best among you is he [or she] who learns the Qur'ān and teaches it to others', we acknowledge that teaching the Qur'ān is indeed a great favour from Allāh unto His servant.

Moulāna Siddeeq Aḥmad Bāndhwi (R) whilst discussing the shortcomings of certain students to his teacher, Mufti Maḥmūd Ḥasan (R), mentioned that he was beginning to lose hope. Mufti Maḥmūd Ḥasan replied by reiterating that the work has to continue in spite of all these problems. He said that in it (the students' weakness) lays goodness for the teacher (and

ultimate salvation). There are a lot of trials and difficulties in other occupations. The teacher should hope that from these students there will emerge a group whom Allāh will use for the reformation of the Muslim nation - in this lays the success of the teacher.

♦ **7.1.39 - Teaching May Lead to Your Protection**

Always think that the students have been entrusted to you. By making an effort on them and correcting their ways, you may gain the closeness and satisfaction of Allāh. The time and effort spent on teaching will benefit you in the Hereafter. It is through the students that Allāh blesses the teacher immensely.

♦ **7.1.40 - Your Students May Inspire You Towards Truth**

Many a time Allāh inspires the heart of the teacher towards truth because of the student.

Moulāna Shah Muḥammad Is'hāq (R) used to say about his student, Qāri 'Abdurrah̄mān (R), that he used to teach him the words of the *ah̄ādeeth* but the *rūh* (soul) of the *ah̄ādeeth* he gained from the student. He would experience that whilst preparing the next days' lesson, he would not be able to understand certain aspects of the lesson. However, at the time of teaching the lesson, he would understand and explain it easily to the student. This is due to the *barakah* (blessings) of the student.

♦ **7.1.41 - Teachers Should Eat From Permissible Sources**

'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azeez (R) says that those scholars and Qur'ān reciters who eat *ḥarām* are in reality dead. They are heedlessly filling their bellies with fire. Had they been alive they would have definitely felt the pain of fire.

### ◇ 7.1.42 - Be Careful in Becoming Too Inclined Towards Your Students

A male teacher should never be alone with young boys or girls. Even if you are alone with them, do not speak to them more than that which is necessary. In fact, one should not even look at them intentionally, nor should one listen to their talks so that the *nafs* takes pleasure from such talks. The sickness of being infatuated with one's students is such that it may become firmly rooted in one's heart before you even become aware of it. The person only becomes aware when the roots of such sinful association are already deeply embedded. At this stage it will become extremely difficult to control one self, which will undoubtedly result in abuse.

Avoid becoming proud or over assured of your piety by thinking that you will never fall into this.

Prophet Yûsuf (AS) has said: "I do not regard my *nafs* to be safe. Verily the *nafs* command towards evil." [Sûrah Yûsuf: 53]

There must be absolutely no free mixing of girls and boys at Islamic institutions (or in any other place - as far as possible). Further effort should also be made that the small boys are separated from the big boys.

### ◇ 7.1.43 - Practicing Your Knowledge

Abu Darda (RA) says, "I tremble with fear when I think that I will be made to stand in front of Allāh and I will be asked, "You attained knowledge, what benefit have you taken from that knowledge?"

He (RA) also said, "There is one destruction for the one who has no knowledge and seven destructions for the one who has knowledge but does not practice."

Ibrāhim bin Adam (R) was once asked:

Allāh says in the Qur'ān, 'Ask of Me and I will answer your call', why is it that we make dua and

it is not accepted?” He replied, “There are five reasons why duas are not accepted:

1. You have recognized Allāh yet you do not fulfil His rights.
2. You read the Qur’ān yet you do not practice on it.
3. You claim to love Rasūlullāh (SAW) yet you do not follow his (SAW) *Sunnah*.
4. You curse *Iblees* yet you obey him.
5. You close your eyes to your own faults and search for faults in others.

‘Ali (RA) said,

O people of knowledge practice on what you have learnt because an ‘*Ālim* is he who acts in accordance with his knowledge. Soon a time will come when the knowledge of people will not become manifest. Their internal values will differ from their external actions. Their actions will be in opposition to their knowledge. They will sit in gatherings boasting with one another. They will get angry when people leave their gatherings and sit in the gatherings of others. The actions of such individuals will not reach Allāh.

Hasan Baṣri (RA) once mentioned that knowledge is of two types, the first is that knowledge which emanates from the hearts of people. This is known as beneficial knowledge. The second type of knowledge will be that which merely flows from the tongue. This type of knowledge denotes insincerity and will become a proof against an individual at the time of reckoning.

Hasan bin ‘Ali (RA) is reported to have said, “That person who has superseded others in terms of knowledge should also excel in practice.”

Sayed Aḥmad Rifā'ee (R) said, "Beware of becoming like a sieve, which provides refined flour to others while it keeps the husk or chaff for itself."

It should not happen that we offer words of wisdom to others and our own hearts are not attached by that wisdom. This chaff is knowledge without practice.

#### ♦ 7.1.44 - Stay Away From Sin

'Abdullāh bin Mubārak (R) said that the previous scholars used to say, "Seek protection from the trials of an ignorant worshipper and a sinful 'Ālim because both of these groups are great trials."

Once Rasūlullāh (SAW) was asked, "Who is the worst person?" He (SAW) replied, "A corrupt 'Ālim."

Mālik bin Dinār (R) used to recite this poem regularly, "Oh group of 'Ulamā, you are like the salt of the town. If the salt itself goes bad, then what is there that can put the salt right."

Pleasure in food is attained through salt. If the salt turns bad, there is no way to cure it. In the same way, the scholars rectify the general public. If the scholars are spoilt, how can the public then be rectified?

Imām Ghazāli (R) said, "Correcting others is based on correcting oneself. Therefore, begin with yourself and then with those close to you."

#### ♦ 7.2 - Teaching Methodology

It is essential, practical, and also in following the example of the Prophet (SAW) that a one-on-one methodology of teaching is implemented.

In addition to this, try to assist the student in perfecting his or her memorization skills. Many teachers instruct their students to practice, learn, and review their lessons without giving them the tools to do so. If the student fails with their memorization, they tend to blame the student or his parents for it.

If we want our students to achieve quality in their studies, we must show them how to arrive effeciently at

this goal (instead of merely assigning passages for memorization).<sup>164</sup>

### ◇ 7.2.1 - The New Lessons

- Students must be able to recite the Qur'ān fluently with *tajweed* before commencing memorization. Recite the students' new lesson to them or let them recite it to you every day. Let the students read their lessons to each other before reading it to you - this will increase their confidence in reciting the lesson. Be strict and attentive when listening to new lesson. Be extremely watchful for the mispronunciation of letters or words, and accepting any mistakes in the new lesson. Only accept the portion that the student knows fluently without mistakes or hesitations and let them rather repeat the rest of the lesson at a later stage. Allowing of mistakes and hesitations in the lesson will automatically result in the back lessons becoming weak.
- Mark the mistakes in the Qur'ān.
- Encourage the student to memorize according to their capability. It is best to start them off with short portions and it to increase it gradually.
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### ◇ 7.2.2 - The Back Lessons

- Back lessons must be recited everyday without fail. Try to include the new lesson that was recited that specific day into the Back lessons - this will make the *Juz* stronger at the time of revision.
- Stop the student's lesson on completion of a new *Juz* for at least one day so that they can consolidate the *Juz* properly before continuing to the next *Juz*. It would be ideal if you could let the

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<sup>164</sup> *An Applied Linguistics Approach to Improving the Memorization of the Holy Qur'ān* by Muhammad Yāseen Alfī. King Saūd University, Saūdi Arabia

student recite the newly - completed *Juz* to another teacher (almost like an exam).

### ◇ 7.2.3 - The Revision

- Supervise the students' revision effectively by working out a 'round' for them. Keep the focus on the last few *Juz* as these are normally the weaker ones.
- Increase the students' revision in accordance with the amount of *Juz* they memorized. Try to let them recite at least two *Juz* revision a day.
- Stop the student's lesson a few days before their holidays so that their revision can be solid at the time when the *Madrassah* closes. It is a 'given' that the students' revision tends to be weaker after the holidays or even weekends. Do not let them continue with new lesson unless you are totally satisfied with their revision on their return from holidays. It is important that they understand that there is no holiday from Qur'an!
- Teachers often use the older or more responsible students to assist the weaker ones or to help out with the flow of revision in the class. You may set the students up as revision partners. Be ever watchful over them and make a point to check their revision at random. Do not give them any indication as to which student you are going to listen to next. This should prepare them to be ready to recite to you at anytime. Make sure that the listening partner reports back to you accurately after having listened with an attentive ear. Make them bear full responsibility should you discover that they did not listen properly.
- Encourage students to read slow and loud at all times. You must be able to hear them clearly from any position in the room. Never allow them to recite hurriedly or in a manner that would cause them to transgress the rules of *tajweed*. The

average time for a student to complete the recitation of one *Juz* is 30 minutes.

- Keep a record of the *Juz* recited together with the amount of mistakes made in it on a daily basis. Always refer to the book to check the student's 'history' with the *Juz*. Allow the parents to scrutinize the book.
- Point out the *mutashābihāt* (similar verses) to the student and advise them on how to master it.
- Be very strict with marked mistakes.
- Stop the students' lessons if their revision becomes weak.
- Encourage honourable competition amongst the students.
- Implement incentives and reward; e.g., if a student performs well, allow some 'privileges' like letting them go home earlier than the rest of the class, etc.
- Encourage the students to memorize the names of the chapters in the Qur'ān and to read over the English translation of the verses.

#### ♦ 7.2.4 - The Exams

Prepare the students to participate in at least one class exam every year. This can be held just before the school holiday. There are various ways you can conduct the exams - you may invite another teacher to test the students individually by letting them recite from verses that are selected at random in accordance to the amount of *Juz* they memorized.

Try to create a honourable competition amongst them by seeing who can memorize portions of the Qur'ān the quickest, or who knows their work the best.

Additionally, you may even create games with them by testing their knowledge on the *mutashābihāt*, or by giving them a verse and they must recite the verse before or after it.

This will serve as excellent confidence boosters for the students and will also assist you to determine which areas of the students' memorization need attention.

## SECTION EIGHT

### Signs of Abandoning the Qur'ān

It is recorded in *Tirmidhi* that the Prophet (SAW) made the following observation, “I was shown the sins that the people of my *Ummah* had committed and I saw no greater sin than that of a person who learnt a Sûrah or verse of the Qur'ān and then had forgotten it.” Allāh says:

But whosoever turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He will say, "O my Lord! Why have you raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)." (Allāh) will say: "Like this, Our *Ayāt* came unto you, but you disregarded them, and so this Day, you will be neglected." [Tā hā: 124-126]

And the Prophet (SAW) said – as is in the *Saheehain*:

A man will be brought on the Day of Judgement and he will be thrown into the Hellfire. His bowels will gush forth and so he circles around Hellfire with it just like the donkey circles around its mill. The people of Hell will encircle him and say, “O so and so! What has happened to you? Did you not used to command us with doing good and forbid us from all wrong?” He will say, “Indeed. I used to command you with good but I would not do it myself and I used to forbid you from evil but I would do it myself.

Abu Darda (RA) narrates that Rasūlullāh (SAW) said,

Allāh had once sent revelation to one of His Prophets to inform those people who learn their religion for reasons other than practising upon it and who display the actions of the Hereafter to earn the *dunya*, that, they are like those, who in the presence of others, dress themselves in sheep skin, yet they have the hearts of wolves concealed in their bosoms. Their tongues are sweeter than honey but their hearts are more bitter than poison. They wish to deceive me and make fun of me. Very well, I will put them into such a trial that will leave even great intelligent people in a state of shock.”<sup>165</sup>

### ◇ 8.1 - Types of Qur’ān Abandonment

Abandoning the Qur’ān comes in different types, some of which are:

- Abandoning the recitation of Qur’ān.
- Forgetting the Qur’ān after memorizing it
- Turning away from the Qur’ān and speaking ill about it
- Not enacting the message of the Qur’ān
- Abandoning listening to it, believing in it, and being attentive towards it.
- Abandoning acting upon it, not taking cognisance of its *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permissible and forbidden), and not believing in it when reading it.
- Abandoning resorting to it as judgement in the principles of religion and in its branches, thinking that it does not bring certainty of truth, that its proofs are only in words and phrases and that it does not lead one to attain concrete knowledge.
- Abandoning its contemplation, understanding, and knowing what Allāh means by it.

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<sup>165</sup> ‘*Adābul Muta‘allimeen* - Moulānā Aḥmad Bāndwi, Published by Jamiatul ‘Ulamā (KZN), South Africa

- Abandoning seeking a cure by it for all the diseases of the heart, so that such a person seeks a cure from other than it and he abandons seeking a cure from it.
- To feel some doubt and constraint towards it in the heart, one time doubts at its revelation and another time that it is totally from Allāh.<sup>166</sup>

All this comes into the statement of Allāh *Ta'āla*, "And the Messenger will say, "O my Lord! Verily, my people deserted this Qur'ān" [al-Furqān: 30]

Khurram Murād explains further:

It may quite possibly happen therefore that you may read the Qur'ān endlessly, turn its pages laboriously, recite its words beautifully, study it most scholarly, and still fail to make an encounter with it that enriches and transforms your whole person. For, all those who read the Qur'ān do not profit from it as they should. Some remain unblest; some are even cursed.

The journey has its own hazards, as it must, just as it has its own precious and limitless rewards. Many never turn to it, though the Book always lies near at hand, and many are turned away from its gates. Many read it often, but come back empty-handed, while many others who read it never really enter its world. Some do not find, but are lost. They fail to hear Allāh even among His own words; instead, they hear their own voices or those other than Allāh's. Still others, though they hear Allāh, fail to find inside themselves the will, the resolve, and the courage to respond and live by His call. Some lose even what they had and, instead of collecting priceless

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<sup>166</sup> *al-Darimi* (3328) and al-Aajuri in *Fadhā'il al-Qur'ān* (pg. 3)

gems, they return with backbreaking loads of stones that will hurt them forever and ever.

What a tragic misfortune it would be if you came to the Qur'ān and went away empty-handed - soul untouched, heart unmoved, life unchanged; 'they went out as they came in'.

The Qur'ān's blessings are limitless, but the measure of your taking from it depends entirely upon the capacity and the suitability of the receptacle you bring to it. So, at the very outset, make yourself more deeply aware of what the Qur'ān means to you and what it demands of you; and make a solemn determination to recite the Qur'ān in an appropriate manner, so that you may be counted among 'Those whom We have given the Book, they recite it as it ought to be recited; it is they who believe in it' [al-Baqarah, 121].<sup>167</sup>

## ◇ 8.2 - Consequences of Abandoning the Qur'ān

If the hearts are not enveloped with the Qur'ān, then the *shayāteen* (devils) take residence in them. This is due to the fact that abandoning the Qur'ān weakens belief and faith in Allāh and causes the heart to become empty.

It is narrated that Mu'adh ibn Jabal (RA) said:

The Qur'ān will become worn out in the hearts of a people just like a garment becomes worn out and is ruined, they will read it but they shall feel no desire towards it nor any sweetness. They are but wolves in sheep's clothing, their deeds are in greed without any fear (of Allāh). If they fall short they say 'We shall attain' and if they fall into sin

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<sup>167</sup> The Journey of Life - *Way to the Qur'ān* by Khurram Murād

they say ‘We shall be forgiven, we do not associate partners with Allāh.’<sup>168</sup>

And it is also reported from Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (RA) that he said:

There will be a people to come after some time, who have abandoned prayer and followed their desires – they will meet evil (consequences). Then there will be a group after them who’ll read the Qur’ān but it will not pass their throats, and the Qur’ān will be read by three: a believer, a hypocrite and a wrong-doer. The hypocrite is a disbeliever in it, the wrongdoer consumes by it, but the believer acts upon it.<sup>169</sup>

Zadhan (R) said, “Whoever recites the Qur’ān in order to gain (worldly benefit) from the people with it, comes on the Day of Judgement with his face being all bones, devoid of any meat.”<sup>170</sup>

There used to be an Afrikāns saying amongst the senior people in Cape Town: “*Speel met die Qur’ān en die Qur’ān sal jou hard slaan*”, meaning that if you play (be negligent with regards to the Qur’ān), the Qur’ān will seize and claim its rights from you.

My dear brothers and sisters, I know (and have seen) of those who have memorized from the Qur’ān and lost their sanity; running naked down the road, jumping in front of moving cars, hearing voices in the minds, and some being reduced to beggars on the streets. These are signs and reminders to you and me in order that we should be alert and vigilant with regards to our duties and responsibilities towards the Qur’ān.

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<sup>168</sup> *al-Darimi* (3346)

<sup>169</sup> *Akhlāq Ahl al-Qur’ān* (106)

<sup>170</sup> Reported by Abu Nu‘aym (4/199)

### ◊ 8.3 - They Are Those Who Do Not Realize the Value of the Qur'ān

O people of Qur'ān, do you think that those people who have reduced the Qur'ān to mere recital at funerals, birthdays, weddings, and innovated matters - do you think that they truly realise the value and power of the Qur'ān? What about those who have taken the memorization of it as an opportunity to earn and trade in business, taking huge sums of money in recording and recitation? And others who have taken it as an opportunity to gain leadership amongst the high-ranking people in their society? Also, what about those who work with *ruq'yah* (Islamic cure) just so they can take advantage over the needs of the ill and their state of weakness in order to gain wealth and fame and many others apart from them – do you think that they realise the value and power of the Qur'ān?

May Allāh protect and guide us as we tread the path of becoming true people of Qur'ān – and make us deserving of the place of residence that Allāh has promised, instead of us becoming desirous of these near enjoyments and wishes.

### ◊ 8.4 - Fulfilling the Qur'ān's Mission

An essential and important part of living by the Qur'ān is to convey its message to people around you. Indeed, since the moment the Prophet (SAW) received the first revelation he (SAW), realized the immense task of bringing it to his (SAW) people. And the second revelation came with the summons: 'Stand up and warn' [al-Muddath-thir, 2]. Then at various places it was made clear to the Prophet (SAW) that to communicate the Qur'ān, to make it heard, to explain it was to be his (SAW) primary duty, his (SAW) life mission [al-An'ām: 19; al-Furqān: 1; al-An'ām: 105; al-Mā'idah: 67; Mariam: 97; al-A'rāf: 157; etc].

Allāh *Ta'āla* also says:

And remember when We sent towards you, a group of the *Jinns*, listening to the Qur'ān, when they stood in the presence thereof, they said: "Listen in silence!" And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners. They said, "O our people! Verily! We have heard a Book sent down after Mūsa, confirming what came before it, it guides to the truth and to a Straight Path. O our people! Respond to Allāh's Caller and believe in him. He (Allāh), will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment. [al-Aḥqāf: 29-31]

Allāh herewith informs us about a group from amongst the *Jinn* who listened to the Qur'ān, believed in it, and then returned to their people in order to call them to the worship of Allāh and to follow the Messenger of Allāh (SAW).

So are we carrying out what the *Jinn* have carried out, of bearing the trust of propagation and calling the people to the worship of Allāh? For that is surely our duty for which Allāh has created us for; that we worship Allāh and that we call the Universe in its entirety to His worship.

Rab'ee ibn 'Aamir (RA) said to Rustum (commander of the Persian Army), when he asked him:

Who are you and what has brought you here?' Rab'ee said, 'We are a people whom Allāh has sent out to take the slaves out from the worship of slaves to the worship of the Lord of slaves, from the tyranny of religions to the justice of Islām and from the narrowness of this world to the vastness of the world and the Hereafter.'

### ◇ 8.5 - Precious Advice to the People of Qur'ān

How beautiful is the advice of Imām al-Aajri (R) in his book *Akhlāq Ahl al-Qur'ān*. He (R) says:

The first thing that he (the student of Qur'ān) must do is to utilise the *taqwa* (consciousness of Allāh) in secrecy and in openness by developing *wara'* (piety) in his eating and drinking, in his sense of dress and in his home, with insight of his era and the *fasād* (sins and evil) of his people so that he is cautious against them with regards to his *deen*. He is highly devoted over his state of affairs and deeply concerned with correcting what has become corrupt in his matters. He guards his tongue and yet is distinguished by his speech.

And from the advice is also the following:

If he studies the Qur'ān, he does so with complete understanding and intellect. What concerns him fully comprehends that which Allāh has made mandatory on him to follow and adhere to, and desisting from what Allāh has forbid him from. His concern is not 'when will I finish the Qur'ān?' But rather his deep distress (and worry) is 'when will I be fully content with Allāh and independent of other than Him?' 'When will I be from the *muttaqeen* (God fearing)? When will I be from the *muhsineen* (good doers)? When will I be from the *mutawakkileen* (relying only on Allāh)? When will I be from the *khāshi'een* (humbled to Allāh)? When will I be from the *ṣābireen* (patient)? When will I be from the *ṣādiqeen* (truthful)? When will I be from the *khā'ifeen* (fearful)? When will I be from the *rājeen* (hopeful)? When will I become abstinent in this world? When will I yearn for the Hereafter? When will I repent from sins? When will I recognise the successive blessings of Allāh? When

will I thank Him for it? When will I deeply understand the public address from Allāh (this Qur’ān)? When will I sincerely comprehend what I’m reciting? When will I overcome my soul’s desires? When will I strive for Allāh with a true striving? When will I guard my tongue? When will I lower my gaze? When will I protect my chastity and when will I have *hayā*’ (modesty/shyness) of Allāh with a true and honest *hayā*?<sup>171</sup>

Fudhail ibn ‘Iyādh (R) is also reported to say:

It is not for the carrier of Qur’ān to have a need of anyone from the creation but it should be such that the creation has a need of him. The *hāfidh* of Qur’ān is the carrier of the Flag of Islām; it does not befit him [or her] that he should indulge in nonsense speech with those who do so, nor should he be forgetful with those who forget nor should he waste time in play with those who waste time in play.”<sup>172</sup>

Abu Mūsa al-Ash’ari (RA) gathered all those who had recited (memorized) Qur’ān – and they numbered near to three hundred – he (RA) then began to exalt the Qur’ān, saying:

Indeed this Qur’ān is enough of a store and reserve for you, and yet it is enough of a burden over you. So follow the Qur’ān and do not make the Qur’ān follow you. Surely whoever follows the Qur’ān, it leads him to the gardens of Paradise and whoever makes the Qur’ān follow him, it drives him by the neck and hurls him into the Fire.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> *Akhlāq Ahl al-Qur’ān* (pg. 79)

<sup>172</sup> Reported by *al-Aajuri* (37) and *Abu Nu’aym* (8/92)

<sup>173</sup> *Al-Darimi* (3328) and *al-Aajuri* in *Fadhā’il al-Qur’ān* (Pg.3)

### ♦ 8.6 - A Moment With the Soul

Dear respected Brothers and Sisters. Have any of you had a sincere moment with your soul to ask yourself, ‘Why am I memorizing the Qur’ān? Is it to make people know that I have memorized the Qur’ān? Or is it to gain a high status with the people? Let us instead strive to make this deed sincere, seeking only the satisfaction of Allāh.

Iyās ibn ‘Aamir (R) said,

‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (RA) took my hand and said: ‘Indeed if you remain, (you will see) the Qur’ān will be read by three sorts: One group will read it for the sake of Allāh, another for the sake of argumentation and another for the sake of this Dunyā, and whoever seeks (these things) by the Qur’ān, will only attain it.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Al-Darimi (3329) and al-Aajuri (25)

## **The Miracle, the Qur'ān**

So brothers and sisters, to increase your *Eemān*  
Read the miracle, read the Qur'ān  
Here's a fact for the ones who are keener  
92 chapters revealed in Makkah, 22 in Madeenah  
Read it every day and read it to be proud  
The message of Qur'ān is meant to be read aloud  
Read the book from the Lord of the worlds  
Over 6,000 verses and 77,000 words  
Read with respect, no disturbance, no laughter's  
From al-Fātiḥa to al-Nās, all 114 chapters  
And in it 14 times you need to prostrate,  
And say Allāhu Akbar, meaning Allāh is great!  
In this book, 25 Prophets are mentioned by name  
Who came at different times but their message was the  
same  
This miracle was revealed over a 23-year span  
Sent from Allāh (swt), by an Angel to a man  
That man was Muḥammad (SAW), the best of creation  
And we are proud to be part of his nation  
He gave us a message called Islām  
So read this miracle, read the Qur'ān.<sup>175</sup>

### **About the Author**

Muntahā Ibrāheem Kenny plays a pivotal role in the establishment and propagation of Quranic institutes, activities, and programs in South Africa. He has been involved in the teaching of Qur'ān since 1998 and has thus contributed to the success of a number of Qur'ān memorizers and institutions. He is the forerunner and initiator of the national Qur'ān recital and research competitions and is presently the chairman of the South African Qur'ān Union.

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<sup>175</sup> Author unknown





