

Who are the Women of the Qur'an?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Foreword

All praises are due solely to Allah (ﷻ), by whose grace and mercy all good deeds are completed. May Allah (ﷻ)'s special and choicest salawaat and salaam be upon our beloved master and teacher Nabi Muhammed (ﷺ), whose life is the greatest example worthy of being followed and who conveyed to us the greatest message of Hidaayah—the Qur'an.

Memorizing the Qur'an is a great feat and achievement, which is only possible with the help and Tawfiq of Allah. The sheer number of Huffaadh in this Ummah is a clear proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and the truthfulness of Islam. To bear this great message, Allah has chosen the hearts of His certain special friends who are referred to as Ahlul-Qur'an and Ahlullah. May Allah make us truly from amongst them.

This booklet was prepared on the occasion of the completion of Hifzul-Qur'an by two girls – the daughters of Moulana Muhammad Lambat and Moulana Afzal Ismail – under the auspices of my respected spouse. This booklet aims to briefly outline the position of a Haafidhah of the Qur'an, her responsibility towards the Qur'an and the effect the Qur'an ought to have upon her life. Great benefits of becoming a Haafidhah have also been highlighted and the lives of some remarkable women of the Qur'an have been mentioned for inspiration. This booklet will, Insha-Allah, prove beneficial to all women – Haafidhah and non-Haafidhah – and even to men, all of whom are encouraged to read it.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to my beloved parents, my asaatzah (teachers), my Shaykh, my father-in-law Hafiz Uzair Makada who taught the Qur'an to his daughter despite his busy schedule, and specifically our respected teacher Moulana Ismail Kathrada and his sister - my grandmother - who was the first Haafidhah of our family. May Allah reward all of the above with the greatest of rewards and be pleased with them.

I wish to make mention of my grandfather Hafiz Dawud Makada ؒ who had married my grandmother only due to her connection with the Qur'an and who had passed his life teaching the Qur'an, as a result of which Allah, out of His kindness, blessed them with a family full of Huffaadh and Haafidhaat. May Allah be pleased with him, forgive him and raise his stages in the Aakhirah.

May Allah accept it from this useless compiler and make it a means of benefit to mankind at large. Aameen. Imraan Kajee 5 Shawwal 1438

GLAD TIDINGS TO THE WOMEN WHO HAVE MEMORIZED THE QUR'AN!

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, congratulations!

Allah has used you to preserve His Book on earth. You are one of those through whom Allah has kept the promise He made when He said: "Surely it is We Who have revealed the Zikr – the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) and We will most surely be its Guardian." (Surah Hijr v.9)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, do not underestimate the worth of what you have done.

What is in your heart is knowledge. Allah says: "Nay, but they are the clear aayaat (verses), preserved in the chests of those who have been given knowledge..." (Surah Ankaboot v.49)

In your heart is a Book which cannot be washed away with water. It was said in the sacred previous Scriptures concerning this ummah that "their gospel is in their hearts."

O (female) bearer of the Qur'an, you are indeed envied by people.

This envy is the kind of envy that is permissible. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "You should not envy (admire) anybody except for two: a man to whom Allah has given the Qur'an, so he recites it night and day, so that another man says, 'If I were given what he has been given, I would do the same as he does'; and a man to whom Allah has given wealth, so he spends it appropriately, and another man says, 'If I were given what he has been given, I would do the same as he does'." (Sahih Bukhari)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, O citron-blossom of this world! Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The believer who reads the Qur'an is like the citron, whose fragrance is good and whose taste is good." (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

The phrase “whose fragrance is good and whose taste is good” attributes the quality of taste to imaan (faith) and the quality of fragrance to recitation of the Qur’an (because taste is more tangible and longer lasting than fragrance). The wisdom behind using the citron as a metaphor rather than any other fruit that also has both a good taste and a good fragrance is because the peel of the citron is used as medicine and the oil that is extracted from its seeds has a number of benefits. It is said that the jinn do not approach a house in which there are citrons, which is an appropriate analogy to the Qur’an, which the shayaateen (devils) do not approach. The outside of its seeds is white, which is an appropriate analogy for the heart of the believer, and it has other qualities: it is big, it looks nice, it may be of different colours, it is soft to the touch, it is delicious to eat, it has a pleasant flavour, it aids digestion and it is good for the stomach.

O Sister who has memorized the Qur’an, do you know the status you have reached?

Your mother Aa’ishah (radhiAllahu anha) reported that Rasulullah ﷺ said: “The one who is proficient in reciting the Qur’an will be with the righteous, noble angels who are travelers (safarah).” (Sahih Bukhari)

The angels are referred to as ‘travelers’, because they travel to the Ambiyaa with messages from Allah. Or it may be that the word ‘safarah’ are the scribes who copied down the Qur’an from Al-Lawhul Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet in the heavens). The one who is proficient is the one who reads well and has memorized perfectly, who does not hesitate when reading or find reading difficult, because he has memorized it well and reads it fluently. They are referred to as righteous as they are obedient angels who obey Allah.

Qaadhi Iyaadh رحمه الله said: "Saying that he is with the angels could mean that in the Hereafter, he will have a position close to that of the travelling or recording angels, because he shares their attribute of carrying the Book of Allah. Or it could mean that he does what they do and follows the same path as them."

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “It will be said to the companions of the Qur’an, ‘Read and rise in status, recite with Tarteel as you used to recite in the world, for your status will be at the last aayah you recite.’” (Sunan Tirmizi).

“It will be said” refers to the time when the person enters Paradise. “The companion of the Qur’an” means the one who persistently recited it and acted in accordance with it. “Rise in status” means to ascend through the levels of Paradise. “Recite with tarteel” means to recite slowly and precisely with concentration, and to not rush in reading. “As you used to recite in the world” means with proper pronunciation (tajweed) of the letters and pausing where one should pause. “Your status will be at the last aayah you recite”

Khattaabi رحمه الله said: "It is reported that the number of aayaat (verses) of the Qur’an will be like the number of levels in Paradise in the Hereafter, and it will be said to the reader, 'Go up as many levels as the aayaat of the Qur’an that you recited.' So whoever recited the entire Qur’an will reach the highest level in Paradise in the Hereafter, and whoever recited a part of it will reach a level proportionate with what he read. The extent of the reward will depend on the amount of Qur’an read."

O Sister who has memorized the Qur’an, congratulations! You have filled your heart with the words of Allah and have responded to His invitation.

Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood رحمه الله said: “This Qur’an is a banquet from Allah, so take as much of it as you can. I know of nothing more devoid of goodness than a house in which there is nothing of the Book of Allah. The heart in which there is nothing of the Book of Allah is as desolate as a house in which nobody lives.” (Sunan Daarimi)

O (female) bearer of the Qur’an, blessings and congratulations be upon you! If you are sincere now, you will be saved from the punishment of Hell.

Abu Umaamah رحمه الله used to say: “Read the Qur’an and do not be content merely to have these Masaahif (copies of the Qur’an) hanging up. Allah

will not punish a heart that has memorized and understood the Qur'an.”
(Sunan Daarimi)

O (female) bearer of the Qur'an, congratulations! For the Book of Allah will intercede for you and will be your adornment on the Day of Resurrection. If you remain steadfast, it will be greater than the adornments you wear now.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “The Qur'an will come on the Day of Resurrection and will say, ‘O my Rabb! Adorn him’, so he will be given a crown of honour to wear. Then it will say, ‘O my Rabb! Increase it’, so he will be given a garment of honour. Then it will say, ‘O my Rabb! Be pleased with him,’ so Allah will be pleased with him. Then it will be said to him, ‘Read and rise in status,’ and for every aayah, his reward will increase.” (Sunan Tirmizi)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, congratulations! If you practice upon the Qur'an, your intercession will be accepted on behalf of ten family members who were destined to Jahannam.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: ‘He who recites the Qur'an and memorizes it, then he considers whatever it declares as Halaal to be Halaal and whatever it declares to be Haraam as Haraam, Allah will enter him into Jannah (Paradise) and accept his intercession on behalf of ten family members (who will now be granted Jannah directly), all of whom were destined to go to Jahannam (Hell).’ (Sunan Tirmizi)

O mother and father of the daughter who has memorized the Qur'an, congratulations to you for your daughter!

Buraydah ؓ said: “I was sitting with Rasulullah ﷺ and I heard him say: ‘Learn Surah Baqarah, for learning it is a blessing and neglecting it is regret, and the magicians cannot contend with it.’ Then he kept quiet for a while, and he then said, ‘Learn Surah Baqarah and Surah Aal ‘Imran, for they are the zahraawaan (bright lights) which will shade the one who learns them on the Day of Resurrection, as if they are two clouds, or two rows of birds spreading their wings. The Qur'an will meet its companion on the Day of Resurrection when his grave is opened for him, looking like a pale man, and it will say to him, ‘Do you know who I am?’ The person will

say, I do not know you.’ It will say to him, ‘Do you know who I am?’ The person will say, I do not know you.’ It will say, ‘I am your companion, the Qur’an, who made you thirsty on hot days and kept you awake at night. Every merchant hopes to earn a profit from his trade, and today you will earn exceptional profits.’ The person will be given kingdom in the right hand and eternal life in his left hand, and on his head will be placed a crown of dignity. His parents will be given two garments to wear whose value cannot ever be paid by all the people of the world and they will say, ‘How did we earn these?’ It will be said, ‘Because your child learned the Qur’an.’ Then it will be said to him, ‘Read and go up through the levels and rooms of Paradise. He will keep on ascending as long as he recites, whether he recites in a fast pace (with less concentration) or slowly (with pauses and additional concentration).’” (Musnad Ahmad)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur’an, staying at the top is harder than getting there.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Take care of the Qur’an, for by the oath of The One in Whose control is my soul, it is more easily lost than a camel that is tied.” (Sahih Bukhari)

The phrase translated as “take care of” means revising the Qur’an regularly and reading it constantly... It is in the nature of camels to try as much as possible to break loose, so if one does not take care to keep them tied, they will run away. Similarly the one who has memorized Qur’an will lose it if he does not take care of it, and this tendency is worse than the tendency of camels to break free.

Ibn Battaal رحمه الله said: "This hadith is in accordance with the two aayaat: ‘Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word’ (Surah Muzzammil v.5) and: ‘And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember...’ (Surah Qamar v.22). So whoever focuses on the Qur’an and tries to memorize and review it, it will be made easy for him, but whoever neglects the Qur’an, will lose whatever he has learned of it.” (Fathul Baari)

Rasulullah ﷺ said: ‘The Qur’an is like a camel that is tied. If its owner (or companion) takes care of it, he will keep it with him, but if he slackens, it will run away from him.’” (Sahih Bukhari)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur’an, do not give up this high status after attaining it.

Ibn Hajar رحمه الله said: “The salaf (pious predecessors) differed concerning the issue of forgetting the Qur’an. Some of them said that this is a major sin. Dahhaak ibn Muzaahim said: ‘There is no one who learns the Qur’an and then forgets it, but it is because of a sin that he committed, because Allah says: “And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned (i.e. your sins)...” (Surah Shura v.30), and forgetting the Qur’an is one of the greatest misfortunes that can ever befall you...”

It was reported that Abul ‘Aaliyah رحمه الله said: “We used to think that one of the greatest sins was for a man to learn the Qur’an and then neglect it until he forgets it.” (Its chain is jayyid) It was reported via Ibn Seereen (with a saheeh chain) that they used to dislike the one who forgot the Qur’an and spoke against him in the strongest terms...

Neglecting to recite Qur’an results in forgetting the Qur’an, and forgetting it indicates that one does not take care of it and that one is neglecting it... Neglecting the Qur’an leads to one returning to ignorance and returning to ignorance after gaining knowledge is a terrible thing indeed.” (Fathul Baari)

N.B. With regard to the warning against one who forgets, what is meant here is the one who neglects it until he forgets it. The one who is negligent or who turns away from it is undoubtedly a loser and deserves to be guilty of sin. As for the one who forgets it because he/she became involved in duties which Allah has enjoined upon him/her which kept one away from revising what one had memorized, or who forgot it for some natural reason, he/she is not sinful. Thus, one who begins to forget due to the periods of haydh and nifaas is not guilty of any sin, since these are natural causes. This fear is not a valid reason for abandoning memorizing the Qur’an. However, a haafidhah who faces such a problem should not give

up, but recite with added fervor during her clean days. She should also listen to Qur'an a lot when she is unable to recite, whether from family members or even from recordings.

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, study it much and live according to it.

Abu Abdillaah ibn Bishr ؓ said: "I have never seen anyone who was better at recalling whatever he wanted to of the aayaat of the Qur'an than Abu Sahl ibn Ziyaad. He was our neighbor and he would always perform salaah and read Qur'an at night. Because he studied the Qur'an so much, it is as if it was before his eyes." (Zahabi in As-Siyar)

O Sister who has memorized the Qur'an, so long as you have learnt it by heart, let it protect all your faculties from committing sin.

Al-Qurtubi ؓ said in his Tafseer: "The bearer of the Qur'an and seeker of knowledge must fear Allah with regard to himself and be sincere towards Allah in his deeds. If he does anything that is disliked, he must hasten to repent and return to Allah. Let him start to be sincere in his pursuit of knowledge and in his deeds, for the abstention and caution required of the bearer of the Qur'an is greater than that which is required of others, just as he will have a reward that is greater than that of others."

Abdul Wahhaab Ash-Sha'raani ؓ has quoted in 'At-Tabaqaatul-Kubra' the following statement of a pious person: "When a reciter of the Qur'an goes towards any sin, the Qur'an in his heart calls out to him/her, saying, "By the oath of Allah! You have not studied me so that you could perpetrate this." If the sinner could only hear this call, he would die out of shame and embarrassment." (Wasiyyatul-Aaadaab)

O (female) bearer of the Qur'an, do not let the fact that you have memorized the Qur'an tempt you to forget about your actions.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "A person(who was a haafidh or haafidhah) will be brought on the day of Qiyaamah who used to neglect the faraaidh

(obligatory injunctions) mentioned in the Qur'an, transgress the limits it had set out, did not obey it and committed that which it declared as sin. The Qur'an will assume the appearance of a man before him. The Qur'an will state: "O my Rabb, You enabled such a person to bear (memorize) me who was a terrible carrier. He transgressed the limits I had set out, neglected the faraaidh (obligatory injunctions) I mentioned, did not obey me and committed that which I declared as sin." Allah will say to the Qur'an: "Do what you wish to do to him." The Qur'an will take him by his hand and will not let him loose until it casts him headlong into the fire of Hell.

Then, another person (who was a haafidh or haafidhah) will be brought who used to abide by the limits mentioned in the Qur'an, carry out the faraaidh (obligatory injunctions) mentioned therein, obey it and abstain from that which it declared as sin. The Qur'an will argue in his favour. It will say: "O my Rabb, You enabled such a person to bear (memorize) me who was a wonderful carrier. He abided by the limits I had set out, carried out the faraaidh (obligatory injunctions) I mentioned, obeyed me and abstained from that which I declared as sin." The Qur'an will continue establishing proofs in his favour until it is told: "Do what you wish to do to him." The Qur'an will take him by the hand and will not leave him until it clothes him in a suit of silk brocade, places on his head a crown of royalty and gives him to drink a royal goblet (of wine). (Musnad Bazaar)

O (female) bearer of the Qur'an, appreciate the value of what is in your heart and give it its due. As you have been elevated to this high status by memorizing the Qur'an, you have duties and responsibilities proportionate to this status. Memorizing the Qur'an is not a trophy to be hung up or a certificate to be decorated, nor is it a prize to be given out. It is a trust which must be fulfilled.

The bearer of the Qur'an should have the best of attributes and characteristics.

Fudhayl ibn Iyaadh ؓ said: "The bearer of the Qur'an is the bearer of the banner of Islaam. He should not pass time in idle pursuits with those who pass their time in this way, he should not be negligent with those who are negligent, and he should not indulge in foolish talk with those who talk foolishness, out of respect for the rights of the Qur'an." (At-Tibyaan)

O (female) bearer of the Qur'an, beware of looking down on those who have not memorized the Qur'an, for maybe the one who does little but has a valid excuse will succeed (attain Paradise), whilst the one who memorized the Qur'an but became proud will be a loser.

Hasan Basri ؓ said: "In this day and age, children and slaves recite the Qur'an who have no knowledge of its meaning. They have not followed the correct sequence in this matter, whereas Allah ﷻ has stated in the Qur'an: 'This (Qur'an) is a blessed book which we have revealed to you so that the people may ponder over its verses.' The reality of the matter is that 'pondering over its meanings' is in essence to implement and follow the knowledge contained in it. By Allah, 'pondering over its meanings' is not just the memorization of its words, while its commands are not being acted upon (rather they are trampled upon). This has reached such proportions that sometimes a Haafidh or a Qaari' says (in an arrogant manner), 'By Allah, I have recited the entire Qur'an and I have not missed out a single letter (i.e. I have not made a single mistake)', whereas (in the sight of Allah) he has actually left out the whole Qur'an. Neither do you see any Qur'anic character in him, nor do you see any practice on the Qur'an. (The condition of their pride is such that) some of them even say, 'By Allah, I have read a whole Surah in one single breath'. By Allah, such people are neither true Qurra' (Huffadh) or Ulama, nor are they wise, nor are they Allah-fearing. Since when would the Qurra' (Huffadh) say such things.

May Allah not increase them in number amongst the Muslims.” (Musannaf Abdir-Razzaaq, Qiyaamul Layl of Marwazi)¹

O (female) bearer of the Qur’an, do not expect praise and appreciation from people.

Try not to let their praise and adulation influence you, and always be sincere towards Allah. Yes, they should respect the bearer of the Qur’an, because she has the words of Allah in her heart, and it is part of glorifying Allah to respect the bearer of the Qur’an, who neither goes to extremes nor neglects the Qur’an. Ibn Abdil Barr ؒ said: “The bearers of the Qur’an are surrounded by the mercy of Allah, honoured with the words of Allah and clothed with the Light of Allah. Whoever supports them supports Allah, and whoever is aggressive towards them disrespects the rights of Allah, may He be exalted.” The author of al-Fawaakih al-Dawaani quoted the words of the scholars: “Backbiting about a scholar or a bearer of the Qur’an is more serious than backbiting about anyone else.” At the same time, the bearer of the Qur’an should not feel too proud about her memorization of the Book, for her lack of sincerity may mean that she is no longer counted as one of them.

A Du’aa (Supplication) For You

O Allah, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Owner of Majesty and Honour and Glory that never fade away, we ask You, O Allah, O Most Merciful, by Your Glory and the Light of Your Countenance, to guide these women who have memorized the Qur’an and to make their hearts always remember Your Book, as You have taught them. Help them to recite it in a manner that will earn them Your pleasure. O Allah, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Owner of Majesty and Honour and Glory that never fade away, we ask You, O Allah, O Most Merciful, by Your Glory and the Light of Your Countenance, we ask You to light their way with the light of Your Book, to make their tongues recite its words, to purify their hearts and expand their hearts with it, to help them ease their distress and the distress of all the Muslims, male and female, through it. May Allah send His choicest salawaat and salaams upon our Nabi Muhammad. Aameen.

¹ These advices of Hasan Basri ؒ were hand-written by my respected teacher Qaari Ismail Ishaq ؒ and given to this useless compiler to publish just one week before his demise. In a sense, it could be regarded as his parting advices to me, my classmates, as well as to all his students. May Allah grant us tawfiq.

BLESSINGS OF HIFDH: A MOTHER'S STORY

Umm Sarah

When my older brother finished memorizing the Qur'an and started leading taraweeh back in the late 90s, it wasn't all that common for children born in the US to have completed hifdh, especially without going overseas. An LA Times reporter interviewed my family for a story on his accomplishment. She asked me, then 11 years old, if I was also planning to memorize the Qur'an like my brother. I told her I wasn't sure yet and then she asked me, "Do you feel that boys are encouraged to memorize the Qur'an more than girls?" "No," I replied. I didn't want the story to take an "Islam's treatment of women" turn, especially by someone who wasn't aware of the whole picture. But my answer was only half true.

I had started memorizing the Qur'an with my older brother, but then paused after memorizing only two of the thirty juz. He was more dedicated and continued. But it would be exaggerating to say the issue was only about dedication. Although my parents encouraged all of us children to memorize and study the Qur'an, the general belief then was that memorizing the Qur'an was not a thing girls needed to do. Most of the few hifdh schools that existed then only catered for boys. "A girl can't lead taraweeh," I would often hear people saying. "How will she keep the Qur'an memorized afterwards? Especially since she won't be able to read during times of the month. So what's the use of doing hifdh anyway?" There was no need to burden a girl with this responsibility of reviewing the Qur'an for the rest of her life. Especially when she couldn't use it to benefit the community by leading taraweeh prayers or the like.

Despite this, I started memorizing again at home. This was an unconventional way to memorize, as children interested in this achievement usually go to a hifdh school and follow a rigid routine. I took it one surah at a time, with no clear end goal in mind. I wasn't sure whether I was going to complete memorizing the entire Qur'an or stop

before that. I had pauses here and there, but eventually, by the grace of Allah, I finished in 2004.

I loved having the relationship with the Qur'an that memorizing the Qur'an gave me, but there were no practical benefits or uses of my hifdh in sight then. By the next year, both my older and younger brother were leading taraweeh at the masjid and everyone in the community appreciated the fact that they had memorized the Qur'an. As far as me though, most people didn't even know I had memorized the Qur'an and even if they did, it made no difference.

The first time I found myself really appreciating my hifdh was when I went to Pakistan to study Islamic sciences. That is also the first time I learned that it's not an uncommon thing at all for a girl to have memorized the Qur'an. About one third of my classmates were haafidhahs and I was fortunate to be among them. There were many advantages of having memorized the Qur'an while studying Arabic and Islam. While other students had to struggle to remember aayahs that teachers quoted for daleels (proofs for various Islamic laws), look up the proper wording of aayahs, etc. haafidhahs had a head start. The Qur'an, the base of all Islamic knowledge, was in our hearts. Just a simple reference to an aayah was all we would need to understand and remember an issue. Often, teachers would ask us to help quote an aayah they couldn't recall. The subjects of Arabic and Tafseer, especially, became easy. Needless to say, having memorized the Qur'an helped me excel in my studies. When I returned and started teaching classes, the benefits of hifdh were obvious in everything. I could quote aayahs easily without having to look them up, something that was especially useful in Tafseer.

But, ironically, I only truly started appreciating what a great, great blessing hifdh is after becoming a mother. And I say ironically because most people thought the "burden" of hifdh would be most difficult to carry then. Instead, only after motherhood, I realized the great value of this treasure.

And as the blessings of hifdh come to color every day in my and my daughters' lives, my appreciation for hifdh grows more and more.

Although there is no minimum limit for recitation in taraweeh and it can be easily prayed individually at home, for most people the only opportunity they get to listen to the recitation of the entire Qur'an in prayer is by praying taraweeh at the masjid...But unlike most other mothers I knew, I had a better option. And that was to complete the recitation of the Qur'an in taraweeh by myself. This had always been a dream of mine ever since I completed my hifdh, and something that many haafidhahs, including my classmates in Pakistan, actually do every year. But for me, it remained a goal that I never actively worked towards...

But last Ramadan, when my second daughter was just two months old and my first one not yet two, I decided that this would be the year that I would finally attempt to accomplish this dream. I would spend as much time as I could during the day---in between nursing and changing diapers and chasing after a two year old---reviewing the part for the night, and reading it to my husband. At night when everyone else left for taraweeh, the best part of my day would start. The girls would sleep; I would pray. If they were feeling fussy or woke up, I could adjust. I'd take a break between rakahs or perhaps start praying later. Sometimes, they'd just play or watch as I prayed. And at the end of the month I had accomplished my goal. I had recited the entire Qur'an by heart in prayer. It was the most empowering and fulfilling experience in my life, not to mention how it helped me strengthen my relationship with the Qur'an, or how it saved my Ramadan at a time when motherhood chores were too taxing for me to use my time the way I would have liked to in Ramadan.

Often, people use motherhood and the responsibility of looking after kids as an excuse for girls NOT to do hifdh. How will she be able to review the Qur'an and keep it memorized with all those other responsibilities? But this experience led me to feel that motherhood should be counted among one of the many reasons for a girl to DO hifdh. True, it is a bit more

challenging to keep reviewing the Qur'an during this busy period of life. But having an excuse to review the Qur'an is a good thing...

This isn't the only way hifdh has benefited me as a mother. Being a haafidhah means the Qur'an is automatically your constant companion, something that is very comforting to me as I navigate the ups and downs of motherhood. Being a haafidhah also means I am able to give my daughters a lot more exposure to the Qur'an. I feel blessed that I am able to put them in such an environment and pass on the Qur'an to them directly without having to depend on others. It's too early to see much result but I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said my nearly three year old daughter is more fluent in juz 'amma than most of my much older students. A lot of this is because of the blessings of hifdh. And I pray to Allah that He increases their love for the Qur'an as they grow older.

As far as not being able to read the Qur'an during certain times, something that people often bring up when explaining why they don't encourage their daughters to memorize, that's not really as big an issue as it seems. Sure, it might make hifdh a bit more challenging. But the break from Qur'an often provides a chance to recharge interest and return with even more excitement and motivation, something that (to-be) huffadh are often in need of.

I am sharing this to show that memorizing the Qur'an is a means of great blessings and goodness for everyone, male or female, mother or not. Not everyone needs to use this blessing in the same way. There are different ways huffadh can benefit their community. For me, to read the Qur'an to my daughters is much more fulfilling and beneficial in the long run than leading thousands of people in prayer or being on stage and reading for an audience.

It is heartening to see more and more girls memorizing the entire Qur'an. We have come a long way from the time that families would train their sons to be huffadh while leaving their daughters struggling with basic

Qur'an reading, let alone memorization. For any parents who might be wondering whether they should encourage their daughters to memorize the Qur'an, I guarantee you that this is the most valuable gift you can give any child. For any girl who might have been having doubts about whether doing hifdh is really worth it, I assure you it absolutely is. And the older you grow and the more entangled you get in life's challenges, whatever you may be facing, hifdh is the anchor that will keep bringing you back to the Qur'an and ensure that the Qur'an remain your lifelong companion.

WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A HAAFIDHAH

Anonymous sister

“And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember, but is there any that (is prepared to) remember?” (Surah Qamar v.17)

There is always an underlying reason as to why a sister has failed to memorize or failed to continue to memorize the Qur'an. Some sisters may have stopped because they feel that they don't have a good memory; others did memorize but forgot what they memorized because of a lack of time and commitment, or a distraction that resulted in a permanent diversion. Whatever the case, the person who has left memorizing the Qur'an has really not come to terms with the greatness and magnitude of what they are missing out on... For, quite simply, if they had, they wouldn't let go of this monumental task.

What follows are just a few of the rewards that I was able to gather; therefore, it should be kept in mind that only Allah Almighty alone truly knows the true extent of the rewards that await the Haafidhah in this world and the next. As a final point before we begin this journey, sisters are advised to try and memorize these rewards, so as to be able to enumerate them to their children and families, with the intention to also urge them towards memorizing the Noble Qur'an.

1. The Qur'an Outlines Mankind's Purpose in this world and is A Cure for Weak Imaan (Faith)

Today we find that many people are devoid of the basic understanding of **why** they exist, even with the many functions that Allah Almighty has so graciously bestowed us with. For all those who care to reflect, the Noble Qur'an gives a clear and precise explanation of our purpose here. It clearly explains to us who created this universe and how to please its Creator **in His Own words**. Therefore, the Qur'an will be a light for the Haafidhah within the dark murky confusions of this life and will help her clarify and determine her purpose, roles and functions within the limited life-span granted and gifted to her here by Allah Almighty. Imaan (faith) will become deeply rooted and firmly fixed into her heart with every word that she will read and memorize from the Qur'an, with every sentence that passes her eyes, and with every page that her hand turns from the Qur'an.

A sister who sincerely wishes to inscribe the Words of her Lord onto the slate of her heart will most definitely not allow a day to pass by her without picking up the Qur'an and memorizing from it. So, while other Muslim women allow days to pass by without allowing their vocal cords to be blessed by the recitation of the Qur'an, the Haafidhah unceasingly continues on through the Qur'an, her eyes twinkling with flashes of Imaan, her heart alight with enlightenment and her being encompassed with tranquility.

Jundub رضي الله عنه said: "We were young youth with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so we learnt Imaan before we learnt Qur'an, then we learnt Qur'an and it increased our Imaan." (Al-Mu'jamul Kabir of Tabraani)

Allah states: "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble (out of awe and reverence for Allah) and when His Verses (of the Qur'an) are recited unto them, they (i.e. these Verses) increase their Imaan; and they place their trust in their Rabb (Alone)." (Surah Anfaal v.2)

2. The Qur'an is your syllabus guaranteeing you success

Dear sisters, success is the opposite of failure. All those who wish to succeed must purify themselves by turning to the Qur'an, the syllabus guaranteeing 100% success in both this world and the next. By memorizing it and its meaning, it becomes easier for the Haafidhah to function according to it.

As women, we are always rotating between different roles, functions and responsibilities during the day; sometimes we feel mellow, sometimes high, and sometimes low. By memorizing the Qur'an, the Haafidhah has the words of the Almighty in her heart, guiding her through her trial-and-error processes and saving her from pitfalls.

A writer so eloquently once expressed: "As you stand in the check-out lanes in grocery stores, you are sure to be barraged by glossy magazines that tell you 5-ways to earn extra money or 7-ways to lose extra weight. If you are a student, you have books that tell specific steps to score higher in your tests. Players are instructed with specific steps that guarantee a better score. In the newspaper, you will get simple, specific steps to make your home beautiful, or to do a weekend project. If you follow the instructions in these glossy magazines, most likely you will shed some weight or gain some money. Maybe you can learn a software in 7 days if you follow the step-by-step directions from some 'dummy' books. It is fine to learn some techniques to enhance our worldly life. That helps our life in this world. We can do things a little more efficiently, we may look little better, and we can decorate our homes nicely with a few steps.

Would it not be nice to find some instructions which will make our Hereafter successful? Instead of the advice coming from some writers of glossy magazines, if the instructions came from the Expert, should we not follow it? Of course we should. However, none of the glossy magazines deals with the life of the Hereafter. How do we find the Expert who can give tips for a guaranteed success in the Hereafter? Finding the Expert is

simple... In addition, the instructions are rather simple... Obviously, the Expert is Allah ﷻ Himself.”

So dear sisters, let's purify ourselves by allowing the verses of Allah to clean our hearts from filth and debris and by polishing it with His Words. Allah Almighty Himself says: “Successful indeed is the one who purifies himself.” (Surah Shams v.9)

3. A cure for the hardness of the heart

It's really heartbreaking, devastating and astounding to see the sort of crimes perpetrated by hard-hearted criminals. Sentencing and imprisoning such people is not the ultimate solution to stopping such problems altogether as some are never caught or convicted at all. The root reason behind these crimes is the hardness of the heart and being estranged from Allah's Words. Sins create this hardness of the heart.

Many continue on transgressing in this regard till the whole heart is engulfed in darkness. Rasulullah ﷺ said, “When the believer commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. If he repents and gives up that sin and seeks forgiveness, his heart will be polished. But if he continues, it (the black spot) increases (until it envelopes the entire heart). That is the ‘raan’ (rust) which Allah mentions in His Book: “Nay! In fact, those (sins and evil) deeds which they used to earn has rusted their hearts (so that no truth can penetrate it).” (Sunan Tirmizi)

As Muslims, we should know better. We need to learn to take our spirituality from the Qur'an, the cure for all the hardness and diseases of the heart. Allah Almighty questions: “Has the time not come for the hearts of those who believe to submit to Allah's Reminder (this Qur'an), and to the truth which has been revealed, lest they become like those who received the Scripture before (i.e. the Jews and Christians), and a long period of time elapsed (without submitting to it) so their hearts (eventually) hardened (due to which it would not repent)?” (Surah Hadeed v.16)

4. The Solution to the World's Problems, the Road to Prosperity and Happiness

The Qur'an is the solution to the crisis and falsehood the world is drowning in today. As history testifies, the people who took this book and wholeheartedly dived into its ocean of guidance transformed from the lowest to the highest, from no-bodies to some-bodies, from bedouins and shepherds to leaders. If we undertake its journey, it will steer us to a gain, never to be regretted. Everyone has problems, but few indeed are those who know where to find the solutions. The Haafidhah, by having memorized the Qur'an, will be able to excel in helping other women across the globe, using the Words of her Lord as her greatest asset in this endeavor. The Qur'an clearly announces: "Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort and contentment." (Surah Ra'd v.28)

5. The Banquet of Allah, the Most High and Mighty

How do you feel when you are invited to an invitation, a get-together by loved ones or dear sisters? Do you get excited? Do you feel something warm take over your heart? Remember the last time you were invited to a feast. How long did you take getting ready? How long did it take to get there? How long did you spend there? All together, how many hours did you spend there? What made you take out so much time for it?

Now, let's think about how we would feel if we were invited to Allah's banquet! How would you feel? How much time would you take out for it? It is narrated from Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Indeed this Qur'an is the banquet of Allah, so learn as much as you can from the banquet of Allah. Indeed this Qur'an is the strong rope of Allah 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'an 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. So recite it, for indeed Allah will bestow upon you ten times the single reward for your recitation

of each letter. I do not say Alif Laam Meem is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Laam is a letter and Meem is a letter.” (Mustadrak Haakim)

It's your chance **now** to partake in a banquet you've never experienced before. An unimaginable experience, never to be forgotten.

6. From the honor of Allah is to honor the bearer of the Qur'an

By memorizing the very words of our most Honorable Rabb, the Haafidhah will be honored – not for her sake as she is limited, transient, needy, weak, but solely and purely because of Allah's ﷻ Words which will raise her in position.

Rasulullah ﷺ said, “Indeed, from the honor of Allah is to honor the white-haired (elderly) Muslim, the carrier of Qur'an who is neither extreme in it nor turns away from it and a just ruler.” (Sunan Abi Dawud)

7. Following the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Pious

The sister who memorizes or who has memorized the Qur'an has indeed taken the beloved Rasul ﷺ, the righteous and the martyrs as her lofty examples. Indeed, Rasulullah ﷺ would memorize the Qur'an and continuously recite from it. In fact, Jibreel ؑ used to review it with him once every year and in the year that he ﷺ passed away, he revised it with Jibreel ؑ twice. Allah ﷻ has said: “Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad ﷺ) you have a beautiful example to follow, for him who hopes (to meet) Allah and (to experience) the Last Day and remembers Allah much.” (Surah Ahzaab v.21)

Therefore, every sister that wishes to take on the character of the Rasulullah ﷺ and follow the example of the righteous before us and even those who live today, should inscribe the Words of Allah Almighty in her heart and continuously review her lifestyle according to it. This will ensure her success, Allah Willing, in this life and the Next.

8. A Special Characteristic of this Ummah

Hifdhul-Qur'an (to memorize the Qur'an) is from the special characteristics of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ. Ibnul Jazari رحمه الله said: "Reliable transmission of the Qur'an is based upon memorization (off by heart) and not upon the written versions found in the mushafs and in books, this is from the most noble specialities given to this Ummah by Allah Ta'aala."

He also said, "Allah Ta'aala has informed us that the Qur'an is not confined – with regards to preservation - 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 preserve it except in Books, they do not read it except by looking at it and it is never recited off by heart."

9. You will come to really love Paradise and vehemently hate Hellfire

The thought of even entering a house on fire is a horrifying prospect, let alone the idea of entering Hellfire. Let's take as many precautions and use as many means as we can by which we may save ourselves from hellfire; by memorizing the Qur'an.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "If the Qur'an was to be placed inside a skin vessel (the heart), Allah will never punish it with Hellfire." (Narrated by Bayhaqi from 'Ismah ibn Maalik)

10. You will become from the Best, the People of the Qur'an, the People of Allah and His Special Ones

Today, many sisters are specializing and excelling in leading professions around the world so as to become distinguished and to have a standing of respect within the ranks and social statuses of this world. Yet the following questions await answers from us: where are the sisters who have

specialized in memorizing the Book of Allah, the very Words of the Creator of all that was, is and ever will exist. How many of us aspire to be, in this way, from His Special Ones? How many of us give it even the same importance, or even half the importance and attention, we give to acquiring and pursuing secular studies?

Dear sister, if you memorize and complete the Qur'an, you will be from the ones whom Rasulallah ﷺ described as, "Indeed, Allah has people from amongst Mankind who are from His Household (i.e. very dear ones): the People of Qur'an, they are the People of the Household of Allah and His Special Ones..." (Ahmad, Ibn Majah)

Indeed, if Allah ﷻ gave every servant a value and a rank, then the people of Qur'an are the best of people in rank, for Rasulallah ﷺ said, "The best of you is the one who learns Qur'an and teaches it." (Bukhari)

11. Delight in Salaah

One of the major reasons why people slack in performing the Night prayer (Tahajjud) and from standing for long hours in front of Allah Almighty is because all day they may have already mechanically read the same short Surahs of the Qur'an that they had probably memorized years back when they were young, and which they now continue to repeat daily many times over without contemplation and without a readiness to change according to its message. Although these short magnanimous verses should always have a profound effect on us, it is a fact that we as human beings find change, variety and alteration interesting. Hence, we tend to bore more easily, except for the one whom Allah Almighty blesses. So, let's say it's a cold freezing night; as the Muslimah intends to leave her bed to stand up to pray at night, Satan whispers to her and reminds her that Tahajjud is not binding on her, and that maybe she can offer it on another day. But the sister who knows that she will be traversing through new verses of the Qur'an, that she has goals and aims to one day finish the whole Qur'an from memory in her Salaah, as was the practice of many of the righteous before her, it will most likely be a further incentive for her to stand up and

pray, despite the temporary and short-lived difficulties experienced in its pursuit.

12. You will automatically memorize the supplications mentioned in the Qur'an


It's truly tragic that many of us haven't memorized even a handful of the du'as mentioned in the Qur'an. As for the Haafidhah, she will not only have memorized the Qur'an, but also all of the special supplications found in the Qur'an.

13. Hifdh of the Qur'an eases recitation of Qur'an at all times, the more you memorize, the easier it gets!

I remember some time ago watching a relative cook. As she was cooking, all of a sudden she began humming and sort of bopping around in the kitchen as she fondly remembered a Bollywood tune. Thinking back, I'm surprised she didn't slip...

The Muslim woman who finds peace in the Qur'an and whose heart is attached to the Qur'an feels greater joy and more satisfaction in reciting the Words of her Lord while cooking, cleaning, walking, sitting...and whenever she gets a chance. For, work and chores just never seem to finish, and the believing woman's heart never feels bored or disenchanted from the Words of her Lord. Allah Almighty says: "Nay, but they are clear aayaat (verses), preserved in the chests of those who have been given knowledge." (Surah Ankabut v.49)


And Allah Almighty has said in a Hadith Qudsi: "I have indeed sent you (O Nabi Muhammad) 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 and sleep." (Sahih Muslim)

Imaam Nawawi  said in this regard, “This means that it’s preserved in the hearts – it’s not free to depart, but rather it stays in the course of history.” (Sahih Muslim, Sharh an-Nawawi (18/204))

Today, many Muslim women sadly can’t recite the Qur’an fluently and without experiencing difficulty. This may be because Arabic is not their mother tongue, or it may be because they haven’t studied Tajweed. As for the Haafidhah, she will gain a lot of practice in reciting the Qur’an as she memorizes the Qur’an. Yes, she will not only recite fluently when reading the Qur’an from the Mushaf, but more amazingly, from her very memory, Allah Willing.

14. It’ll surely keep you away from sin

Those of us who aren’t used to continuous zikr should be really, really worried as people who keep away from Allah Almighty’s remembrance are more liable to being attacked by Satan, just like a house that is left unprotected, unlocked, and without any alarm is more prone to be burgled by thieves.

This is because Satan likes to play with a heart that is devoid of Allah’s remembrance. In fact, in the last surah of the Qur’an, we find that Allah Almighty refers to Satan as "Al-Khannaas," which means ‘the one who withdraws’ as he is the one who whispers in the hearts and then retreats. Ibn Abbaas  said, “The devil is squatting (perched) upon the heart of every person. So when he becomes absent-minded and heedless, he (Satan) whispers...” (Ibn Kathir in his Tafsir of Surah Naas)

Some of us may think that the best zikr is to repeat Allah Almighty’s names continuously, which is true in a sense. However, in reality, the whole Qur’an is the best Remembrance (zikr) in its totality, which includes the Names, Mention and Words of Allah in the best possible way. At the same time, it also contains much more; for example, it contains the mention of the Ambiyaa (Messengers) and the pious, beautiful and inspiring examples, mention of paradise and hell, the story of creation, etc. and so it

is a complete guide, a beacon of light, the very Words of the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, reading, understanding, reflecting and pondering **with faith** in Allah's words is the most effective way of remembering Him and protecting oneself from Satan's influence.

Now we come to see why one of the names by which the Qur'an is referred to is: 'Az-Zikr' i.e. 'The Remembrance' or 'The Reminder'. In fact, this name of the Qur'an has been mentioned 55 times in the Qur'an!

Likewise, due to it being the best of Remembrances, the Qur'an cleans and clears the heart from the filthy remnants and dark lurking debris which sin leaves behind, as does asking the forgiveness of Allah Almighty. Rasulallah ﷺ said: "Verily, these hearts rust just as iron rusts because of water." When someone asked what would polish the heart, Rasulallah ﷺ replied: "Frequent remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an." (Shu'abul Imaan of Baihaqi)

Dear sisters, to save ourselves from sin and ensure that we are not from the majority of the women of the hellfire, we will have to live under the shade of the Qur'an, to live it day-in and day-out. To apply it, even when it's hard, to understand it, learn it, and what I intend to highlight here: to try to even memorize it. For, once our hearts shine by its words, our heart will be attached to it, and then we'll want to be in the company of our Lord's Words as much as possible: at every moment, every second, every hour, and every day of our life. And the only way to truly actualize this is to memorize it. Then our limbs will obey its commands, and the whispers of Satan will as a consequence subside. We will become women of the Qur'an, the Haafidhaat, those who run away from sin....right into the shade of the Qur'an, the very Words of the Allah Himself.

An Interview with Umm Saalih A Grandmother Who Completed Memorizing the Qur'an at the age of Eighty-Two

Alhamdulillah (All-Praise is due to Allah), the One Who said: "And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember; but is there any that (is prepared to) remember?" (Surah Qamar v.32)

Many all over the world memorize the Qur'an, and it is not strange to see the youth memorizing the Noble Qur'an at an early age. Alhamdulillah, the One who made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, had made it easy for Umm Saalih who was aged 82.

In an interview with Umm Saalih, she was asked the following questions:

Q1: "What was the reason that drove you to memorize the Qur'an after so many years?"

She said, "I always hoped to memorize the Qur'an from the time I was young. My father always used to invoke Allah for me to become one of the memorizers of the Qur'an, like himself and like the elder brothers of my family who memorized it. So I memorized in the beginning about three parts and then after I completed the age of thirteen, I got married and became busy with the household and the children. After I had seven children, my husband died. They (the children) were all young, so I took the time to raise them and educate them, and then after they grew up and got married, I had more time for myself. Therefore, the first thing I directed myself to focus upon was the Qur'an."


Q2: "Tell us about your journey with the Noble Qur'an."

She said, "My younger daughter was going to high school and she was the closest of my children to me and the most beloved, because she stayed with me after her older sisters got married and got busy with their lives, and because she was a quiet girl, upright, loving, and good. In addition, she was interested in learning the Noble Qur'an, and her teachers encouraged

her. Furthermore, she was very enthusiastic and always told me of many women who were driven by this great motivation to memorize the Qur'an, and this is where I started."

Q3: "Tell me about your way of memorization."

She said, "We assigned ten verses (meaning her and her daughter who was going to school). So each day after Asr, we used to sit together. She reads and I repeat after her three times. Then she explains the meaning to me, and after a while, she repeats that three times. The next morning, she repeats them to me before she goes to school."

She recorded also the recitations of Ash Shaykh al Husary  repeating each verse three times and thus I continued to listen most of the time. Therefore, the next day we would go to the next ten verses if my memorization was good. Otherwise, we would postpone taking additional verses until the day after. Moreover, we assigned the day of Friday to review the memorizations of the entire week. And this was the journey from the beginning."

Then she said, "Over four years and a half, I memorized twelve juz' according to the way I described to you. Then this young daughter got married. When her husband knew of our task concerning the memorization, he rented a house close to me, close to my house, so that he could allow the continuation of the memorization. In addition, he, may Allah reward him, used to encourage us and sometimes sit with us, listening, explaining and teaching."

Then after three years of her marriage, my daughter got busy with the children and the household and our schedule was interrupted, but that did not make her give up. To the contrary, she sensed that my eagerness for the memorization was still established so she looked for a special good teacher to continue the journey under her supervision. So, I completed the memorization by the success of Allah and my daughter is still working to

finish the memorization of the Glorious Qur'an. She has a little left, Inshaa Allah Ta'aala."

Q4: "This motivation of yours, did it have an effect on other women around you?"

She said, "It really had a good strong effect. My daughters and stepdaughters were all encouraged and worked on learning and teaching the Qur'an to their children and learning it themselves.

Q5: "After finishing the Noble Qur'an, don't you think about working on memorizing hadith?"

She said, "Now I have memorized ninety hadith and Inshaa-Allah I will continue the journey. I depend, in my memorization, upon the tapes and upon the Qur'an radio station. At the end of each week, my daughter comes and checks for me the memorization of three hadith, and I am trying now to memorize more.

Q6: "Over this period of memorization of the Qur'an, did your life change? Was it affected in one way or another?"

She said, "Yes, I went through a major change and I tried always, all praise is due to Allah, to obey Allah before I started the memorization. However, after I started the task of memorization, I began to feel a self-comfort, a great self-comfort and all worries began to move away from me. I even reached the stage of freeing myself from all these excessive worries concerning fearing for the children and their affairs, and my morale was boosted.

I had a noble objective to work for and this is a great Ni'mah (Favor) from Allah upon me, since we know that some women, when they get old and they do not have a husband, and their children got married, may be destroyed by the empty time, thoughts, worries, and so forth. But, Alhamdulillah, I didn't go through this and I made myself busy with a great task and a great objective.

Q7: "Didn't you think at one point, to join one of the circles focusing on teaching the Noble Qur'an?"

The answer was, "Yes, some of the women suggested this to me, but I am a woman who got used to staying at home, and I don't like to go out everyday, and Alhamdulillah, my daughter sufficed me from all difficulty and I was so happy while I was learning from her. My daughter had set an example in goodness and righteousness which we rarely find in our days. She started this task and journey with me while she was an adolescent and this is a critical age many people complain of. She used to pressure herself so that she could have spare time to teach me, and she used to teach me with kindness and wisdom. Her husband was a good help to her and he exerted a lot of effort. I ask Allah to give them success and to bring their children up on uprightness."

Q8: "What do you say to a woman of your age who wishes to learn and memorize the Qur'an, yet she is worried about it and feeling unable to?"

She said, "I say to her that there shall be no despair with firm, sincere and truthful determination. Begin with sincerity, firm determination and dependence on Allah at each time. And remember that, at this age, you should have the time for yourself. However, do not use your time to only go out or to sleep and so forth. Rather, busy yourself with righteous work."

Q9: "Now what would you say to a woman who is still young? What would you advise her?"

She, may Allah preserve her, said: "Preserve Allah and He will preserve you. Make use of the favor of Allah bestowed upon you of health and ways and means of comfort. Use that to memorize the Book of Allah. This is the light which enlivens your heart, your life and your grave after you die. And if you have a mother then exert the effort to teach her, and there is no better favor upon a mother than one of her righteous children aiding her to be close to Allah."

(Presented on the 1st of Muharram 1426, Feb 10th 2005. Read by Dr. Saleh as Saleh. Originally published in Ad-Da'wah Magazine, no.1552, 17th of Rabee' Al-Awwal 1417, corresponding to Aug 1, 1996)

GREAT HAAFIDHAAT OF THE UMMAH OUR ROLE-MODELS

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا (34) سورة

الأحزاب

قال في الوسيط وهذا حث لهن على حفظ القرآن والاخبار ومذاكرتهن بها للاحاطة بحدود الشريعة والخطاب وان اختص بهن فغيرهن داخل فيه لان مبنى الشريعة على هذين القرآن والسنة وبهما يوقف على حدود الله ومفترضاته انتهى . (روح البیان) أخرج عبد الرزاق وابن سعد وابن جرير وابن المنذر وابن أبي حاتم عن قتادة رضي الله عنه في قوله واذكرن ما يتلى في بيوتكن من آيات الله والحكمة قال : القرآن والسنة عتب عليهن بذلك

Allah ﷻ states, addressing the noble wives of Rasulullah ﷺ: ‘And revise the Aayaat of Allah (the Qur’an) and wisdom (the Sunnah) which is recited (by Rasulullah ﷺ) in your homes. Verily, Allah is the Most Compassionate and is the Well-Informed.’

The author of Al-Waseet has written: This verse is an encouragement for them to memorize the Qur’an and narrations (of Rasulullah ﷺ) and to discuss it, to be able to properly grasp the limits of the Shari’ah. Although the verse is directed primarily to the wives of Rasulullah ﷺ, the command applies to all other woman as well (as the commands before this too are addressed to the wives of Rasulullah ﷺ but are indirectly addressing all the women of the Ummah)... (Ruhul-Bayaan)


The practical manifestation of this Aayah can be seen in the lives of the Azwaaj Mutahharaat (the noble wives of Rasulullah ﷺ), the Haafidhaat of the Qur’an and the Muhaddithaat of this Ummah whose details have been preserved in the books of Islamic history and whose achievements can never be forgotten.

The author of ‘Al-Muhaddithaat’ has written regarding Muslim women throughout history: “After or alongside acquiring language skills, the girls would turn their attention to the Qur’an, learning how to recite and memorize it, and understand its meaning. Only then would they start

learning hadiths by memorizing and then narrating them. Those with more aptitude would go on to learn how to think about the ‘scholarly apparatus’ of the hadiths – their occasions and their narrators – how to distinguish among narrators and chains of narrators, and learn the sunnahs that derive from the hadith and how to implement them...From my study of biographies of the women scholars of this period I can affirm that girls usually began their studies with the Arabic language and developed reading, speaking and writing skills. At the same time they would learn the Qur’an, reciting and memorizing it. Some learnt the whole of it by heart at a remarkable young age. One example of that is Fatimah bint Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja’far At-Tawusiyyah al-Husayniyyah (5th c.) who had memorized the Qur’an before she was nine years old. Later, she learnt Hadith with her father.”

He also wrote: “All the major jurists in the history of Islam began their education by memorizing the Qur’an, learning its different recitations, and gaining expertise in its interpretation. Women have also built this strong relationship with the Book, the fruit of which is that it is fully internalized, and they become fluent in it, speaking from it like a mother tongue.”

Hereunder, we will present a few glimpses from the lives of great women who were haafidhahs of the Qur’an:

Note: Abu Ubaid has, in ‘Kitaabul-Qira’aat’ listed the names of the Qurraa’ from the Sahaabah. From amongst them, he has listed 3 women; Aa’ishah, Hafsa and Ummu Salamah . Allamah Jalaalud-Deen Suyuti comments in ‘Al-Itqaan’ that he had managed to find the name of another Sahaabiyyah who had memorized the Qur’an, although none of the Ulama seem to have listed her as such. She was Ummu Waraqah bint Abdillah ibn al-Harith (radhiAllahu anha). Haafidh Zahabi has however stated in ‘Tabaqaatul-Qurraa’ that those who were listed as Qurraa’ (or Haafidhaat) were those whose unbroken chains of Qira’ah reached us. As for those whose chain of Qira’ah did not reach us, they were numerous. In other words, although many Sahaabah and Sahaabiyyaat had memorized the

Qur'an, we are unable to trace their names because the narrations of their Qira'ah (which specify how they recited) have not reached us.

1) Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha)

She was the daughter of Abu Bakr ؓ, the wife of the Rasulullah ﷺ in this life and the next and the most beloved of the Ummah to Rasulullah ﷺ. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "The excellence of Aa'ishah over all women is like the excellence of Thareed (pieces of bread in vegetable or meat broth) over all other foods." (Sunan Tirmizi) She was amongst the most learned of the Ummah. Shamsud-Deen Zahabi has referred to her as 'the greatest Faqeehah (jurist) among the ladies of this Ummah' and 'the most eminent scholar among all ladies'.

Her Life with Rasulullah ﷺ: Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) spent 9 years in the companionship of Nabi ﷺ and in this period she attained vast oceans of knowledge. Rasulullah ﷺ had perceived within her great intellectual capabilities and a combination of such qualities which are prerequisites for an outstanding scholar who would preserve and spread the teachings of Islam, due to which she became his favourite.² Actually, on account of this special affinity within her heart for the Ilm of Deen, Allah blessed her with the privilege of being the only wife of Rasulullah ﷺ who was such that Jibreel ؑ would descend with Divine revelation while she lay down with Rasulullah ﷺ under the same sheet. History has proven that whatever Rasulullah ﷺ wished to attain through this marriage was indeed realized in the best of manners. It is no exaggeration to say that hardly anyone in the history of Islam had contributed so greatly to the preservation, propagation and dissemination of Islam as Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) did.

After entering into the marriage of Rasulullah ﷺ, she learnt the art of reading, which aided her for the rest of her life to recite the Qur'an from

² Had Rasulullah ﷺ loved her most only because she was a young maiden at the time of her marriage, then he would have certainly forgotten Khadeejah (radhiAllahu anha), who he ﷺ never ceased to remember even after her death. Had he loved her most because of beauty, then Ummu Salamah and Safiyyah (radhiAllahu anhuma) were reportedly more beautiful than her.

the Mushaf. She was however unable to write. Her slave, Abu Yunus, had transcribed the Qur'an for her. Whenever she could not understand any intricacy with regards to an Aayah, she would unhesitantly ask Rasulullah ﷺ. Therefore, she is understood as one of the first Imaams of Tafsir.

Her Knowledge: Imam Zuhri رحمه الله said, "If the knowledge of all the other wives of Nabi ﷺ and of all the women in the world were to be combined, the knowledge of Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) would surpass them. Abu Moosa Ash'ari رضي الله عنه said that whenever, we, the companions of Nabi ﷺ had a difference regarding any Deeni matter, then we would refer to Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha), where we always received clarification. Urwa bin Zubair رحمه الله would say that he had not known anyone who was better learned in the Qur'aan, Faraaidh of Islaam, matters regarding Halaal and Haraam, Arabian history, and knowledge of the lineage of Arabians than Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha). Once, he said to Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha): "O beloved mother, I am not surprised at your being a Faqeehah (scholar well versed at Islaamic Jurisprudence), because you were the wife of Nabi ﷺ and the daughter of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه. I am also not surprised at your knowledge of the Arabian incidents or at your knowledge of poetry and Arabian lineage, because you have acquired these things from the companionship of your father. However, I am surprised at your knowledge of medicine." Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) placed her hands upon his shoulders and said: "Urwa, my son, when the illness of Nabi ﷺ worsened, people used to come from far and wide and they used to prescribe all sorts of remedies and medicines. I learnt from them." One narration states: "When I used to treat Rasulullah ﷺ, I learnt all about it."

Disseminating Knowledge: After the demise of Nabi ﷺ, Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) was significantly instrumental in disseminating Deeni knowledge. She had many students (approx. 200 +), of whom many were Sahaabah. She passed away in the year 58 A.H., hence she spread knowledge for about 48 years after the demise of Nabi ﷺ. The Muhadditheen have recorded about 2210 Narrations from her. Aa'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) disseminated her knowledge with great wisdom and

successfully. She educated the children, woman and Mahram men in the form of Majaalis (educational gatherings). She imparted her knowledge to Ghair-Mahram men from behind a screen. She was asked many questions and she answered them. She performed Hajj every year. People from all over used to come and stand outside her tent and ask questions, and she answered them. She (radhiAllahu anha) was counted amongst those eminent Sahabah who were Muftis. She issued Fataawa (religious verdicts) even during the Khilaafah of her beloved father Abu Bakr ؓ. Umar, Uthmaan and Mu'aawiyah ؓ used to send people to her to enquire regarding any mas`ala (laws of the Shari'ah). Many people used to send her letters, and thereby ask questions, to which she used to reply. People used to ask her regarding Nabi ﷺ's personal life and habits, and she used to answer without reservations, because, whatever Nabi ﷺ taught and practised was from Allah Ta`ala.

2) Hafsah bint Umar (radhiAllahu anha)

Hafsah (radhiAllahu anha) was the daughter of 'Umar ibnul Khattaab and the wife of the Rasulullah ﷺ in this life and the next. Rasulullah ﷺ married her in 3 A.H. One day, Jibreel ؑ told Rasulullah ﷺ about Hafsah (radhiAllahu anha): "She is an often fasting and abundant-worshipping lady and she will be your wife in Paradise too." (Mustadrak Hakim)

Hafsah was an extremely religious lady who used to spend her time in prayer and fasting. She was an excellent writer and orator. When the call to Islam was made, only seventeen people from the Quraish were able to read and write, from whom only one was a woman. Her name was Shifaa bint Abdillahi Adawiyyah. Hafsah (radhiAllahu anha) was instructed by Rasulullah ﷺ to learn from her how to read and write. Hafsah (radhiAllahu anha) became absorbed in studying the finer points of religion after entering into the marriage of Rasulullah ﷺ. She would store in her mind conversations of Nabi ﷺ which would lead to a better understanding of Islam. Often she would discuss any points that arose in her mind about the Shari'ah.

While we know that the companions Abu Bakr and ‘Uthmaan ؓ oversaw the compilation and preservation of the Qur’an, what we may too often overlook is that only one person was entrusted the only existing copy at the time. And that person was a woman: Hafsa, the daughter of ‘Umar ؓ. Some claim that Hafsa (radhiAllahu anha) was the first Haafidhah of this Ummah. (However, this useless compiler was unable to locate any proof supporting this claim. Allah knows best.)

3) Ummu Salamah bint Abi Umayyah (radhiAllahu anha)

Her real name was Hind bint Abi Umayyah, but she became famous by the agnomen Ummu Salamah. She was noble by birth, intelligent, learned, wise and skillful. Ummu Salamah (radhiAllahu anha) was also one of the earliest converts to Islam. She married Rasulullah ﷺ in the month of Shawwal, in the 4th year after Hijrah. Aa’ishah (radhiAllahu anha) narrated that it was the habit of Rasulullah ﷺ to visit each of his wives in turn after the Asr prayers. He would inquire about their welfare and if they needed anything. He would start from the apartment of Ummu Salamah because she was the eldest among them, and finish his rounds at the apartment of Aa’ishah (radhiAllahu anhunn).

Several of the Aayaat of the Noble Qur’an were revealed to Rasulullah ﷺ when he was in her apartment. For instance, the aayah in Surah Ahzaab regarding the Ahlul Bayt and the verses of Surah Tawbah regarding the repentance of three Sahaabah who had not taken part in the campaign of Tabuk were revealed in her apartment. Rasulullah ﷺ was sleeping in the apartment of Ummu Salamah when these last aayaat was revealed to him. He woke up in the late hours of the night and told her that the supplications for forgiveness of these three Companions had been accepted. She asked him if this good news should be conveyed to them immediately. He said they should not be disturbed so late at night; after the Fajr prayers he sent for them and congratulated them. They were overjoyed and so were all the other Companions.

Ummu Salamah (radhiAllahu anha), because of her beauty, knowledge and wisdom, held an eminent position. She was a very astute and wise lady. She was educated and was very devoted to the welfare of the destitute and needy. She was very generous, always amiable and kind to her neighbors. Umm Salamah was very learned in religious matters. She was a Haafidhah of Qur'an. She was also proficient in reading. Some historians maintain that she was able to write as well. She narrated three hundred and eighty-seven Hadiths of Rasulullah ﷺ, which she knew by heart. She knew very well the finer points of Islamic law about foster-relations through suckling and divorce. Abdullah bin Abbas ؓ used to consult her for many points of Shari'ah (Islamic law). Leading the list of names of Sahaabah whose judgments on points of law were regarded as valid is the name of Ummu Salamah (radhiAllahu anha). Ummu Salamah (radhiAllahu anha) had hardly any equal in mastery over language. When she spoke, her words and phrases were well chosen and exactly appropriate for the expression of ideas. Her written language was suited for literary expression.

She lived to the ripe old age of eighty-four and passed away in 62 A.H. Zaynab bint Jahsh was the first among the Mothers of the Believers to pass away and Ummu Salamah the last. ؓ

4) Ummu Waraqah bint Abdillah ibn al Haarith

Ummu Waraqah (radhiAllahu anha) was from the Ansaar. She had memorized the Qur'an and was known as a Haafidhah. Therefore, Rasulullah ﷺ had instructed her to lead the other women living in the same quarters as her in salaah with Jama'ah at her home. When Rasulullah ﷺ went out for the battle of Badr, she requested to join, saying: "Permit me to come. I will engage myself in treating the wounded. Then, perhaps, Allah will grant me martyrdom." Rasulullah ﷺ said to her: "Stay at home. Allah will certainly grant you martyrdom in your house." Rasulullah ﷺ would sometimes visit her house. He would say to the Sahaabah: "Come with me, we will go to visit 'Ash-Shaheedah' (the martyr)." This soon became her title. In the khilaafah (era of rule) of Umar ؓ, her slave boy and girl (whom she had promised to free after her death by rendering them Mudabbbar),

desiring freedom, blindfolded her and murdered her. She was therefore blessed with martyrdom in her own house. Her two slaves were the first two people to be hanged in Madinah Munawwarah. When Umar ؓ heard of her martyrdom, he stated: “Rasulullah ﷺ spoke the truth. He would say to us, ‘Come with me, we will go to visit ‘Ash-Shaheedah’ (the martyr).”

5) The daughter of Saeed ibnul Musayyib ؓ

Saeed ibnul Musayyib ؓ was one of the greatest scholars of his time. He was not a Sahaabi, but met many Sahaabah and narrated Hadith from them. He was married to the daughter of Abu Hurairah, the close companion of Nabi ﷺ. He was given the title: ‘Sayyidut Tabi’een – The Leader of the Tabi’een’. Many considered him to be the most knowledgeable amongst the Tabi’een. His knowledge and acceptance amongst his contemporaries can be gauged from the fact that he used to pass fataawa (verdicts) while other Sahaabah were still alive. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ؓ, while he was Amirul Mu'minin, would not make a decision without prior consultation with Sa‘eed ibnul Musayyib.

He had a daughter of marriageable age, whose hand was sought by the ruler of the day Abdul-Malik, for his son Waleed. But he refused the offer. This caused his relationship with Abdul Malik to be soured and he was whipped a hundred lashes on a cold day! Thereafter, a pitcher of water was poured over him and he was made to wear an overcoat made from wool. Saeed’s stance arose from his desire to marry his daughter to an Allah-fearing man – a man who bears the trait of Taqwa will be a man who will naturally give his wife her due rights and take care of her in the best of manners. Instead, Sa‘eed ibnul Musayyib married his daughter to Kathir ibn Abdil-Muttalib, famously known as Ibn Abi Wada‘ah, one of his poor students.

Ibn Abi Wada‘ah explains, “I used to sit in the company of Saeed ibnul Musayyib and happened to be absent for a few days. When I came to him, he asked where I had been. I replied that my wife had passed away and I was occupied with her funeral arrangements. He asked, ‘Why did you not

inform us so that we could have attended her funeral?’ Then he asked, ‘Have you married again?’ I replied, ‘May Allah have mercy upon you! Who would marry me when I have no more than two or three dirhams?’ He answered, ‘I will marry my daughter to you.’ I asked in doubt, ‘Will you?’ He replied, ‘Yes, I will.’ He then praised Allah and sent salawaat upon Nabi ﷺ and married his daughter to me for a mahr of two dirhams.³ I left the gathering, stunned and overjoyed. I began to reflect from whom I could borrow some money.

I performed Maghrib Salah and returned home. I then broke my fast with some bread and olive oil. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. I asked, ‘Who is it?’ The reply came, ‘Saeed.’ I thought of everyone I knew whose name was Saeed, except Ibnul Musayyib, because he had not been seen for forty years in any place, except his home and the masjid. When I went out, I was met by none other than Ibnul Musayyib and thought that he had changed his mind. I said to him, ‘Abu Muhammad, why did you not send for me? I would have come to you.’ He replied, ‘No, you had a greater right that I should come to you. You were single, and have just married, and I disliked that you spend the night alone. Here is your wife.’ She was standing directly behind him. He took her hand and ushered her towards the door. He then left. She almost stumbled out of modesty and shyness but managed to hold onto the door. I tried to hide the container of food in the shadows of the candle light, so that she would not see it. I then climbed up the roof and called out to my neighbors. They arrived and asked, ‘What is the matter?’ I explained to them what had just happened. Some of the women from the neighborhood came to my house and my mother was also informed. When my mother arrived, she said, ‘I will not see your face again if you touch her before I have prepared her in three days.’

So, I waited for three days, after which I consummated the marriage with her. She was one of the most beautiful women. She was also the most well-

³ According to Imam Abu Hanifah and other great scholars, the mahr should not be less than 10 dirhams, due to a Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ which has been narrated by Jaabir ؓ and quoted by Ibn Abi Haatim with a Hasan (sound) chain. However, it is the view of other Ulama and mazaahib that there is no minimum amount of mahr. Based on the above incident, it seems as if this latter opinion was the view of Saeed ibnul Musayyib.

versed from those who know the Qur'an by heart (due to her perfect memorization), the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah of Nabi ﷺ and very well-acquainted with the rights of the husband.

I did not attend the gathering of Saeed ibnul Musayyib for an entire month. When I finally went, I greeted and he replied. He did not say anything further, until the gathering had dispersed and I was left behind. He then asked, 'How is she?' I replied, 'She is excellent, O Abu Muhammad. She is one whom friends will love but foes will envy.' He advised, 'If the need arises, you may discipline her.' I returned home, where I found that he had sent me a gift of twenty thousand dirhams."

Another narration of this incident states that when the nikah had been performed, Saeed ibnul Musayyib said to his daughter, "Gather your clothing and follow me. Perform two rak'ats of Salaah." She complied, and Saeed ibnul Musayyib also performed two rak'ats of Salaah. He then handed her over to her husband.

Her high level of knowledge can be understood from the following incident: The very next day after his marriage to the daughter of Saeed ibnul Musayyib, Abdullah was putting on his cloak to go out, when his new bride asked him, "Where are you going?" He said: "To the assembly of Saeed to attain knowledge." She said to him: "Sit here, I will teach you the knowledge of Saeed. Hence she taught him from her knowledge. For one month, Abdullah did not attend Saeed ibnul Musayyib's circle because the knowledge that this beautiful young girl had learned from her father (which she was passing on to him) was sufficient. (Al-Madkhal)

It is important to ask ourselves the question – if Muslim Women did possess this kind of knowledge over their husbands today, would it increase them in respect and obedience towards their husbands or would this knowledge become a source of many marital problems? The greatness of these women was such that their knowledge only increased them in obedience and respect for their husbands, since they acted on its dictates

and molded their lives according to it. The following statement from the husband of this great female scholar suffices us in understanding the sort of love her husband possessed for her due to her knowledge and obedience, “She was one of the most beautiful women. She was also the most well-versed from those who know the Qur'an by heart (due to her perfect memorization), the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah of Nabi ﷺ and very well-acquainted with the rights of the husband.”

6) Hafsah bint Sireen ؓ

She was the eldest sister of the renowned Tabi'ee and scholar, Muhammad ibn Sireen. To understand the amazing upbringing Hafsah (rahimahAllah) was blessed with, it is important to note that her father was the freed slave of the illustrious Sahaabi Anas ibn Maalik ؓ. Anas ؓ once purchased a slave from Khalid ibnul Waleed ؓ. This slave had been captured in one of the deserts of Iraq, and his name was Sireen. Overtime he freed himself and his family by paying Anas ibn Maalik a certain amount of wealth, yet truly he could never pay back Anas ibn Maalik for the great beneficial knowledge that he and his family gained from him.

Sireen married a pious woman by the name of Safiyyah, who was the freed slave of Abu Bakr ؓ. Eighteen Sahaabah who had participated in the battle of Badr attended their marriage ceremony. Heading these eighteen Sahaabah was Ubayy ibn Ka'b ؓ. The fruit of this marriage was pure and blessed. Allah ﷻ blessed them both with a daughter, who they named Hafsah, in 31 AH during the khilaafah of Uthmaan ؓ. She received and was provided with the best nutrition: the spiritual nutrition of the Qur'an and Sunnah. She had many brothers and sisters, including half-brothers and sisters, all of whom became trustworthy narrators (ruwaat thiqaat) of the narrations of Rasulullah ﷺ. She married Abdur-Rahman and bore him a son by the name of Huzail, who later became a senior scholar of his time. Her brother Muhammad ibn Sireen was also a great scholar and her sister Kareemah bint Sireen was also a great aabidah (worshipper).

The knowledge of Hafsah (rahimahAllah) was such that Iyaas ibn Mu'aawiyah said: 'I did not meet anyone whom I regard as superior (in knowledge) over Hafsah.' He was asked: 'What about Hasan Basri and Muhammad ibn Sireen?' He said: 'As for me, I do not prefer anyone over her. She learnt the Qur'an by heart when she was twelve years old.' Hishaam ibn Hassaan said: "I saw Hasan (Hasan Basri), and (Muhammad) Ibn Sireen, and I did not see anyone that I thought was more intelligent than Hafsah."

Ibn Abi Daud said: "The leaders of the women during the era of the Tabi'een were Hafsah bint Sireen and Amrah bint Abdir-Rahman. They were followed in rank by Ummud-Dardaa."

Not only had she memorized the Qur'an by the age of twelve, but she possessed deep knowledge pertaining to the Qira'aat (various methods of recitation of the Qur'an). Hishaam narrates that when Ibn Sireen (her brother) would find something difficult and ambiguous regarding the Qira'aat, he would say, "Go and ask Hafsah how to recite."

She was both a great muhaddithah (scholar of hadith) and faqeehah (jurist). She had learnt many ahaadith from the great Companion Anas ibn Maalik ؓ. This is why ahaadith narrated by her from Anas ibn Maalik and other Sahaabah can be found in Saheeh Bukhari and all the other authentic compilations of Hadith.

Aasim said: 'We used to enter in the presence of Hafsah bint Sireen (in her old age) and she would adjust her jilbaab (outer garment which does not only cover the face like the Niqaab, but covers the entire body) like this and would cover her face with it. So we said to her, "May Allah have mercy on you! Allah ﷻ says: 'And as for women past child-bearing age who do not expect to marry, it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a Way as to not to display their adornment...' (Surah Noor v.60) And this aayah is (referring to) the Jilbaab.'" Aasim continued: "Then Hafsah said to us: "What comes after that (i.e. what is mentioned next in the same verse)?" We said: '...but to adopt chastity (i.e. not to discard their outer

clothing) is better for them. And Allâh is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.’ (Surah Noor v.60) So Hafsah said: “This part of the aayah affirms (makes ithbaat of) the Jilbaab.”

This is noteworthy for us, my dear sisters. A woman who is **past** the age of covering, yet she has so much modesty and bashfulness. So, how much more shy should young Muslim girls and women be?! The deceiving shaytaan promises us the opposite! He whispers to us that, “You are still young. When you become older, you can begin to cover...”

Mahdi ibn Maymoon said: “Hafsah bint Sireen passed 30 years without leaving her prayer mat, except to take a nap or to answer the call of nature (li qadhaa’il haajah).” (This was probably after her husband had passed away.)

Her heart was soft, and her eyes flowed with tears of hope and fear of her Rabb. Hishaam ibn Hassaan mentions that Hafsah (rahimahAllah) purchased a maid slave-girl. She was asked, “How do you find your master (i.e. Hafsah)?” She said, “She is a righteous woman, except that she has (i.e. must have) committed a huge sin, because she cries all night and performs salaah.”

Abdul Kareem ibn Mu’aawiyah said: “It was mentioned to me regarding Hafsah that she would read half of the Qur’an every night and would fast during the day and would not fast only on the two Eids and the days of Tashreeq (the three days after the day of sacrifice, i.e. the 11th, 12th, 13th of Zul Hijjah).”

Hishaam said: “Hafsah bint Sireen would light her lamp for a part of the night and she would then stand on her prayer mat (musallaa). Sometimes the light would burn out, but a (miraculous) shining light would brighten her house for her until the morning.” Hishaam said: Umm Sulaym, the daughter of Sireen, narrated to me: “Many a time, there was a light for Hafsah bint Sireen seen in her house.”

She passed away in 101 AH at the age of 70 and a group of the leading Taabi'een attended her funeral prayer in Basrah, Iraq. Leading them was Hasan Basri and her brother Muhammad ibn Sireen.

7) Fatimah Nayshapuri ﷺ

She had memorized the Qur'an and was an expert at Tafsir. When she would explain the meanings of the Qur'an, the listeners would be amazed. She was blessed with a very high level of Ma'rifah (recognition) of Allah. She would spend her entire nights in Tahajjud. She would never eat to her fill and would eat simple foods. She stayed for a long time in Makkah Mukarramah. Zun-Noon Misri was once asked regarding the greatest person he had ever met. He commented, "I have never seen a greater person than a woman I had met in Makkah. Her name is Fatimah Nayshapuri. She would explain the meanings of the Qur'an. I was amazed with her knowledge and piety. She is one of the friends of Allah and she is my teacher." He then went on to narrate some of her amazing pearls of wisdom. Baayazid Bustaami said, "I have only seen one man and one woman who reached perfection in my entire life. The woman was Fatimah Nayshapuri. I found her to be knowledgeable about every matter and every state (which one passes through in the path towards the love of Allah) which I informed her of, possessing such knowledge which was based on personal experience and eye witness (rather than mere theory)." She passed away in Makkah Mukarramah during 223 AH.

8) Fatimah bint Hasan ibn Ali ad-Daqqaaq ﷺ

The renowned scholar Fatimah bint Hasan ibn Ali ad-Daqqaaq was the wife of Abul-Qasim al-Qushayri (the great Sufi who authored Risaalah Qushayriyah). Both her father and husband were two of the greatest Sufis of their time. Her father, Hasan ibn Ali ad-Daqqaaq, paid great attention to her tarbiyah (spiritual training and upbringing). Her father loved her greatly and turned his full attention to her education. He himself taught her knowledge and trained her in good character and refined manners. He instilled within her heart the beliefs of Islam and the etiquettes of the Sufiyaa.

She heard the whole of Sahih Abi 'Awaanah (the mustakhraj of Saheeh Muslim) and then later transmitted it. She heard Hadith from Abu Nu'aim Isfara'ini, Abul-Hasan Alawi, Abu Ali Rudhbari, Abu Abdillah Al-Haakim and Abdur-Rahman Sulami.

Not only did she know Saheeh Muslim, she also had a strong connection with the Book of Allah, just as every Muslim woman should have. Al-Sayrafeeni said: 'She knew the Book of Allah by heart, recited it day and night and knew its meaning.' This brought about in her refined character, which she was well known for. Al-Sam'aani said about her: 'She was the pride of the women of her time, no one similar to her has been seen in her good character; she was a scholar of the Book of Allah and virtuous.'

She was a great worshipper of Allah who would stand for lengthy periods of time in salaah, especially Tahajjud. She would remain perpetually in wudhu and pass her time engrossed in salaah and reciting Qur'an. She was blessed with 6 children, all of whom were great worshippers of Allah and beacons of guidance in that era. She was so disinclined from the world and unconcerned of wealth that she never bothered to find out what amount she had inherited from her father and mother. Her husband would take care of her inherited wealth, see to her needs and spend it wealth on her.

Fatimah bint Ali ad-Daqqaq passed away in 480 AH at the age of 90.

9) Fatimah bint Muhammad ibn Ahmad ﷺ

This great Faqeehah (female-scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence) of her time was renowned for her grounded knowledge of Hanafi Jurisprudence. She was none other than the daughter of the great scholar and jurist, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Ahmad Alaa'ud-Deen Samarqandi, whose book 'Tuhfatul Fuqaha' is well-known by the scholars and students of knowledge. Not only did she learn Fiqh from her father, but she memorised his book 'Tuhfatul Fuqaha'. Being a jurist in itself is no small matter; one needs to be well-acquainted with the Qur'anic verses, ahaadith of Rasulullah ﷺ and the principles of the mazhab upon which the Fuqaha

base their rulings on. Further, one needs to have knowledge of the circumstances and needs of the contemporary world.

Her father had married her to Alaa'ud Deen Abu Bakr ibn Mas'ud Kaasaani, who was highly distinguished in the fields of usool and furu' (the principles of fiqh and the subsidiary laws which are deduced from the principles). He wrote a commentary on 'Tuhfatul Fuqaha' entitled 'Badaai'us Sanaai', and showed it to his Shaykh (the father of Fatimah), who was delighted with it and accepted it as a mahr (dowry) for his daughter, although he had refused offers of marriage for her from some of the kings of Byzantium.

Before her marriage, Fatimah used to issue fataawa (religious edicts and verdicts) along with her father, and the fataawa would be signed by herself and her father. After she married the author of Badaai'i, the fataawa would appear with her signature, along with that of her father and her husband. Her knowledge was such that it exceeded that of her husband, who would consult her for her opinions, especially when he erred in passing a fatwa. Ibnul 'Adim says: 'My father narrated that she used to quote the Hanafi mazhab very well. Her husband al-Kaasaani sometimes would err in the (issuing of a) fatwa; then she would inform him of the correct opinion and explain the reason for his mistake. He would then retract his fatwa and issue fatwa according to her view in that particular matter. She was a Mufti. Her husband would greatly honour her and revere her.' She herself was a famous teacher who would deliver lessons and impart her knowledge to the women in Halab. She had also authored a few books in Fiqh and Hadith.

She was very generous. She possessed two precious bangles. One Ramadhaan, she graciously sold her bangles and used the money she received to prepare iftaar for the Fuqahaa and Ulama for the entire month in Masdrasah Halaawiyah in Halab. She therefore initiated this generous and rewarding practice which continued for many decades (and possibly

many centuries) thereafter, an action which surely earned for her rewards even after her death.

Her knowledge had created within her a natural sense of shame, purity and chastity. The following incident bears testimony to this: Due to her insistence, her husband had once resolved to return back to Samarqand, their homeland, from Halab (Aleppo) where he had been appointed as the head of the Madrasah Halaawiyah. When Nurud-Deen Zangi, the pious and just king of that time came to know of this, he summoned him and begged him to stay on at Halab. Al-Kaasaani explained to him the reason; he was being pressurized to return by his wife who he could never oppose, being the daughter of his teacher. The king and Al-Kaasaani together agreed to immediately send a messenger to her on behalf of the king with a personal message from the king requesting her to kindly stay on in Halab. A servant of the king was deputed with this task. When the messenger reached her door, he sought permission to enter and to speak to her. She refused him permission and remained concealed in her house. She sent a message with him to her husband who was still in the court of the king: "After such a long period of engrossment in Fiqh, you still made such a huge blunder. Don't you know that it is not permissible for this servant to look at me (and be with me in the privacy of my home). What difference is there between a servant and any other man when it pertains to the law of the impermissibility of looking at a strange woman." The servant was compelled to return without delivering the king's message. He conveyed her message to her husband in the presence of the king. The king realized his mistake and now sent a woman to her on his behalf with the same message, requesting her to kindly stay on in Halab. She complied with the king's request. Thereafter, whenever the king needed to send any message to her or enquire regarding any mas'alah (matter of the Shari'ah), he would always send a female as his messenger. This incident proves how conscious the pious women of former times were concerning issues of Hijaab and how they would not compromise its limits, even with slaves and government officials. This is a great lesson for us today, in an era

when many sisters give very little importance to completely covering themselves and segregating themselves from male servants.

She eventually passed away in Halab. Her husband Al-Kaasaani also passed away soon after her, and was buried right next to her in the 'Ibrahim Al-Khalil' graveyard.

10) Aa'ishah bint Ibrahim Dimishqiyyah known as Umm Muhammad ﷺ

She was born in 661 A.H. She had memorized the Qur'an and had studied Hadith under Ibn Asaakir. She had passed her life teaching the Qur'an to other women. Her husband was Haafidh Abul Hajjaaj Jamaalud-Deen Al-Mizzy, the famous Muhaddith who authored Tahzibul-Kamaal and Tuhfatul-Ashraaf. Haafidh Ibn Kathir, her son-in-law, said about her: 'She was one of a kind from amongst the women of her era, due to her frequent Ibaadah, abundant recitation of the Qur'an and constantly teaching it. Her recitation was clear, fluent and her pronunciation was impeccable. She had by far surpassed most men in these two aspects. Many females had memorized the Qur'an under her supervision. Her students benefitted greatly from her company, and were inspired to reform themselves on seeing her piety, her Islamic lifestyle, her disinclination from the world and her meager possessions and belongings. She possessed very little money and few belongings. She had passed her entire life of over 80 years in the obedience of Allah, in salaah and in reciting the Qur'an. Her husband was very kind to her and submissive. He would hardly ever oppose her opinion, due to the love he had for her, a love which was both natural as well as due to her strict obedience to the commands of Allah.' She passed away in 742 A.H.

11) Aa'ishah bint Imraan Manubi ﷺ

She had completed hifdh of Qur'an by her father. Thereafter, she turned her full attention towards Ibaadah and cut herself off from all worldly pleasures. She had completed 1520 khatms of Qur'an in her life. She loved to spend on the poor and help those who were in difficulty. She never kept

any of her expenses back for her own needs. She used to say, “If one coin remains in my pocket till the night which I had not yet given in Sadaqah, my entire night’s Ibaadah will be deficient.” She passed away in 665 A.H. while reciting the verse ‘Verily, Allah is with those who adopt Taqwa and those who continuously do good’.

12) Salmaa, who was known as Ummul Khayr 🕌

She was the daughter of Muhaqqiq Ibnul Jazri. He himself wrote about her in ‘Tabaqaatul-Qurraa as-Sughra’. She began memorizing the Qur’an in 813 A.H. She then memorized ‘Al-Muqaddamatul Jazriyyah’ and ‘Muqaddamatun-Nahw’. She then memorized ‘Tayyibatun-Nashr’ (a book on the various Qira’aat) and subsequently recited all ten Qira’aat to her father by memory, which she completed on 12 Rabiul Awwal 832 A.H. Her recital was impeccable and she would never miss a single ikhtilaaf (method of reciting according to the different Qurraa’) when reciting. She was such a master that her father claimed that she has no parallel in the world, neither man nor woman. She had written poetry in Arabic and Persian. She had also studied the science of Hadith under the tutorship of her father, who stated that she had acquired a lofty level of competence and expertise in this subject as well.

13) Zaybun-Nisaa 🕌

Zaybun-Nisaa was a famed poetess and the daughter of the Emperor Awrangzeb Alamgir of the Moghals. The emperor Awrangzeb Alamgir gifted Maryam al-Kashmiriyyah with 30,000 gold dinars after his daughter Zaybun-Nisaa memorized the Qur’an under her guidance. Zaybun-Nisaa also learnt writing and different styles of calligraphy, and she studied hadlth and fiqh according to the syllabus of that time. She possessed a huge library which housed many rare and amazing books. There was no woman in the Subcontinent at that time who could compare with her in her talent, genius, clarity of thought and gentle nature. She never married. She was the author of many books. By her request, Shaykh Safiyyud-Deen Ardabili translated ‘At-Tafsirul Kabir’ of Allamah Fakhrud-

Deen Raazi into the Persian language and named it ‘Zaybut Tafaaseer’ after her name. She passed away during the life of her father in 1113 AH.

14) Khadijah bint Ahmad Faasiyyah ﷺ

She was an expert reciter and very proficient in the science of Tajwid. She had memorized the Qur’an in all seven Qira’aat. She possessed great knowledge of the Qira’aat, its laws and wujuh (methods of recitation). She passed her life teaching the Qur’an. Due to her engrossment with the Qur’an, she never indulged in any futile or useless talk, let alone gossip and sinful speech. She passed away after the year 1323 A.H.

15) Amatullah bint Shah Abdul-Ghani Mujaddidi Dehlawi ﷺ

In the 14th century, one of the greatest experts of hadith was Amatullah bint Shah Abdul-Ghani Mujaddidi Dehlawi in Madinah. Her father began her education by teaching her the Qur’an Kareem, which she memorized. She then studied the books of Hanafi Fiqh under him, as well as books on Nahw, Sarf and Adab. She studied with her father, many times over, all the Six Sihaah Books of Hadith, as well as many ajzaa’ and thabats (notebooks containing details of one’s narrations or teachers). She also received from him all the Musalsalaat. Her father took a lot of interest in her education and obtained high ijaazah’s for her from the leading Muhadditheen (Ulama of Hadith) of that time, many of whom were his own teachers.

She paid alot of attention to educating females on matters concerning their Deen. At her home in Madinah, she taught ‘Mukhtasar Al-Qudoori’ as well as various short books of hadith. She was from the last major female scholars of Madinah and the last living student of her father. Many senior Ulama and Mashaayikh would visit her home to seek ijaazah (permission to narrate through her lofty chain), from amongst whom were scholars of the caliber of Shaykh Ahmad Ghumari and Shaykh Muhammad Yaasin Faadaani. Allamah Yusuf Banuri ﷺ had received ijaazah from her during the last year of her life. She lived past the age of one hundred. She passed away in 1357 A.H. (Al-Anaaqeedul-Ghaaliyah) (Some incidents of hers are recorded in ‘Malfoozaat Faqeehul Ummah’)

16) Sayyidah Khayrun-Nisaa Behtar ﷺ

She was the mother of Moulana Sayyid Abdul-Ali Hasani and Moulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. She was born in 1295 and passed away in 1388. She was a role-model to all Muslim women of her time, due to her strong Imaan, love for Allah, disinclination to the world and desire for Aakhirah, her passion for making dua' and enjoyment in Salaah and reciting Qur'an. She had learnt how to read and write at home. She studied the Qur'an and its meaning in Urdu with her father Moulana Dhiyaa'un-Nabi Hasani. She studied many kitaabs which left a deep impression on her heart and mind.

A desire was developed within her to memorize the Qur'an. She began memorizing under the tutorship of her brother Sayyid Ubaydullah and completed in three years. Her sister, neice and two other female relatives also joined her in memorizing and completed at around the same time. The five of them would get together in the month of Ramadhaan and perform Taraaweeth until close to the time of Sehri, each of them reciting one juz'. Therefore, each of them would complete one khatm of Qur'an in Taraweeth and listen to four khatms of Qur'an. She was punctual with her daily recital in Tahajjud and recited Qur'an abundantly throughout her life. Her only solace was in dua, which she made with great fervor, and she was very particular of the Sunnah duas, many of which even the Ulama were not aware of. Many of her books which she had authored have been published. Her two daughters Amatul-Aziz and Amatullah Tasneem were also Aalimahs and prolific authors.

17) Bi Safiyyah, the grand-daughter of Moulana Muzaffar Hussain Kandehlwi ﷺ

Bi Safiyyah was the mother of the great Muhaddith Moulana Muhammad Yahya, Moulana Muhammad Ismail and the famous Daa'ee Moulana Muhammad Ilyas ﷺ (the founder of the effort known as 'Da'wah and Tabligh'). Her grandsons included people like Shaykhul-Hadith Moulana

Muhammad Zakariyya Kandehlwī and Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Kandehlwī ﷺ

Bi Saffiyah was an excellent reciter and memorizer of the Noble Qur'an. She had memorized the Qur'an during her son Yahya's suckling and she remembered it so well that few could stand to contest. It was due to the blessings of this abundant recital that her son Moulana Muhammad Yahya had memorized a quarter of the 30th juz' of the Qur'an before even being weaned. He then went on to complete memorizing the entire Qur'an by the age of seven. It was also her practice to perform the household duties and the recitation of Qur'an and zikrs simultaneously.

Her daily practice in months other than Ramadhan was that she would recite: *Salaat alan Nabi (Durood)* 5000 times, zikr of the name 'Allah' 5000 times, استغفر الله 500 times, يا مغنى 1100 times, بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم 900 times, حسبى الله ونعم الوكيل 500 times, الحمد لله 200 times, سبحان الله 200 times, لا اله الا الله 200 times, الله اكبر 200 times, افوض امر الى الله 100 times, حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل 100 times, رب انى مغلوب فانتصر 100 times, رب انى مسنى الضر وانت ارحم 100 times, لا اله الا انت سبحتك انى كنت من الظالمين 100 times. Moreover she would recite one manzil of the Noble Qur'an daily, due to which she would complete one Qur'an recital every seven days. In the month of Ramadhan she used to complete the recitation of the entire Qur'an Majeed forty times. (Akaabir ka Ramzaan pg. 73) Her condition in salaah was one of absorption.

She would teach her children how to recite Qur'an. She would also teach them the Tafsir of the Qur'an, Mazaahir-e-Haq, Mashaariqul Anwaar, Al-Hisul Haseen and other such books. She would love to narrate the incidents of the Sahaabah and pious Ulama of the past.⁴

⁴ Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ said about the women of Kandhla, her home town: "Most of the women from the town of Kandhla have studied upto (the level of) Mishkat and Ad-Durrul Mukhtar. There are very few women there who have not memorized the Qur'an and remain asleep the entire night during Ramadan." (Majaalis-e-Hakimul Ummat p. 147)

18) Ummus-Sa'ad Iskandariyyah ﷺ

Ummus-Sa'ad was born into a poor family in a town called Bandaariya, one of the towns of the larger city Munofiya (north of Cairo). She was afflicted by blindness shortly after the age of one and, as was the practice of many in rural areas in dealing with blindness, her family sent her to learn the Qur'an. She completed her memorization in Alexandria at the age of 15. She then completed the memorization of the ten Qira'at of the Qur'an from Shaykhah Nafeesah when she had reached the age of 23.

After Ummus-Sa'ad completed her memorization of the Qur'an, she went to the Shaykhah Nafeesah bint Abil-Alaa, who was known as "The Shaykhah (woman scholar) of her time" to request from her to learn the 10 Qira'at (recitations). Nafeesa agreed on a peculiar condition; that Ummus-Sa'ad never marry. She used to refuse to teach girls because they would marry, become busy, and neglect the Qur'an.

Ummus-Sa'ad possessed one of the highest Isnads (chains of narration) in the world. Her isnaad in the recitation of Hafs from Aasim had 27 Shaykhs in between her and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This put her on the same level with well known Shuyukh of recitation such as Shaykh Abdul-Basit Hashim and Shaykh Muhammad Abdul-Hameed Abdullah.

What proved her unique status was that she was the only woman to whom qurraa' and huffaadh of the Qur'an would travel to receive ijaazah in the ten qira'at (recitations). Being the only woman to specialize in the ten qira'at, she had spent over fifty years granting ijaazahs in the ten qira'at.

Ummus-Sa'ad said, "It is from the blessings of my Lord that anyone who has obtained an ijaazah (license) in the Qur'an, in any qira'ah, in Alexandria either received it directly from me (munaawala) or from someone whom I had given an ijaazah to."

Ummus-Sa'ad once commented: "Sixty years of memorizing the Qur'an and it's recitations has made me unable to forget any of it. I can recall every aayah (verse), it's surah (chapter) and its juz', I know the aayaat

(verses) that are similar (mutashaabih) and how to recite the same aayah in different qira'at. I feel like I know the Qur'an like my name, I cannot imagine forgetting a letter of it or making a mistake in it. I don't know anything other than the Qur'an and its recitations. I never learned a science, listened to a lecture, or memorized anything other than the Qur'an and the mutoon that were related to the Qur'an and tajweed. I don't know anything other than that."

Waves of people could be seen entering and leaving her humble apartment, students who dreamed of memorizing the Qur'an, comprising of different age groups. Classes for the women and girls would begin from 8 AM until 2 PM after which the classes for men and boys would start until 8 PM. Ummus-Sa'ad would continue all day with no breaks except for prayer and a light meal to sustain her. Each student would recite what they had memorized and she would correct their mistakes bit by bit, until they memorized the Qur'an in one of its qira'at.

When asked about her students, Ummus-Sa'ad said: "I remember every one of them, there were some who received ijaazah in one of the recitations, and there were some (and they were very few) who received ijaazah in all ten recitations. They are the ones who receive an ijaazah with a special seal I have that I always keep with me. I never give it to anyone, no matter how much trust I have in them."

The happiest days for Ummus-Sa'ad are the days of the khatm (completion), when she would grant a student an ijaazah, even though she has experienced this day over 300 times! She keeps a copy of every ijaazah. The most beloved of those ijaazahs that she granted was to a student from Saudi Arabia who received it when she was seventeen years old!

She said: "And some of the men hesitated to recite to me, considering that I'm a woman, and some refused, but Shaykh Muhammad Isma'eel (a well

known shaykh in Alexandria) gave a fatwa that they could when he learnt of my age, and he sent his entire family to me to recite to me!"⁵

Her husband was Shaykh Muhammad Fareed Nu'man, who before his death, was the most well known reciter on Alexandria radio. He too was blind and had memorized the Qur'an at an early age. She was married to him for forty years and had no children.

She commentated on that, saying, "Alhamdulillah, I feel like Allah chooses for me the good always. Maybe if I had children, I would have become busy with them and neglected the Qur'an or forgot it."

Ummus-Sa'ad RahimahAllah passed away to the Mercy of Allah in 2006.

Impact of the Qur'an on the Muslim Women

S. Farooqi

The Qur'an is indeed a miracle that has withstood the test of time; not a single letter in it has changed over 14 centuries. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims memorize and preserve it in their hearts. It contains amazing scientific facts confirmed much later after their revelation. Allah ﷻ promised to protect and preserve it. He says, "Surely it is We Who have revealed the Zikr – the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) and We will most surely be its Guardian." (Surah Hijr v.9)

One of the most profound ways in which the Qur'an has proved to be miraculous is how it transforms those who read it, understand it, and then act upon it. As a Muslim woman who has witnessed such a change in numerous Muslim sisters of different ages and backgrounds after they

⁵ This is the ruling of the Fuqaha Kiraam. The Qur'an has relaxed the rules of Hijaab for women who have reached old age. However, such women are still encouraged to adopt the highest level of chastity, cover themselves before men and speak in gruff tones, although it is not compulsory.

started to study, ponder over, and adhere to the commands of the Qur'an, I can testify to the miraculous phenomenon that this book brings about.

So flabbergasting has this effect been that even Rasulullah ﷺ was initially accused, by the disbelievers of Makkah, of practicing sihr (witchcraft) over the early Muslims, as the unflinching change of their hearts toward the Qur'an's monotheistic message could not be attributed to any human cause...It is the same today. Whenever a Muslim adheres to the Qur'an, reciting it with understanding, reading its translation or exegesis with deep reflection, or teaching it to others, he or she undergoes a real change for the better in his or her lifestyle and habits, worship, dealings with others, and best of all in his or her innate spiritual self.

Correcting Belief and Worship

Knowledge of the Qur'an improves the Muslim woman's understanding of monotheism - the Oneness of Allah - in such a way that her Creator becomes the center of her existence. Her basic beliefs are rectified and her heart is cleansed from the impurity of shirk (polytheism), as she reads in the Qur'an "Worship Allah, and do not ascribe not any partners with Him". (Surah Nisaa' v.36)

She also experiences a gradual decline in the reverence of intangible deities that her heart previously harbored, such as strong love for the world and its adornments (e.g. fashionable clothes, jewelry, shoes, interior decor, and luxuries), the human self's base innate desires, and dependence on physical means and people (who are among Allah's creation) in achieving ends.

Her attitude toward tahaarah (purity) in herself, her home, and her family also undergoes a radical change, so that she can be seen focusing more on simple, clean, clutter-free living rather than lavish opulence and extravagance. That is because Almighty Allah loves the repentant and the pure ones.

Relinquishing Useless Pastimes

Knowledgeable companionship with the Glorious Qur'an removes from a Muslim woman's life all useless pastimes, such as window shopping, buying unnecessary possessions, watching soaps or drama on television, gossiping for hours on the phone, attending extravagant parties to ascend the social ladder, showing off one's possessions, and attending gatherings of innovative religious rituals and customary functions.

Eventually, the Qur'an enables her to relinquish social ills such as backbiting, mingling with members of the opposite sex, and indulging in impermissible entertainment (like films, music, dating, singing, and dancing). By refraining from all these ills, a Muslim woman will have ample time to pursue leisure-time activities and hobbies that will be more fruitful for her in the hereafter.

Righteous Activities for Society

Most Muslim girls and women who gain knowledge of Allah's Book eventually start teaching what they learned to others or actively start volunteering for social work on a community level (e.g., feeding the poor, paying off others' debts, facilitating marriages, counseling those who are aggrieved, and providing the needy with work). They also start to focus more on their family and on building its Islamic character. The major cause of this shift in focus is, as mentioned before, relinquishing useless and time-wasting pursuits.

Modesty in Dress and Dealings

The more a Muslim woman studies the Qur'an, the more she becomes inclined to chastity, humbleness, and modesty. The Qur'an reconnects her to her fitrah (intrinsic human nature), and thus she starts becoming conscious of how she dresses in public, how she talks to men who are not mahrams (unmarriageable family members), and how she uses body language outside her house.

In fact, all her manners undergo a noticeable change for the better: her dressing, her tone of voice, her conversational style, her sense of humor,

her gestures, and her way of talking with men all become compliant with Allah's ordainments in the Qur'an.

Better Relationship with Others

Deep understanding of the Qur'an leads to a high level of taqwa, which is piety, perpetual consciousness of Allah, and fear of His anger. This makes a Muslim woman extremely careful to give other people their due rights. This taqwa improves her relationships with them, making her more patient, tolerant, forgiving mistakes and shortcomings, and more kind to everyone in general.

The Qur'an makes her more zealously cherish, obey, respect, and serve her parents, especially if she is single and free from the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood. She thus helps out more with household tasks instead of always going out with friends. She gives due attention to her parents' advice and opinions and obeys their decisions regarding her marriage proposals.

Similarly, the Qur'an reminds the married Muslim woman of the nature of her husband's and children's rights, which are her duties toward them. It is therefore not uncommon to see a husband (who himself might not be so practicing on the teachings of Islam beyond basic obligations) singing his wife's praises once she starts studying the Qur'an.

This is because he strongly feels the improvement in her overall character and conduct; he notices her hard work on the moral upbringing of their children and her increased dedication to her home life. He finds a warmer, happier home and family awaiting him each evening, so he openheartedly welcomes this change, which was brought about by the Qur'an's effect on his wife.

A Tranquil Soul and a Rancor-Free Heart

Last but not least, the greatest blessing that the Qur'an gives to a Muslim woman is a heart filled with Allah's love. This heart throbs with unadulterated faith and is free from any malice, rancor, hatred, or envy

toward others; it is a heart that knows no despair of Allah's mercy in bleak circumstances and is tranquil due to complete trust in Allah.

This is the heart described by Allah Himself as a healthy heart: "The day on which property will not benefit (one), nor will sons, except him who comes to Allah with a (spiritually) healthy heart." (Surah Shu'araa' v.88-89)

If the Qur'an can so positively change hearts, people, and eventually entire families and communities, would you not want to welcome its enlightening effect into your life too?

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR A HAAFIDH AND HAAFIDHAH

Advices of Rasulullah ﷺ

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whoever recites (memorizes the Qur'an has secured the knowledge of Nubuwwah between his ribs (in his chest), although Wahy (revelation) is not revealed to him. It is not appropriate for the one endowed with the Qur'an (the Haafidh/ Haafidhah) to become angry with those who become angry and to behave ignorantly (display evil character) with those who behave ignorantly, while the speech of Allah is in their chests." (Al-Mustadrak of Haakim)

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "O people of the Qur'an! Do not sleep over the Qur'an (i.e. do not neglect it by not practicing on it and not reciting it at night), but recite it as it should be recited in the hours of the night and day. Spread the Qur'an (by teaching and propagating it), recite it in a beautiful voice and ponder over its contents so that you may be successful. Do not be hasty by seeking a reward for it (in this world), because it has a magnificent reward (in the Akhirah)." (Shu'abul-Imaan)

Rasulullah ﷺ was asked, "Who recites the Qur'an in the best voice and in the best manner?" He ﷺ replied: "That person who recites in such a

manner that when you hear him, you feel that he fears Allah.” (Daarmi, Abd Ibn Humaid, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Tabraani in Awsat)

Advices of Umar ؓ

Kinaanah Adawi narrates that Umar ؓ wrote to the commanders of his armies to send him a list of all the men who were Huffaadh of the Qur'an so that he could dispatch them to the ends of the empire to teach the Qur'an. Abu Moosa Ash'ari ؓ wrote back to Umar ؓ, stating that the Huffaadh with him numbered just over three hundred. Umar's ؓ reply to him was as follows:

‘In the name of Allah the Most Kind, the Most Merciful.

From the servant of Allah, Umar, to the servant of Allah, Qays, and all the Huffaadh with him:

Peace be upon you all. This Qur'an is a great source of reward and honour for you and shall be a treasure for you in the Akhirah. You should therefore follow its dictates and never allow it to follow yours (by distorting its interpretation to suit your desires) because the person whose dictates the Qur'an is forced to follow shall have it shoved on to his neck to throw him into Jahannam. As for the one who follows the Qur'an, the Qur'an shall lead him to Jannatul Firdous. So as far as you can, let it be an intercessor for you and never let it be a complainant against you. The person for whom the Qur'an intercedes shall enter Jannah and the one against whom the Qur'an complains shall surely enter Jahannam. Always bear in mind that the Qur'an is a fountainhead of guidance, a flower of knowledge and the final scripture from the Most Merciful. It is by this Qur'an that Allah opens blind eyes, deaf ears and locked hearts.

You must also bear in mind that when a man wakes up at night, brushes his teeth with a Miswaak, performs wudhu, says 'Allahu Akbar' and then recites the Qur'an, an angel places his mouth on the person's mouth and says, "Recite, recite. You are doing an excellent thing and it is most excellent for you." If he performs wudhu without using the Miswaak, the

angel protects him and does nothing else. Behold! Recitation of the Qur'an in salaah is a hidden treasure and the most wonderful form of worship. You should therefore do as much of it as you possibly can. Salaah is a nur (celestial light), zakaah is a proof, patience is an illumination, fasting is a shield and the Qur'an is a proof either for you or against you. You should therefore honour the Qur'an and never cause it disgrace because Allah will honour the one who honours the Qur'an and will disgrace the one who brings it disgrace.

You also ought to know that the person who recites the Qur'an, memorizes it, practises on it and abides by its injunctions shall have his du'as accepted by Allah. If Allah pleases, He may accept them in this world and if He wills, he may reserve them as a treasure for the Aakhirah. Remember that what remains with Allah is better and more lasting for those who have Imaan and who rely on their Rabb.' (Ibn Zanjwayh, Kanzul-Ummaal)

Advices of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud ؓ

Abdullaah bin Mas'ood ؓ said, "It is only befitting that a person of the Qur'an be recognized by his nights (when he is engaged in Ibaadah) when others are asleep, by his days (spent fasting) when others are eating, by his sorrow (pondering about his plight in the Aakhirah) when others are rejoicing, by his weeping when others are laughing, by his silence when others are socializing and by his humility when others are behaving arrogantly. It is also befitting of a person of the Qur'an to be weeping and sorrowful, wise and tolerant, knowledgeable and composed. It does not behove a person of the Qur'an to be uncouth, negligent, boisterous, rowdy and short-tempered." (Hilyatul-Awliyaa, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah)

Advices of an Esteemed Scholar

The following are some pertinent advices of Moulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) which he had delivered to Huffadh/Haafidhaat on various occasions:

- 1) We are not worthy of the great gift of being a Haafidh/Haafidhah. It is not our capabilities which have allowed us to achieve the memorization of Qur'an. Allah ﷻ says: "Whatever good comes to you is from Allah."
- 2) Make sure that your beliefs are correct. Consult reliable Ulama and study reliable literature on this subject.
- 3) Be punctual with your five daily salaah on its time. For men, it should be performed in the Masjid.
- 4) A Haafidh/Haafidhah should recite at least one juz' a day, and no less than this. It should be gradually brought up to 3 juz'. A good method is to recite 1 juz' looking in the Mushaf, then recite the same juz' to another and finally recite it once in nafl salaah or in sunnah salaah. If one's recollection of the Qur'an is weak, recite half a juz' 6 times. If it is even weaker, recite quarter juz' 12 times. In this manner, in a short while, one's hifz will be strengthened.
- 5) Create an environment of reciting Qur'an aloud at home, especially after Fajr or Maghrib with one's family.
- 6) To become from the Ashraaf (honourable individuals) of the Ummah, a Haafidh/Haafidhah should perform Tahajjud. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The Ashraaf (honourable individuals) of the Ummah are those who are carriers of the Qur'an and who perform salaah at night." (Shu'abul Imaan) If one is unable to wake up in the latter portion of the night, then perform 2 or 4 rak'ats before sleeping, or at least after the 2 sunnah rak'ats after Isha. People who do so will also be included amongst Ashaabul-Layl (those who perform salaah at night). However, a Haafidh/Haafidhah should make an effort to gradually increase the extent of Tahajjud, by even just five minutes every six months. Those who do not perform any salaah at night are unfortunate people.
- 7) Be punctual with zikr daily and the sunnah morning and evening duas.

8) Inculcate within us the love of Allah, love of the Qur'an and the love of the pious friends of Allah. Build up a connection with Allah, by creating His love and remembrance in your heart. For this, refer to some pious friend of Allah.

9) Dress according to the command of Allah and the sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ. It is waajib (compulsory) for men to keep beards upto one full fist-length and to keep their garments above their ankles. Likewise, it is waajib (compulsory) for women to cover their faces and the rest of their bodies (excluding the hands and feet under the ankles) when emerging from their homes due to some necessity, and to abstain from wearing revealing and tight-fitting clothing. This is very important. Do not be perturbed by the criticism and comments of others.

10) Your company and friends have a great impact on you. See who you associate with and who you befriend. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "A person follows the Deen of his friends who he associates with. Each person should reflect over whom he associates with." (Tirmizi)

11) Do not visit places of evil. Never be present in any gathering where sin is taking place. Remember that the Qur'an is in your chest.

12) The Huffaadh and Haafidhaat ought to have the best Akhlaaq.

13) Make an intention to reform yourself according to the Qur'an, and begin working towards it.

14) Endeavour to teach the Qur'an after having memorized it. The very least one should do is to teach the entire Qur'an to at least one student in your lifetime.

Three Important Reminders

a) Remember that the greater one's position and status, the greater the responsibilities.

b) The fact is that the Haafidh/Haafidhah does not really look after the Qur'an, but the Qur'an looks after the Haafidh/Haafidhah.

c) If a person does not respect or appreciate this great gift of the Qur'an, it is sometimes taken away.

The Rights of the Qur'an

Moulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) also advises every Muslim to at least endeavour to fulfil the primary rights of the Qur'an. These rights should be given further importance by the Haafidh or Haafidhah. They are as follows:

1. **IMAAAN BIL QUR'AN** - To believe every single verse of Qur'an, especially when it concerns Hijaab, Islamic punishments, inheritance etc.
2. **AL HUBB WAL ADHAMAH LIL QUR'AN** - To have immense love and respect for the Qur'an and for those who have memorized the Qur'an. To honour the Qur'an, by placing nothing on top of it, not stretching one's feet to it, by handling it with respect and placing it high up in a respectable position, etc.
3. **TAJWEEDUL QUR'AN** - To learn to recite the Qur'an correctly, with all the laws of Tajweed. If one has forgotten, a few days effort under a tutor will easily put one back on track.
4. **TILAAWATUL QUR'AN** - To recite the Qur'an. For reciting, lip movement is essential. Mere mind reading will not suffice.
5. **AMAL BIL QUR'AN** – To act upon the injunctions of the Qur'an and to practice upon its teachings, lest it becomes a proof against us on the Day of Qiyaamah.
6. **TA'LEEMUL QUR'AN** – To teach the Qur'an according to one's capacity, either personally or by aiding those involved in its teaching.
7. **TABLIGHUL QUR'AN** – To propagate the Qur'an and its message to those unaware, Muslim and non-Muslim.

Some advices on female education

The following are excerpts of an article written by Hakimul Ummah Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ on the topic of female education, along with a few of his advices on this subject:

The best system of education for the refinement of character and producing cultured individuals

As for learning good manners and morals, then no other system or education can teach good manners and character the way Deen can. Compare a person who has been totally influenced by knowledge of Deen and another person who has been totally influenced by modern culture. Thereafter, compare their character, social dealings and transactions, and you will find a world of difference between the two. Deen has many aspects: beliefs, actions, mu'aamalaat (monetary dealings), mu'aasharah (social relations), and self-purification. To have sufficient knowledge of all the aspects of Deen mentioned above is called Deeni knowledge. And those who abide by the rules of all these aspects are truly called religious people.

The best method of educating females

The best method for girls is the one that came down to us from generation to generation; groups of two, three or four girls should get together and acquire the necessary education. As far as possible, they should try and get a female teacher who does not charge any fees, because experience has shown that this type of education is more blessed and more effective. But if there is no alternative, there is no harm in paying. Where no female teacher is available, then the menfolk of the house should undertake to teach them. This is in regard to the system of education.

Moulana had also stated: “The Deeni education of women is more necessary than that of men, since a man still has the opportunity to benefit from the company of the Ulama and the pious who may reform him. Women do not have this opportunity, because they remain indoors, which is best for them. It is therefore necessary that there be knowledgeable

(Aalimah) women so that this may facilitate the reformation of women in general. By only men becoming Ulama, total reformation of women cannot take place.”

The ideal syllabus

As for the syllabus, then as far as possible, they should be taught to read the Qur'an correctly. Thereafter, Deeni books which have been written in simple language and in which all aspects of the Deen have been dealt with comprehensively (like Bahishti Zewar-Heavenly Ornaments). If the men of the house are imparting the education, then those matters that are "shameful" should be left out and taught through their wives. If this is not possible, then these matters should be marked off so that they can read it themselves once they get more mature.

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ also proffered the following suggestion: “Boys and girls should be provided with Islamic education from the time they are able to understand. A great asset like the Qur'an must be taught to them and should never be regarded as a waste of time. If they are unable to memorize the entire Qur'an, they should memorize half the Qur'an or at least the last Manzil (from Surah Hujuraat till the end-also known as Al-Mufasssal).”

He ﷺ also stated: “I am not opposed to educating females and strongly feel that they should receive Islamic education. If the interest is keen, they should be taught the Arabic syllabus (the Aalimah course). I have stipulated a keen interest because learning Arabic requires more effort and understanding.”

Tarbiyah (spiritual training)

Together with education, practicing on the knowledge should also be seen to. It should also be ensured that the desire to teach be inculcated in them so that they have some contact with knowledge throughout their lives. In this way, there will be a constant revival and yearning for ilm and amal (knowledge and practicing on it). They should also be encouraged to always keep a habit of reading beneficial books. After completing their necessary syllabus, if it is found that they have the potential, they should

be directed towards learning an Arabic syllabus (the Aalimah course) so that they are able to understand the Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh (jurisprudence) in the original language. In my opinion, those girls who read the translation of the Qur'an only (without learning Arabic so as to understand it from the original text) make many errors in understanding it.

Selection of the teacher

Some people get their daughters educated at the hands of liberal and shameless women. Experience has shown that the company one keeps has a definite effect on one's character and emotions. This is more so when the person whose company one adopts is followed and respected. Obviously, who can be more worthy of following and respect than one's teacher? So in this case, that liberalism and shamelessness of the teacher will also rub off onto these girls. In my opinion, the best woman is the one in whom hayaa' (shame and self-restraint) is natural. This is the key to all good. When this is not found, then no good can be expected, nor can any evil be unlikely. The rule is, 'when hayaa' goes away from you, then do whatever you wish'. (Hadith) Similarly, if the female teachers are not like this, but the classmates and school mates are like this (i.e. liberal and shameless), then being close to them will also cause many harms.⁶

Appendix

Ulama and their duty towards their daughters

It is the duty of Ulama is to teach their daughters the Tafsir of Qur'an and other Deeni sciences like Hadith and Fiqh. We have already mentioned the incidents of some such women who were tutored by their fathers, including the daughter of Sa'eed ibnul Musayyib, Fatimah bint Muhammad Faqeehah, Ayesah bint Imraan Manubi, Salmaa the daughter of Muhaqqiq Ibnul Jazri, Amatullah bint Shah Abdul Ghani Dehlawi and Sayyidah Khayrun-Nisaa Behtar (rahimahunnAllah). Hereunder follows a few more such examples which illustrate how much

⁶ Bahishti Zewar, At-Tableegh v.7 pg.67, At-Tableegh v.14 pg.164-166, Huququz Zawjain. The sub-headings have been added by the compiler, as well as a few comments in brackets

care was taken to ensure that their daughters were well educated in Deeni sciences:

a) Abu Ja'far Yazid ibnul Qa'qaa Tabi'ee, the eighth Qaari from the ten famous Qurraa to whom the Qira'aat Asharah are ascribed, taught his daughter Maymunah the Qur'an. Her son Ahmad and Thaabit narrate this Qira'ah through her from Abu Ja'far. She was married to Shaybah ibnun-Nassah, the freed slave of Ummu Salamah (radhiAllahu anha), who was the judge of Madinah.

b) Imam Maalik taught his daughter Faatimah the whole of his Muwatta. Not only did she memorize the whole of the Muwatta, but she learnt all the ahaadith her father knew, from him. Zubayr said, 'Maalik had a daughter who knew his knowledge (i.e. the Muwatta) by heart, and she used to be behind the door. When the reader made a mistake, she would knock on the door and Imam Maalik would then correct him.' Allah had decreed such that one of the sons of Imam Maalik whose name was Muhammad was not inclined to studying and knowledge. Indeed this is something gifted by Allah in the heart. Sometimes he would pass by with a sparrow on his hand, wearing stylish, elegant shoes and long robes. Imam Maalik would say to his students: 'Good manners are in the Hands of Allah. This is my son and this is my daughter.' Qurawi said: We used to be sitting in the gathering of Maalik. His son used be in and out, but he would not sit (to listen to Hadith or learn Fiqh). Maalik ﷺ used to turn to us and say, "What gives me consolation and lessens my grief is the fact that this knowledge is not inherited, and that no person has ever become a perfect Khalifah of (i.e. perfectly represented) his father and inherited his father's majlis (position and gathering) in the true sense of the word other than Abdur-Rahman ibnul Qaasim." Faatimah was married of to her cousin Ismail ibn Abi Uwais.

c) The pious African Maliki Qadhi, Isa ibn Miskeen, used to teach his daughters and grand-daughters. Qadi Iyaadh said: "After the Asr salaah, he would call his two daughters and the daughters of his brother to teach them the Qur'an and Ilm." The same was done by Asad ibnul Furaat (who

was a famous student of Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Imam Maalik) with his daughter Asmaa, who attained a high degree of knowledge.

d) Hafiz Az-Zayn Abdur-Rahim Iraqi was blessed with three daughters; Khadijah, Juwairiyah and Zaynab. All his daughters had studied Hadith under their father. Their father had also procured for them Ijaazahs from his senior teachers. They later themselves became famous teachers of Hadith. Khadijah was married off to his famous student Nurud-Deen Haythami, and Juwairiyah was married off to the scholar Shihaab Klautati.

e) Amatul-Ghafur Bint Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi was the great Muhaddithah of the 13th Century. She was non-Arab. Many feel that these great women were great only because they were lucky to have Arabic as their mother-tongue and since their ancestry was from the Arabs. The Muhaddithah Amatul Ghafur bint Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi (rahimahAllah) was from Delhi – India. Her father was one of leading scholars of India and so she would learn from his company, covering many books of hadith and fiqh with him. In this way, she acquired high authority in both the sciences of hadith and fiqh. Her father married her to his famous student, Mufti Abdul-Qayyum Budhanwi of Bhopal. When her husband, himself a great scholar, faced any difficulty in any matter concerning hadith or fiqh, he consulted her and benefited from her.

f) Moulana Muzaffar Hussain Kandhlawi had 2 wives who had both previously been widowed. He would divide his night in three parts: 1) The first part was spent with his first wife, wherein he would teach her the translation of the Qur'an. 2) The second part was spent teaching his daughters the translation of the Qur'an. 3) The third part was spent with his wife from Kirana who was willing to leave Shiasm if he was willing to marry her, to which he consented. She caused him much hardship. She used to lock the door of the house most of the time. He would then spread a sheet outside the door and perform Tahajjud for that part of the night.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ - مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ - الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمَّ الصَّالِحَاتُ - سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ
سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ - سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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Some quotations have passed already in the kitaab, which have not been repeated here. Much of the subject matter quoted in the above booklet from articles has been condensed, and some additions have been made by the compiler. May Allah reward all those who have written on this subject, from whose writings I have drawn extensively.

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