

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وَدِدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah *azza wajal*, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,
The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah *azza wajal*, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger *Sallal Laahu 'Alayhi Wasallam*

Ant teaches a person to remain Steadfast

Yahya ibn Waaqid bin Mohammed bin Adi bin Juzaim Ta'i Nahwi Bahdadi, whose appellation was "Abu Saleh", was certainly a very famous scholar. Abu Nu'aim says that, "He was certainly considered as an Imam in classical Arabic; in the field of Arabic syntax and grammar." Yahya ibn Waaqid was also the student of Haytham ibn Abi Zaahidah and Ibn Aleeyah. Yaqut says that he also acquired knowledge from Asma'i. He was born in 165 A.H.

(Baghyatul Wa'at)

However, in the beginning, Yahya ibn Waaqid was a mere boatman. He possessed no knowledge at all. When his passengers discussed various issues, he listened very attentively and in this manner, a great urge was built in him to acquire knowledge. As this zeal grew greater, Yahya ibn Waaqid said to himself, "My age has passed the forty-year mark and besides being a boatman, I have no other attribute or qualification. How can I be able to even acquire such knowledge when I have no connection with the people of knowledge?"

He was busy thinking about this when his eyes fell on an ant. The little ant had a large seed in its mouth and was trying to carry it over a wall. Yahya ibn Waaqid noticed that on the first attempt, it fell off the wall. In spite of this, it took hold of the seed and tried again. This continued many times and finally, the little ant was able to cross over the wall. Looking at the steadfastness of the ant, Yahya ibn Waaqid said to himself, "This is such a small and delicate creature and yet, through its great effort and steadfastness, it is able to reach its destination. Therefore, I cannot lag behind if a small creature like this can succeed."

After making up his mind, (remember at past the age of forty), Yahya ibn Waaqid enrolled in a Darul Uloom. He then started to study Arabic grammar, Arabic syntax and logic. He studied so earnestly that he actually became one of the most noted scholars of his era. Yahya ibn Waaqid also became famous all over the country. He has also authored many treatises in this field.

Every seeker of knowledge should indeed take a lesson from this example. The two main factors of success are steadfastness and effort. We have seen many examples of people who have come from poor backgrounds, yet, by merely adopting these two noble traits they have been able to achieve magnificent results.

Here, we have an example of a mere boatman. He had the sincere intention of becoming something in life and when he saw a little creature, his mind opened. Such is the manner of creation that from simple creatures mighty lessons are derived and learnt. When we look at an ant, we might not think very much of it, yet, Allah *azza wajaal* has created powerful messages for mankind in these simple creatures. We have already learnt about the ant in the story of Nabi Sulayman *'Alayhis Salaam* and we have now learnt about an ant in this story. This is the wisdom behind one of the smallest creatures on earth! If people are able to look at creation and learn from creation, they will be able to gain mighty lessons from this. This is the reason that Allah *azza wajaal* has clearly declared that, "nothing has been created in vain."