

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وُلُودِ آدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيُرِضِي بَأْنُ يُصْلِي عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

The Memory of the Scholars

There is no doubt that Allah Almighty has certainly blessed this Ummah with the power of immense memorization. This is the reason that some of the eminent Muhaditheen used to memorise in one single sitting hundreds and thousands of Ahadith. Such was their greatness that if they heard something only once, they never forgot what they had heard. Some of them heard a certain book from the teacher or mentor only once, and in that gathering, they not only memorised the entire treatise but they never had to ask their teacher any question after that.

It is reported that once, Hadrat Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Abbas - *may Allah be pleased with them* - memorised a poem of eighty couplets and in one single sitting, and he then repeated the entire poem. (Al Kamil)

Another interesting incident is mentioned about the sons of Harun Rashid, namely Mamun Rashid and Ameen Rashid.

They were advised by their father to attend the classes of the famous Muhaddith, Hadrat Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Idris Abbas - *may Allah be pleased with him*. When both of them were in his company, they heard a hundred Ahadith mentioned by the eminent scholar. Mamun then asked, "Hadrat, if you give us permission, we will like to repeat the hundred Ahadith which you have mentioned to us." After the teacher had given them permission, they repeated the hundred Ahadith.

This the state and condition of sultans and princes of the previous generation that they spent their time seeking Islamic knowledge and also seeking knowledge of the Ahadith. They used to attend the classes of eminent scholars of Islam and behaved as ordinary students. But today, when we look at the rich and powerful, besides the father, we can safely say that even the children know nothing about Islam.

At the same time, they were so concerned about spreading knowledge that they went out of their way to reward and financially help those who spread Islam. It is reported that Hadrat Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Abbas - *may Allah be pleased with them* - used to actually give a certain portion of his money to his special student, Hadrat Sayyiduna Abu Hamza (Nasr bin Imran As Thab'i) Abbas - *may Allah be pleased with him* - so that he could spread Islam to others. He used to translate the words of the great Saint to non-Arabs. (Sahih Bukhari Shareef, Abu Daud, etc)

Once, Sultan Harun Rashid gave an official decree that whoever becomes a Hafiz of the Qur'an, or acquires knowledge of Ahadith or knowledge of Fiqh, he was to be give a yearly stipend of four thousand Dinaars. With the result of this official announcement, even eight year old children or eleven year old children were becoming Huffaz and specialists in other fields of Islam as well. (Al Imaamah wal Siyaamah)

The eminent Imam of Arabic grammar, Abu Bakr bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him*, mentions that during his younger days, his education was under the supervision of his uncle, Husain bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him*. His teacher was Allama Sa'eed bin Abu Uthman Harun - *may Allah be pleased with him*.

Abu Bakr bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him* – says, "It was the habit of my uncle that whenever he used to eat, he used to also call my teacher to join him. One day,

during this time, I mentioned a few lines of poetry written by the famous poet Haarith bin Hallu. When my uncle heard this, he mentioned that if I can memorise this Qasidah, he will give me such and such a reward. Both of them busied themselves eating and also spoke about a few other subject. During this time, I had memorised the 83 couplets of the Qasidah and asked them permission to recite this in front of them.”

In another report it is mentioned that his teacher went out for a few minutes and when he returned, this student had recited the complete Qasidah in front of them through memory. He was then given a special reward by his uncle for this amazing achievement. (Khateeb Baghdadi)

He learned the complete lecture in one sitting.

The friend of Imam Abdullah ibn Mubarak Abu Bakr bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him*, Saghrah, mentions that during their young days, he and Abdullah ibn Mubarak Abu Bakr bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him* - were passing a certain area and they noticed someone speaking or giving a lecture. The lecture was quite lengthy and both of them sat to listen to this lecture. When the lecture had been completed, Imam Abdullah ibn Mubarak - *may Allah be pleased with him* - looked at his friend and said, “I have memorized this complete speech and lecture.”

One of the people who was in this gathering then challenged him to reveal this fact to them. Imam Abdullah ibn Mubarak - *may Allah be pleased with him* - then proceeded to reveal the entire lecture through memory. (Khateeb Baghdadi)

It is mentioned that Imam Khalid bin Sa’ad - *may Allah be pleased with him* - used to listen to twenty Ahadith in one sitting and used to memorize it immediately. (Tadkirah)

The same about Imam Abu Yusuf Abu Bakr bin Dareed - *may Allah be pleased with him*. It is mentioned that once someone recited forty Ahadith of Imam Sufyan Thouri - *may Allah be pleased with him* - to him and after listening to it only once, he memorized all of them with the Sanad as well. (Al Jawaahir Al Madeeyah)

In fact, at times, there were fifty or seventy Ahadith which were mentioned in one sitting and after listening to all of them only once he used to then dictate this to others so that they could record them. (Taarikh Ibn Kalakaan)

Imam Abu Zar'a Ar Razi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - also mentions that whatever he heard only once, he used to memorize immediately. At the same time, he never used to forget this. He also admits that he never had to ask any Muhaddith to repeat his words. He also admits that when he used to walk in the bazaar, he used to close his ears so that he is unable to listen to useless poems which ladies and young girls used to recite in bazaars. The reason was that his power of memory was so good that if he heard anything only once, he would be able to memorize those words and he did not want to memorise useless words. (Tahzeeb. Al Bidaayah)

He mentions that nearly fifty years have gone by since he had recorded certain Ahadith in certain books and that in all these years, he did not have to refer to any of these recordings. He used to admit that he knew exactly in which line or page a certain Hadith was recorded or written. (Baghdadi, Tahzeeb)

It is mentioned that Imam Mohammed bin Al Hasan Ash Shaybani - *may Allah be pleased with him*, one of the famous students of Imam Abu Hanifah - *may Allah be pleased with him*, narrates that he memorized the complete Qur'an in only seven days.

Imam Aamir bin Sharaheel - *may Allah be pleased with him* - states that he never had to urge to record anything. "If ever I had to record something, I never used to forget that and with the result of this power of memory, I never had to record anything twice." (Baghdadi; Tahzeeb)

Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was also someone who had attended the blessed gathering of nearly five hundred eminent Ashaab - *may Allah be pleased with them* - and is also mentioned as one of the most eminent teachers of Imam Abu Hanifah - *may Allah be pleased with him*. Besides being a great Muhaddith, Jurist and Mufassir, he was also someone who used to be light-hearted.

It is mentioned that once while walking, Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - met a person and asked him what was his occupation. The person replied that he was an escape artist. Imam Shubah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - then asked him, "There is a small container of mine which has broken, would you be able to hide it." (In other words, would you be able to hide its crack.) The escape artist replied, "If you are able

to give me a rope made from sand, I will be able to mend it.” When he heard this, he laughed out aloud. (Tadkirah)

His amazing memory.

A close friend of Imam Bukhari - *may Allah be pleased with him* - mentions that when they were in class, all of them used to busy themselves in recording whatever was being taught except Imam Bukhari - *may Allah be pleased with him*. He used to merely listen to whatever was being taught. Later some of his class friends mentioned to him that he was wasting time coming to classes because he never recorded anything. At first, the great Imam was quite, but when they insisted on their opinion, he asked them to bring whatever they had recorded and from memory, he read whatever they had recorded. His close friend admits that the great Imam recited in front of them nearly fifteen thousand Ahadith. (Baghdadi, Tadkirah, Tabqaat Subqi)

Muhaddith ibn Ambazi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - used to say, “I have memorised nearly thirteen boxes of books. Allama Zehbi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - also mentions that this amazing scholar has also memorised nearly one hundred twenty books of Tafseer with their chain of narrators.” (Tadkirah)

Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Shafi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - narrates that, “When I was seven years old, I had memorized the Qur'an. When I had reached the age of ten I had memorized the *Mu'atta* of Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him*.” (Tadkirah, Baghdad, Al Bidaayah, Tahzeeb)

Hafiz ibn Hajar Asqalani Shafi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - mentions that Sultan Mohammed Shah Sakhi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - had actually memorised the complete book of Hanafi law which is the *Al Hidaayah*. (Bear in mind that this is four volumes).

It is mentioned that Imam Abul Khayr - *may Allah be pleased with him* - (Abdur Rahman bin Ahmed) had also memorised the complete *Sahih Al Bukhari* and the *Sahih Muslim Shareef*. (Tadkirah)

Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Bukhari - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was once asked whether he knew everything by memory of whatever he had written. The great Imam mentioned that nothing was hidden from him and that everything was in front of him. The great Imam also mentions that when he was only sixteen, he had memorized the great works of Imam Abdullah ibn Mubarak - *may Allah be pleased with him* - and Imam Waqee - *may Allah be pleased with him*. (Baghdadi, Tabaqaat Subqi)

It is mentioned that another great Imam, Imam Jalaaludeen Suyuti - *may Allah be pleased with him* - had memorised the Qur'an when he was only eight years old. After that, he also memorised the book *Umdatul Ahkaam*, *Minhaajul Fiqh* and the *Kitaabu Fay* of Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik - *may Allah be pleased with him*. (Ma'aarif)

The same is mentioned about the great Mujaddid, Sayyidi A'la Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza - *may Allah be pleased with him*. He also memorised the entire Qur'an in one month. It is mentioned that once, he said to those around him that there were Sunnis who wrote the name "Haafiz" before his name and he was not a Haafiz of the Qur'an. He then asked one of the Huffaz to read the Qur'an to him while he was making Wudu for the 'Isha and Taraweeh Salaah and within this short time, he used to memorize one complete para of the Qur'an. Later on, when someone asked him about this, he mentioned that he had completed this so that the ordinary Sunni is not guilty of committing a sin when calling him a "Haafiz" in future. Such is the habit of the Awliyah that they wished to always protect a Sunni Muslim.