

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى 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*

Was the Ant a Male or Female?

It is mentioned that Hadrat Qatadah bin Dimaamah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was born blind but he was certainly a treasure of Islamic knowledge. In fact, in the field of Qur'an and Hadith, it was very difficult to find someone like him.

It is mentioned that one day, he travelled to Kufah and masses of people came to listen to him. In fact, before he could deliver his speech, he claimed, "Anyone is allowed to ask me any question, I will give him the answer."

The crowd was so amazed and over-awed by the personality of this great scholar that they could only sit quietly and do nothing. In fact, he continued making this same challenge all the time and still people kept silent.

At that time, Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Hanifah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was still a very young man and wanted to ask a question but out of respect he decided to ask a question *via* someone who was much older. He told the person to ask the question that in valley of the ants, where Nabi Sulayman - *peace be upon him* - had heard the conversation of the leader of the ants and had smiled, was this ant a male or female?

When people asked this question to Hadrat Qatadah bin Dimaamah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - he speechless and remained silent.

When the people realised that he was not giving an answer, they asked the young Imam Abu Hanifah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - the answer. He replied that the leader of the ants was a female because in the Qur'an, the word used to describe this conversation is "Qaa lat" and "Qaala". If it was a male, the Qur'an would have used the word "Qaala". Imam Qatadah - *may Allah be pleased with him* - then called the young man forward and congratulated him on his knowledge. (Tafseer Ruhul Bayan)

This also proves that knowledge should also create a sense of humility in a person and should not make him a show off. A person should always remember the Qur'anic words that above a learned person there is another learned person. At the same time, a person should also remember that there are certain people whom the Allah Almighty has elevated above others. If a person feels that there is no one like him or feels that no one in the world has more knowledge than him, then sooner rather than later, he will face a situation in which someone is going to teach him a bad lesson.