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I t burns.

The feeling is excruciatingly uncomfortable but buried is all it will ever be. At least that's what I keep saying; fooling myself into believing it will go away.

YouTube clips of children mastering Qur^{ān} competitions. **Burn.**

Friends progressing in their *ḥifz*. **Burn.**

Lost in *tarāwīḥ* every Ramadan. **Burn.**

The people are moving forward but here I am stuck in the same place.

Ya Allah! I wanna be a Haafidha Too!

The Qur^{ān} has entered deep into countless hearts. And when it does, it takes over completely. That feeling is inexplicably divine, full of light, free of worry. You'd think it was impossible to achieve, but it really is a simple path.



Ya Allah! I will be a Haafidha Too!

So you're engaged in conversation and you think you're gaining ground. Then bam! She asks for proof. Stammering and stuttering you meekly say, "It's somewhere in the Qur'an. I read it once."

Or it's just one of those awful days when you feel like life's in the gutter. You know there's nothing sweeter than the soothing sounds of Qur'an but absolutely nothing comes to mind.

Yes, there are perks to having the Words of Allah in your heart, but the sweetness is so much deeper than that.

It's Easy Breezy

Allah (subhānahu wa ta'āla) says:

“And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance,
so is there any who will remember?”

Sūrat'l-Qamar: 17

You Become the Best of People

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said,

“The best among you (Muslims) are those
who learn the Qur'an and teach it.”

Al-Bukhārī (545)

You are from the People of Allah, Cherry-Picked by Him (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*)

The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

Verily, Allah the Exalted has his own people among mankind; the people of the Qur'an are the people of Allah, and His chosen ones.

Reported by Abu Dawūd and Ibn al-Baythar in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* (6439)

Not Only Will You Smell Sweet, But Taste Sweet Too

The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

The example of a believer who reads the Qur'an is like that of a citron fruit (*utrujjah*); its taste is delicious and its scent is pleasant.

And the likeness of the believer who does not read the Qur'an is like that of a date; its taste is delicious, yet it has no scent.

And the likeness of a hypocrite who reads the Qur'an is like that of basil; its scent is pleasant, yet its taste is bitter.

And the likeness of a hypocrite that does not read the Qur'an is like that of a colocynth; its taste is bitter and it has no scent.

Al-Bukhārī (5020) and Muslim (797), wording from Muslim

You Will Be Among the Highest Levels of Jannah

The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

It will be said to the companion of the Qur'an:

Read and elevate (up through the levels of the Paradise)

and beautify your voice as you used to do when you were in the *dunya*.

For verily, your position in the Paradise will be at the last verse you recited.

Sunan al-Tirmidhi (2914)

You Will Be Crowned Along with You Parents

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

Whoever reads the Qurʾān and learns and acts according to it will be adorned on the Day of Judgment with a crown of light whose gleam is like that of the sun, and his parents will be dressed in two garments that the world can never be equal to. Thereupon, they will question, For what reason are we dressed in these garments? It will be said, This is by virtue of your son who memorized the Qurʾān.

Reported by al-Āʿim

You Already Have an Intercessor & Two Clouds

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

Read the Qurʾān, because it will intercede on behalf of its people on the Day of Resurrection. Read the two lights, *Al-Baqarah* and *Āle-‘Imrān*, because they will come in the shape of two clouds, two shades or two lines of birds on the Day of Resurrection and will argue on behalf of their people on that Day.

Reported by Imām Aḥmad

You are Saved from the Hellfire

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said,

If the Qurʾān was to be gathered inside a vessel (heart), Allah will never punish it with the Hellfire.

Al-Bayhaqī Ḍ-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ (5266)

You Are the Best of Examples

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

Do not wish to be the like of except two men.
A man whom Allah has given the knowledge of the Book
and he recites it during the hours of the night,
and a man whom Allah has given wealth, and he spends it
in charity during the night and the hours of the day

Al-Bukhari (4691)

It is the ABCs of Knowledge

Imam al-Nawawi said,

The pious predecessors would never teach *adab* and *fiqh* except to someone who had
memorized the Qur'an

Al-Majmu' (1/38)

It Catapults You to Allah

Khabib b. al-Arat said to a man,

Draw near to Allah as much as you are able,
and know that you will never draw near to Him with anything
more beloved to Him than His words (i.e. the Qur'an)

Someone to Call My Hero

If you were asked to list names of scholars in any Islamic science, how many of them would be female?

Some may not be able to list even one but that doesn't mean they didn't exist. Shaykh Mohammed Akram Nadwi authored a 40-volume biographical dictionary (*Al-Muḥadiththāt*, 2007) solely on female scholars of aadlth. He discovered a whopping **8,000 female biographical accounts** that took part in the chains of narration.

Not a single one of them was ever considered a fabricator.

Classical Female Scholars

While we know that the companions Abu Bakr and ʿUthmān (radīAllāhu ‘anhuma) oversaw the compilation and preservation efforts of the Qurʾān, 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: **ʿĀʾiṣā, the daughter of ʿUmar** (radīAllāhu ‘anhuma).

By the 5th century, non-Arab women excelled the Arabs in teaching and narration. **Nishapur Fāṭimah bint Abi ʿAlī al-ʿĀṣan b. ʿAlī al-Daqqī** (d. 480 AH) was described as “the pride of women of her time; no one similar to her has been seen in her good character; she was a scholar of the Book of Allāh and virtuous.”
[*Al-Muḥadiththāt*, Pg 277]

Shaykh'l-Qurrā' Ibn al-Jazari (d. 833 AH), considered the ultimate authority in *tajwīd* and *qirā'āt*, takes his *isnād* for the *ḥadīth* about the "People of All#hä through a woman. Her name was **Umm Mu'ammad Sitt'l-'Arab (The Lady of the Arabs) bint Mu'ammad b. 'Ali b. A'ammad b. 'Abdul Wa'id al-B#i'ayyah** [*Tayyibāt'l-Nashr*, Ibn al-Jazari, Pg 12]. Ibn al-Jazari also narrates through at least 10 women on various levels of a single chain [*Al-Muḥadithhāt*, Pg 276].

Yet another female scholar, **F#mah bint 'ammad al-Fu'ayli** (d. 1247 AH) was an expert of *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, *Fiqh* and *Uṣul*. Many famous scholars of Makkah studied with her and praised her piety and righteousness and devotion. She was also praised for writing many books in beautiful calligraphy.

You may even recognize the names of giants like Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) and al-Dhahabi (d. 748) who were both taught by **Sitt'l-'Arab (The Lady of the Arabs) bint Ya'aya al-Kindiyyah al-Dimishqiyyah** (d. 684).

Al-Dhahabi was also taught by **Zaynab bint A'ammad b. 'Abdul Ra'mh al-Maqdasiyyah al-Dimishqiyyah** (d. 740 AH) whose packed classes took place in the Bani Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. She taught both men and women alike. Ibn al-Hajar said upon her death, "The people were lowered (in value) as a cause of her death."

Contemporary Female Scholars of Quran

The legacy of our female scholars lives on today throughout the East and West. May Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) reawaken female scholarship and increase the love for Qurānic Sciences throughout the masses.

Here are only some of the known contemporary female scholars of Qur'ān.

Get to know them.

Shaykhah Um al-Sa'ad al-Iskandariyyah (1925-2006)

~ May Allāh have mercy on her soul

Born: Bandariyah (Egyptian town)

Died: Alexandria

Inspirational Note: Not a single *ijāzah* in Alexandria is transmitted except through her

Her Story: Um al-Sa'ad was inflicted with blindness at a very young age, but that didn't stop her from memorizing the Qur'ān at the age of 15 and becoming the first known woman of her time to specialize in the 10 *qirā'āt* (ways of recitation).

She began her studies with a female teacher (Shaykhah Nafisa) who agreed to teach on the condition Um al-Sa'ad never marries lest it distract her from the study of Qur'ān. Um al-Sa'ad agreed.

Um al-Sa'ad quickly became one of the highest authorities in *qirā'āt* with only 27 names between her and the Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). Reciters and ḥuffāz would travel to Alexandria for the sole purpose of receiving *ijāzah* from her. Her student base was so vast including the old and young, men and women, engineers and doctors, university professors and students alike.

She said:

“In 60 years of memorizing the Qur’ān, reciting it and reviewing it has caused me not to forget anything of it. I am able to recall any āyah (verse), its sūrah (chapter), its juz', the āyahs similar to it, and all the different ways it is recited by all the qirā'āt ... I do not know anything else but the Qur’ān and the qirā'āt. I never learned a science, listened to a lecture, or memorized anything other than the Qur’ān. Besides this, I know nothing else.”

Um al-Sa'ad recounted that she could not keep her promise to her Shaykhah (Nafisa). When asked who her closest student was, she replied, “My husband Shaykh Muhammad Fareed Nu'ānā. Shaykh Muhammad later became the most popular reciter on Alexandrian radio and the first one to receive an *ijāzah* from Um al-Sa'ad.

“He used to recite the Qur’ān to me in all ten recitations, I became comfortable with him, and he was like me in that he was blind and memorized the Qur’ān at an early age. I taught him for five years, and when he finished he asked me for my hand in marriage and I accepted.”

They married for 40 years and had no children.

“Alḥamdulillāh, I feel like Allāh chooses for me the good always. Maybe if I had children I would have become busy with them and neglected the Qur’ān or forgot it.”

While Um al-Saād may not have been blessed with children, she had given birth to generations of *qurrā’*.

Today, Um al-Saād’s legacy is thriving with Qur’ān competitions in her name, famed scholars who were once her students, and now *Misk* Academy has named its student scholarship foundation: **The Um al-Saād Foundation.**

Shaykhah Dr. Farhat Hashimi
(born 1957)
~ May All#h preserve her

Born: Pakistan

Resides: Toronto, Canada

Inspirational Note: Founded the famous Al-Huda Institute (1994) in Pakistan, Canada, USA and centres around the world.

Her Story: Dr. Farhat has revolutionized the study of tafsīr to ease the understanding of the Qurʾān for all walks of life. She has inspired thousands of students on the simple yet profound principle.

“Qurʾān for all; in every hand, in every heart.”

Dr. Farhat is the daughter of a scholar, Shaykh Abdur Rahman Hashmi, and the wife of a scholar, Dr. Idrees Zubair. She has become one of the most popular female scholars of the century and has been dubbed one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims (2010).

Upon completing her Bachelor's degree in Pakistan, Dr. Farhat completed her Masters in Arabic from Punjab University. She then completed her PhD in Ḥadīth Sciences from the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

A wide range of her audio cassettes and CDs is available worldwide on a variety of topics, online and otherwise. She has written papers on the rights, roles and responsibilities of a woman in the light of Qurʾān and Sunnah and contribution of Muslim women scholars in dissemination of *al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawi*.

Asked about her role model, she answered our Mother of the Believers, ʿĀʾiṣḥāh (raḍyAllāhu ʿanha).

“Not only was she one of the leading narrators of the aḥādīth of the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam), but also a brilliant orator and scholar. Her home was like a university and she used every minute of the 48 years she survived after the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) to serve Islam. She was a mother figure to hundreds of orphans and was known for her charitable acts. She is truly my role model as a woman.”

Dr. Farhat explains her passion in life:

“My biggest passion is the Qurʾān – the very word of Allāh. Learning it, teaching it, serving it and re-discovering it every day. I take the work of serving the Qurʾān as an indispensable part of my life. Just like you don’t give up eating food or spending time with your family as those are your basic needs, this is also a basic need for me. A sense of ownership is very important if you want to serve Islam.”

Ustādhah Kareema Carol Czerepinski

~ May Allāh preserve her

Born: USA

Resides: Jeddah, KSA

Inspirational Note: Author of the most popular English-language book series in *tajwīd*.

Her Story: There isn't a single English-speaking *tajwīd* student who hasn't directly or indirectly benefited from *Ustādhah Kareema's* work.

She is the author of the world-famous book series "Tajweed Rules of the Qur'ān", arguably the best English instructional books on the science of *tajwīd*. She's also the mastermind behind the popular Tajweed Tutorial website www.abouttajweed.com.

American by nationality and upbringing, she is a teacher at Dar Al-Huda, a women's Qur'ān school in Jeddah. She bases her 3-year course on these books. In the introduction to her books, she lists 2 of her teachers:

Shaykh Dr. Ayman Rushdi Swayd and Shaykhah Rehab Shaqaqi

Shaykh Dr. Ayman Rushdi Swayd is an internationally renowned scholar in *tajwīd*. He has a Ph.D. from Al Azhar and a Ph.D. from Um al Qura University, Makkah. Further, he has many ijazat from great scholars. For 20 years he has worked with "The Qur'ān Memorization Society" in Jeddah. In the preface of the book he writes about Ustādhah Kareema,

“...My joy was immense with the great work that the honorable sister, al-Ustādhah Kareema Carol Czerepinski did when she wrote a book on the first level of tajwīd in the English language which is considered to be the international language of this age. She has closed a wide gap in the Islamic library with this work.”

Ustādhah Kareema has the capability to write on this subject. She has memorized the complete Qurʾān and mastered its recitation in the way of āfCān ā Cm, by the way of Shātibiyah, and then by the way of Ṭayyibat’l-Nashr, receiving ijāzah in both ways. She now intends to learn the different qirā’āt. As an American woman raised in the West, Ustādhah Kareema has proven that the Qurʾānic Sciences are accessible to all.

In her introduction, Sister Kareema Carol Czerepinski writes the reason behind why she compiled these three books,

“This book started out, not as a dream of my own, but as a suggestion from his eminence Shaykh Dr. Ayman Rushdi Swayd, may Allāh extend his life, increase his good deeds, and make him of the companions of the highest Paradise. He suggested that I write a tajwīd book in English, using the computer. I was teaching a class in tajwīd for a group of non-Arabs and realized that the need for a complete textbook in English in tajwīd was very necessary. My husband, may Allāh reward him with al-Firdaws, bought a computer, and the task began. The book has been in the formative stages for the last three years. It has been used as text for the classes at Dar Al-Huda Qur’ān School in Jeddah, and editing has been done every year...”

Qāri'ah Sharifah Khasif
(born 1982)
~ May Allah preserve her

Born & Resides: Malaysia

Inspirational Note: The most famous female reciter and founder/ CEO of Sharifahkhasif Productions, an Islamic media production house.

Her Story: If you close your eyes, you could be almost certain you were listening to Abdul Basit Abdul Samadé except not in such a deep voice. *Qāri'ah* Sharifah has mastered the art of recitation and can mimic any popular *qāri* or keep to her own unique style.

She is the daughter of Syed Mohamed Badiuzzaman and Zauyah Ahmad. She completed her studies of the art of *tilāwah* and *tajwīd* with her father, a descendant of Yemen and a well-known *qāri* in her hometown.

Qāri'ah Sharifah focused on Qur'ān at the young age of 4 and had soon completed reciting all 30 *juz'* a year later. Sharifah, a Bachelor holder in Finance and a degree in Psychology, won first place in the International Qur'ān Reciters' Assembly Competition in 2009 and many other competitions since the age of 7.

She became a celebrity reciter as her voice began to draw listeners. Sharifah Khasif has recited Qurʾān at the Malaysian King's Palace, official national functions and mosques throughout Malaysia. She has travelled internationally to recite Qurʾān in numerous countries including Brunei, Indonesia, Iran, Mauritius, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand and recently Austria. She hosts "Akademi Al Qurʾān" and "Kalam Suci" Islamic TV programmes in Malaysia.

Currently, she is the owner and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sharifahkhasif Production Sdn. Bhd., an Islamic media production house, which produces Qurʾān learning materials, CDs and Islamic documentary programmes.

Shaykhah Maha Al-Ifranjee

~ May Allah preserve her

Resides: Jeddah, KSA

Inspirational Note: She is the first woman in Saudi Arabia to receive the title *ashaykhat'l-Qur'an Al-Karimä*. Her student became the second.

Her Story: Shaykhah Maha studied with many renowned *qurrä'* like Shaykh Muhammad Abdul Majeed, Shaykh Bassam bin Muhammad of Alexandria, and Shaykh Muhammad Al-Mas'ood.

She is a respected and loved teacher at the School of Qur'ân, Dar Al-Hekma College in Jeddah, where she graduated over 25 female *huffäz*. Many of her students are also enrolled in secular sciences at the same college. The first *ijazah* she issued was to a graduate of the School of Medicine, Shaykhah Shaymaa'Al-Sabr.

As the first woman in Saudi Arabia to be given the title *ashaykhat'l-Qur'an Al-Karimä*, she graduated the second woman granted this title, her student Shaykhah Rawaan Zeyad Al-Naaji of Palestine. Both are together in picture above at the celebration of Shaykhah Rawaan's graduation.

The President of Dar Al-Hekma College, Dr. Suhair Al Qurashi says that the college's success rate at graduating female *ḥuffāz* has a lot to do with Shaykhah Maha's love for teaching and listening to her students' recitation.

In the event of Shaykhah Rawaan's nationally celebrated graduation, it was most eloquently said [translated from Arabic]:

“Just as the pure emotion of longing is only evident to the one who must endure it, similarly, the beauty of the Qur’ān and its relish is not fully understood except for the one who is frequent and permanent upon the relation with the Qur’ān. Remaining frequent and permanent with the Qur’ān is of the greatest virtuous acts that causes the love of Allāh.”

Exclusive Interviews

Abu al-ʿaliyah reports that a man once asked ʿUbayy b. Kaʿb for advice.

He said:

*“Take the Book of Allāh as your leader (imām) and be pleased
with it as a judge and ruler.
It is what your Messenger left amongst you.
It will be an intercessor for you.
It is to be obeyed.
It is a witness never doubted.
In it is a mention of you and those before you,
and judgment for whatever happens amongst you.
And in it is news about you and whatever will come after you.”*

We dug deep.

We reached *qurrāʾ* and *ḥuffāz* around the world: *imāms*, teachers, college students, mothers, professionals.

We discovered a treasure chest of advice, strategies, and stories.

Imām Ismail Albatnuni (Ottawa)

~ May Allāh preserve him

Imām of Masjid Assunnah (AMA)

Ijāzāh in Qālūn ‘an Nāfi’

Community lecturer & mentor

What was your motivation for dedicating your time to studying the Qurān?

The political situation in Libya was very difficult when I was younger until recently. Many of my friends had been captured by the regime & imprisoned and tortured. We all lived in a state of fear and it wasn't until the age of 20 that something happened that brought me closer to Allāh.

In my 3rd year university, the regime brought 2 young brothers to the university and conducted a public hanging. I couldn't continue with my studies because of what I witnessed but it did bring me closer to Allāh. At this point, I decided to memorize the Qurān.

At that time, those who memorised Qurān started when they were children (much earlier than I had started). I went to the local Qurān ḥalaqa (kuttāb) and told the shaykh I wanted to start. He looked at me surprisingly because everyone in his class was around the age of 8-10 years. **He gave me a tablet to write on, a wooden pen and ink to write with and told me to begin with Sūrat'l-Nās. It was one of the most difficult days of my life.** Boys half my age were memorising big sūrah's like Sūrah Yā Sīn and there I was at 20 years of age writing out Sūrat'l-Nās. **After I finished writing it out, I went to a far corner of the masjid and started crying. I kept going and Alhamdulillah 2 years later I finished my ḥifẓ and I had written it all out.**

What strategy did you find worked best for memorizing and retaining the verses of the Qurʾān?

The method in Libya is to write the verses you are memorizing on a wooden tablet with ink (extracted from cattle) and a wooden pen. **I wrote the entire Qurʾān on the same tablet I kept with me throughout my journey.**

Four days of the week (Saturday-Tuesday) was spent writing and memorizing one *thumna* (half a *ḥizb* = 1/16th of a *juzʿ*). We wrote one *āyah* at a time, memorized it, read it to the *shaykh*, he made corrections, we return to re-memorize, returned to the *shaykh* and when he finally approved our memory of that one *āyah* along with its writing, we moved on to the second *āyah*.

The following two days (Wednesday-Thursday) was spent reviewing everything that was memorized thus far. I paired up with another *ḥifẓ* student at my level and we would listen to one another recite everything that was already memorised even if it was half or all of the Qurʾān.

Fridays were off. We erased the tablet to begin the new *thumna* of the week.

Throughout this entire strategy we never touched a *muṣḥaf*. Our *shaykh* forbade us from relying on one so that we were able to commit what we wrote on our tablets (and then erased) to long-term memory. For those using a *muṣḥaf*, **you need to look at your page long enough so that when you close it you will never have to look back at it again.**

How do you remain consistent with your *ḥifẓ*?

Keep repeating. Anybody memorizing, especially *ḥuffāz*, must keep repeating what is memorized. The best way is to make *khatm* as often as you can. **The average *khatm* for a *ḥifẓ* should be every 2 weeks if s/he wants to hold onto the Qurʾān, but the absolute maximum is 1 month.**

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

è They start by overdoing their memorizing out of enthusiasm. You can begin memorizing many pages a day but it is hard to keep that up consistently. **Start small but be consistent with it, never decreasing or increasing and never missing a day.** The goal is not to memorize but to hold onto it. Don't rush it.

è A lot of people begin with difficult *sūrah*s. If you are new to memorizing, start from the back. It gives you a psychological boost because in one day you are able to memorize multiple *sūrah*s and often times they are *sūrah*s you hear in *ṣalāh*. **SubhānAllāh , it is like Allāh designed the order of *sūrah*s so it is easy for you to memorize it in stages** beginning with the small ones in the 30th *juz'* and it gets bigger and bigger as you go backwards.

è People depend on their short-term memory when memorizing. Sure you can memorize a page within 20-30 minutes but that's not real memorization. **It's a very, very bad strategy because the next day you will not be able to recall that page without mistakes.**

I made this same mistake when I was memorizing *Sūrat'l-Najm*. It's a *sūrah* I enjoyed reading due to its rhythm and I was so excited about it that I wrote it all out on 2 tablets on the same day. I came to my *shaykh* only after a few minutes of memorizing and recited it to him. He was surprised but let me go home.

Until this very day, in my *ṣalāh*, I can read any *sūrah* without a problem but I don't dare try *Sūrat'l-Najm*. I have always had problems with it since then because I did not commit it to long-term memory. **A *sūrah* like *Sūrat'l-Ma'idah* I have no problem with because I gave it my time.**

Sometimes when it gets hard, you give up and it's hard to get back into momentum.

How do you keep going?

To be able to keep going you must have a good strategy – slowly but surely. Allah loves those deeds that are consistent even if they are little. **If you rush into your memorization then it will become hard and you will quit making it even more difficult to come back.**

Why do you think *Sūrat'l-Iklās* is so easy for us to recite without even thinking about it? It's not because it's an easy *sūrah* but because you repeated it so many times. **So when you are memorizing review your new verses and your old verses as they accumulate.** It will become easier for you as you progress because you have repeated all the verses every week or two.

Practice in your *ṣalāh* and in *qiyām*, live with the Qurān and the meaning of the Qurān. The *ṣahābah* used to cry when reading *Sūrah Qāf*; so live with the *sūrahs*, apply them in your life and it will help you memorize.

How do you keep balanced?

Don't put a huge burden on your shoulders with the Qurān. I started with my 2 sons by giving the younger one 2-3 lines a day and the older one 1 page a day. My younger one has now memorized half the Qurān and my older one completed his *ḥifẓ* last year.

They were able to do this because they kept it small each day but they never missed a day. **Even if you are busy or have exams, what is a line or two to memorize that day? It's nothing.**

Are there any special *du'ā's* or special acts of *'ibādah* we could do aside from prayers to help?

è The key is sincerity. All#h said in *Surat'l-Baqarah*: "And fear All#h and All#h will teach you." So just have *taqwā* of All#h and He will teach you His Book.

è **Have a really good relationship with All#h**, pray on time, fast, do good deeds, stay away from backbiting, jealousy and especially the diseases of the heart. A diseased heart cannot memorize the Qur#n.

There are no specific *du'ā's*, but you can say:

Allāhuma 'iftah 'alayya fi Qur'ānik

"O Allāh unlock for me (the path to) the Qur'ān"

Allāhumma ya mu'allima Ibrāhīma 'allimni

"O Allāh, the Teacher of Ibrahim, teach me"

Should one study *tajwīd* and/ or *tafsīr* before starting *ḥifẓ*?

Study *tajwīd* in parallel with *ḥifẓ* so that you memorize with *tajwīd*.

I memorized before learning *tajwīd* so when I wanted to learn it, it became difficult for me. **I got so used to reciting the Qur#n so much without *tajwīd* that the tongue became difficult to correct.** I strongly recommend starting *ḥifẓ* in parallel with *tajwīd*.

As for *tafsīr*, it helps one memorize. The verses you know the *tafsīr* of are much easier to memorize. Plus, it is much easier to love the Qur#n when you understand it.

How do you protect yourself from the *shayṭān*'s whispers that you're not worthy of memorizing & that you should give up before the Qurʾān becomes a *ḥujjah* against you?

Abandoning the Qurʾān will not benefit you. All of us are sinful and none of us ever believe we are worthy of carrying the Qurʾān. But **never doubt memorizing it because it is the only thing that keeps you in check**. If I didn't memorize the Qurʾān, I don't know where I'd be today.

To memorize the Qurʾān is a blessing and it is one of the things the *shayṭān* hates the most because **when you memorize you are with Allāh and with the Speech of Allāh**. So just fight those feelings.

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

The journey with the Qurʾān is an amazing journey. Once you have completed your *ḥifẓ* you will have pleasant memories of your days spent committing the verses to memory.

Know the meaning of the verses and live with them, insist on them and keep going with them. If you ever feel tired take a short break but come right back and keep moving.

The best advice I can give is to review the Qurʾān and keep reviewing during memorization. You will be named as one of those who have memorized. There are too many people I know who have memorized but have forgotten and are no longer *ḥuffāz*. **The trick is to keep the Qurʾān, practice its *aḥkām*, use it in your prayers and spend time with it every day**.

Muqri'ah Rabia Khan (Toronto)

~ May All#h preserve her

Teacher at Al-Huda & Jazriyyah Intistute
Ijāzāt in Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim and 'Ashara Ṣughra
Judge at Quran competitions

What strategy worked best for memorizing and retaining the verses of the Qurān?

I have invented a formula for my students to help revise everything they have memorized within two months. As they are nearing their *khatm* (like on 20th *juz*), I tweak it to help them revise everything within a month and then within a week. You have to build up gradually.

Also, if you apply the teachings in your life and you remind yourself and others with the *āyāt*, then they are a part of you. **That is my challenge - to make each and every *āyah* a part of my life, my companion and best friend so I don't lose them.**

How do you remain consistent with your Ḥifẓ and knowledge of Qirā'āt?

I try my best and there are days when I am not able to stay consistent with my plan.

Allāhumma 'ighfirlī.

I find teaching helps a lot when I listen and repeat the *āyāt* for them.

For the *qirā'āt*, I have a teacher whom I currently memorize in Warsh with. I am also memorizing the *matn Shāṭibiyya* along with *furūsh* which is helping a lot, *walḥamdulillāh*. I also have a couple students are reciting in different *qirā'āt* with me.

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

I can mention these as I have fallen into these mistakes myself.

èNot having a teacher. This is the biggest mistake. **You cannot do *ḥifẓ* without a teacher.**

èNot revising daily. If you are not someone who has been hearing and memorizing since a young age, then you need to **revise daily as everything is new to your brain.**

èLeaving the recitation of the Qurʾān. Here I mean not reciting the Qurʾān at all other than their lesson or revision portion. **No we should have a habit of reciting the Qurʾān for our *‘ibādah* and not just for education.**

èNot having a life—Don't limit yourself to just books. **Bring it to life.** If you don't spend time with people, with nature, and with yourself how will you contemplate and reflect? How will you see the signs and ponder? How will you be grateful to this knowledge and appreciate it?

èAlso, there are times when you do have to limit yourself. Especially when you are nearing the end. I cut off my social life 100% at least for 6 months so I could finish the memorization and not get distracted. **Each and every moment counts.**

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

When it gets hard don't give up. **Allāh (subḥānahu wa taʿāla) promised us that the Qurʾān is easy to remember, so why are you giving up?** That's why it's important to have a teacher who will observe the signs of you giving up and will know what to do.

Other than my teacher, **I kept my family involved with my progress.** My mom noticed the days I was slacking, so she started to give me really nice gifts after I'd finish a *juz'*.

My husband would also celebrate every time I'd finish a set of *juz'* (every 5 or 10) and **we'll go out on a date to celebrate.**

Are there certain habits that could deter one from retaining what is memorized?

There could be. If someone is not brought up with discipline and time-management, that could deter them from memorizing. **You gotta do things to keep your brain healthy** - do mental games and exercises especially with your kids if they are memorizing.

In terms of retaining, Rasulullah (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: **Keep on reciting the Qurʾān, for by Him in Whose Hand my life is, the Qurʾān runs away (is forgotten) faster than camels that are released from their lead ropes.** (Book: Virtues of the Qurʾān, ḥadīth 4746, al-Bukhārī)

Here the word mentioned in the ḥadīth is *ḍaʿāhadu* which means to go back to it frequently and from time to time. So we know to leave the revision for a longer period of time will result in forgetting.

Are there any special *duʿā's* or special acts of *ibādah* we could do aside from *fard* and *sunnah* prayers to help?

èl'd say have your parents involved and *Silāt'l-Raḥm* (**maintaining ties of kinship**).

èThe other thing one of my teachers advised was that if you forgot to keep up with your schedule and are getting lazy, to **give sadaqah**.

Should one study *tajwīd* and/ or *tafsīr* before starting *ḥifẓ*?

Qurʾān will become *ḥujjah* against you if you are an adult and you are just parroting the words. One does need to learn the meaning and *aḥkām* of the Qurʾān.

When it comes to *tajwīd*, learning how to apply the rules is important but you don't have to go spend time learning the names of rules and other technicalities in order to memorize. Your teacher will teach you what you need to know.

But I would advise one to learn *tajwīd* after their memorization (or during if they can commit) with a proper curriculum because the poems help with retaining the memorized portions and they make you more aware.

How do you protect yourself from the *shayṭān* and his whispers that you're not worthy of memorizing and that you should just give up before the Qur'ān becomes *ḥujjah* (proof) against you?

You keep yourself busy. *Shayṭān* will bother you when you give him time to bother you and when you put down your guard.

I had this pitfall during my 13-15 *juz'*. I almost quit. But my friend reminded me of how many blessings I have due to being with the Qur'ān and how I have time and health now to do it. And you make *du'ā'* and ask Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*) to not hold you accountable if you forget or err. Apply what you have memorized - **there are so many beautiful *du'ā's* in the Qur'ān. Remind yourself with them and keep yourself busy.**

I'd keep myself busy with classes, teaching and with family all day only to come crash at night. **Who has time to think then?**

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qur'ān?

Nothing will keep your relationship healthy and fulfilled with Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*), your family and loved ones other than with the Qur'ān. If you have a healthy and fulfilling relationship with the Qur'ān, you will also have it with everyone else around you. **The Qur'ān will give you joy, happiness, peace and a connection that you are longing for with Allāh** (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*). Recite it, learn it, memorize it, share and teach it to others. There can be no other fulfillment.

Ustādhah Kareema Czerepinski (KSA)

~ May All#h preserve her

Author of book series “Tajweed Rules of the Qur’ān”

Founder of popular website www.abouttajweed.com

Teacher at Dar Al-Huda, Jeddah

What was your motivation for dedicating your time to studying Qurānic Sciences?

I read different *ḥadīths* about the merits of memorizing the Qurāh and immediately wanted to memorize the Qurāh completely. I only knew the Arabic letters then and couldn't really read much and wasn't sure I could ever do it, but it was a goal.

How do you remain consistent with your *ḥifẓ* and knowledge of *tajwīd*/ *Qirā'āt*?

As far as *ḥifẓ*, I keep up a daily review schedule. With *tajwīd* the best way to retain the knowledge is by teaching and the same holds true for the *qirā'āt*. One needs to rotate through the different *qirā'āt* with a *khatm* in each one or in a *riwāyah*. Plus when giving students *ijāzāt*, one reviews them plus the way of *jamā*(reading them all together).

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

Often we want a quick fix and then when a student of the Qurāh realizes it takes much longer than a few months and lots of work is needed to obtain their goal, they may lose their strong drive and may stop trying.

We have to remember that our goal is Paradise and the highest level in it with all the rewards promised those who memorize Allah's book. It may take time and hard work but *inshā'Allāh* we will get a great reward in the Hereafter plus the benefit of having All#h's words preserved in your heart-always there for our comfort and reminder.

Can you please give us an example of the schedule you had when you were memorizing?

I would get up early and review what we were supposed to have memorized for that day, repeating it several times and on the way to school. When I would come home from school I would rest a bit and cook etc, then would study the rest of the day pretty much. Reviewing the most recently memorized portions and then memorizing the assigned pages for the next day.

How do you protect yourself from the *shayṭān* and his whispers that you're not worthy of memorizing and that you should just give up before the Quran becomes a *ḥujjah* (proof) against you?

I think I was ignorant of this at the time I memorized. I was just fixed on completing my goal and doing it the best I could.

Now though this kind of *wisw#s* (whispering) comes now and then and I find **turning to All#h and spending more time in worship including strong and continuous *du'ā'* and lots of *istighfār* helps diminish these kinds of thoughts.** It is a battle though that we can expect to have with these kinds of goals.

Should one study *tajwīd* and/ or *tafsīr* before starting *ḥifẓ*?

That depends on your level of *tajwīd*. If you cannot read smoothly and correctly or have problems with articulation points and/ or know absolutely nothing of the *tajwīd* rules, you should study *tajwīd* first. **In general it is better to take all the basic rules plus the characteristics and *tafkīm* and *tarqīq* and be able to apply them before entering an intensive memorization program.** One can memorize a lesser amount while learning the rules.

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

First and foremost **make sure your intention is for Allāh only**. This should be a daily resolve, as *shayṭān* comes to us all the time.

Try to keep your goals **reasonable and attainable** and at the same time, be ready to **sacrifice for your goals** and put in time and effort to attain them, by Allāh's will. Don't give up and don't get discouraged easily. Keep your main goal in front of you and keep working towards it, even if it is not as fast as others or as fast as you like.

Ask Allāh for help continuously. **Make duʿāʾ**, asking for Allāh *Taʿāla* to make it easy for you. Turn to Him asking for assistance in everything and anything you find difficult. We obtain nothing without Him.

Read books or articles about the manners of *āhl'l-Qurʾānā* and strive to take on all these manners. **Read tafsīr of the Qurʾān and apply the Qurʾān to your life.**

If the sister is married, she needs to have her husband's support, so she needs to balance studying and her duties to him and their family and at the same time ask her husband for support and understanding. Many good brothers help out in the house to make it easier on their wives. A good idea is having your husband listen to your assignment and inshaʾAllāh you will find benefit for both of you in that.

May Allāh grant all those sisters starting out on this path all success and keep their intentions solely for Allāh. Āmīn.

Hāfizah òFajrò (London, UK)

~ May All#h preserve her

*Author of popular Islām & Qur'ān-based "Fajr" Blog
Completed ḥifẓ & Arabic-language certifications
Studied in Cairo and now resides in hometown London*

What was your motivation for dedicating your time in studying the Qur'ān?

My biggest motivation actually came from the Qur'ān itself. I remember one day in my early teens, I picked up a Qur'ān in English and just began to read it from the beginning. I was looking to understand and develop a relationship with it.

This automatically put me on an intense personal journey with the Qur'ān and it completely changed my life *alḥamdulillāh*. Believe it or not, it actually took me a whole year to read from cover to cover (which is a long time compared to the novels I get through in days), but it was really incredible. From then, I knew I had to study this Book in its revealed language and memorise whatever I could of its verses. **I just felt that it would be a huge loss if I did not learn it and familiarise myself with its beauty.**

How do you remain consistent with your ḥifẓ?

It's really a lifelong progressive journey which I'm far from being perfect with, but **it's important that every one of us forms their own personal relationship with the Qur'ān.**

My teachers used to advise me to have a personal 'taḥzīb' of the Qur'ān, which is basically a set portion that you complete every day (e.g. 1, 2, or 3 juz' a day, completing the Qur'ān in less than a month). This keeps you in the loop and also on top of your ḥifẓ.

Repetition is the key to retaining one's ḥifẓ, so the more you recite and go over the chapters, the more likely you are to retain them.

What strategy worked best for memorizing & retaining verses of the Qurʾān?

With memorization and review, my strategy changed depending on my circumstances. At the beginning, a lot of effort went into new memorization, whereas towards the end, the scale tipped and effort would be more on the review because memorization naturally gains its own momentum. My personal and external circumstances didn't really allow me to seclude myself to just *ḥifẓ* so I had to come up with a different approach. **At the time, I was studying full-time at university and also holding down two jobs so time was quite tight. Luckily, I used to commute to University and work, so that gave me about 2 hours of free time on the London Underground (metro system) which allowed me to utilise for *ḥifẓ* and review.**

The best strategy that worked for me during this busy time, and which I think is one of the best strategies, was frequently listening to the portions of Qurʾān that I intended on memorizing and just absorbing it. **I probably listened twice more than I actually recited.** I know this is a different approach to the other methods (such as the Mauritanian method which is based on repetition) but it worked for me *alḥamdulillāh*. When you listen to something frequently, it's absorbed by parts of your brain linked to memory, and it's a very fast and effective way of memorising. After this method of listening, I found that when it came to actually memorising, it would take a relative short time *alḥamdulillāh*.

Interestingly, this was the primary method of Qurʾānic transmission; the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) would listen from Jibrīl and head transmit the Revelation to the Companions orally, they would in turn listen to it, memorise it, and transmit it on also via this route.

How do you keep balanced?

By trying to plan things well it's easily to get lost in our affairs when we don't have a good structure, so planning helps me keep things in their right place. For example, if it was time for *ḥifẓ* and a non-important phone-call came in, I wouldn't answer it until I was done. On the flipside, if I had made plans to attend a family occasion or do something recreational, I'd keep that appointment and instead work my *ḥifẓ* around it. **It's really important to remain balanced because the soul can't cope with an imbalanced life.** We know of the narration where the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) told *ānsalah āe a time (for this) and a time (for that)* to show that life consists of a balance and when we tip that balance, we will not be able to continue on the path for long.

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

I think sometimes we misjudge the overall journey and fall into pitfalls simply because we don't expect/ anticipate or prepare for them.

Sometimes we start the path of *hifz* with a type of zealousness and enthusiasm (which is great), but we suddenly don't know what to do with ourselves when that fades away, or when we hit obstacles and difficulties. So I would definitely say that a big pitfall is not pre-planning your journey well and not preparing for the various obstacles that can occur.

One of those obstacles is you yourself. There will be times when you have to battle with your soul because it might slack or it might bore of routine.

Other times too many external pressures might affect your *hifz* at which point you have to pull yourself together or diffuse the pressure and continue on with your goal.

Other usual pitfalls we should avoid for example: laziness, sinning, not giving the Qur'an its right or its *ta'zim* (respect/ exaltedness), not being able to keep time, not being regular with the Qur'an, not having a strong base (in *tawjüd* etc), slacking/ wasting time, etc.

Are there certain habits that could deter one from retaining what is memorized?

Yes. There are quite a few but the bigger ones tend to be:

- è Lack of effort
- è Falling into sin
- è General heedlessness of Allah
- è Being too busy for the Qur'an
- è Not reciting often enough
- è Bad companionship and so on

Basically, the further away you are from the Qur'an and Allah, the faster it will leave you.

Sometimes when it gets hard, you give up and it's hard to get back into momentum.

How do you keep going?

I try to remember why I'm doing this in the first place. Memorizing the Qurʾān is not *wājib* or a *farḍ*-'*ayn* so anyone who's ever memorized it out of their own accord did so with a certain intention, and when things get tough, it's best to look back and recall that intention.

Remember the greatness of Allāh, Whose words you are studying, remember the Hereafter and place it before your eyes, remember the darkness of the grave or the Hereafter and how it is the Qurʾān that will come as a light for you. Ask yourself **Do you really want to die without knowing everything that this miraculous Book contains?** **When you zoom out of this world, and place things on their real scale, you will see that this small hardship is nothing in the long run, and *inshā'Allāh* this will make you hold on and not give up.**

Are there any special *du'ā's* or special acts of *'ibādah* we could do aside from prayers to help?

With *du'ā'*, I always feel that the best ones to make are the ones that come straight from your heart. Use the verses of the Qurʾān as *ḥujjah* (evidence) and beg Allāh with them.

For example you can say, **o Allāh, You have said in Your Book And We have indeed made the Qurʾān easy to remember, so help me to remember it, help me to memorise it**

After prayers (and worship in general), always ask Allāh to make you from the *ḥuffaz* of this Ummah, ask Him to grant you His Book, ask Him to place you in the high ranks of Paradise and so on and so forth. It also goes without saying that it does wonders to use your daily portion of *ḥifẓ* in your prayers, particularly the night prayer and *nawāfil*.

How do you protect yourself from the *shayṭān*'s whispers that you're not worthy of memorizing & that you should give up before the Qurʾān becomes a *ḥujjah* against you?

The Qurʾān is one of the greatest forms of protection, the more you keep within its vicinity and surround yourself with it, the more Allāh (‘azza wa jal) protects you not just from *shayṭān*, but all other evil in this world. **Never think that you are not worthy of memorising the Qurʾān.** That itself is a deceptive plot of *shayṭān*. If you were not worthy, Allāh would not have turned your heart towards the Qurʾān, He would not have made you a Muslim; so the fact that you are indicates what He wishes for you. Also, **the Qurʾān was revealed for mankind; it was meant for us**, so how can we allow such thoughts to divert us away from it?

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

Go for it. Really go for it, and don't let doubt stop you. If it's in your mind and heart to do it, seize the opportunity because perhaps Allāh is inspiring you and guiding you towards something; maybe He intends good for you. Sisters, our life on this earth is very short, and soon we will stand in front of Allāh with our life scrolls laid bare. Wouldn't you want to see your life filled with the Qurʾān? **Believe me, once you start memorizing and learning about the beauty of the Qurʾān, it will open up so many doors for you.** If you are a student of knowledge, you'll see that every branch of ‘ilm you can possibly study is rooted in concepts and *shawāhid* (evidences) found primarily in the Qurʾān. It will teach you life lessons and it will be there for you as a companion and guide. **So don't let any opportunity to learn it slip you by.** *Wa billāhi-tawfīq!*

Jazākumu Allāhu khayran. Anything good I've said is truly only from Allāh, and anything bad is from myself and *shayṭān*.

Hāfīzah Sarah Ahmad (New Mexico)

~ May Allāh preserve her

Private teacher & 'Ashara Kubra student

Completed ḥifẓ & Ijāzāh in 'Ashara Şughra

Mother of two: Eesa & Maryam aged 6 years & 8 months

What was your motivation for dedicating your time in studying the Qurān?

I made the intention in my first AlMaghrib class a long time agoñ I realized from all the stories that the Şahābah's amazing attachment, understanding, and knowledge of the Qurān is what made them such amazing people. That was when I realized it was a goal I could attain if I just made my intention sincere.

Honestly, memorizing the Qurān does not require a genius. It just requires determination and lots of *du'ā'*. I figured if I could memorize Allāh's book, then He (*ta'āla*) would raise my *īmān*, make me a better Muslimah, increase me in knowledge, and shape my character.

How do you remain consistent with your ḥifẓ?

Always attend classes or have a teacher helping you to tweak your recitation. There is always more and more to learn and you are never at the end of the road.

My purpose in life has become to worship Allāh through studying the Qurān. **Without that purpose, I would be completely lost and my life would be empty.** So that keeps me always searching for the next opportunity. I've found that I always need to be working with a teacher so that I stay focused and committed.

What strategy did you find worked best for memorizing and retaining the verses of the Qurʾān?

Just read the *āyāt* over and over and read a simple translation. I didn't get too bogged down in the *tafsīr* because then a lot of time would be spent on that. I figured I would memorize first, and then tackle *tafsīr* later. After memorizing, I'd make sure to say that new portion with the audio of a reciter either while driving or at home. **If I could keep up with the Qāri, then I knew I had it down pretty well.** Also the audio helps you catch any mistakes in your memorization. It also helps you to link the *āyāt* because you will memorize the *ṭune* in your head.

Then of course in order to retain, **always review, review, review**

A method of review I am trying out right now:

The goal is to review all that you have memorized every week. Initially that sounds hard, especially if you have a lot under your belt. However, say you are in the beginning of your *ḥifẓ* and have 3 *juz'* memorized. You should do about a *ḥizb* every day so that you have reviewed everything in one week. That might be hard in the beginning, but once you have done this a few times it will become a piece of cake.

Continue to increase the amount you do daily so that you are continuously reviewing everything in 1 week. If you have 7 *juz'*, then you will do a *juz'*/day. If you have 14 *juz'*, then you'll do 2 *juz'* a day. If you have the whole Qurʾān, then you do 5 *juz'* a day.

And the saying is:

«Whoever recites 5 will never forget.» This obviously seems difficult, but if you build up to it then in theory it will be easy.

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

Two major areas are:

èFailing to have a regular review schedule

èNot having a teacher.

I spent about 4 years trying to memorize on my own without a teacher and was able to finish about half the Qurʾān. Then I had a kid and fell off the band wagon. Two years later I finally decided I needed to start up again. **I found a teacher and started memorizing and reviewing daily. Alḥamdulillāh, two years later I'd finished my memorization.**

As for the review, it's important to have someone who will listen to your review. It could be someone separate from your *ḥifẓ* teacher. That person does not have to be an expert in *tajwīd* but should be very familiar with the Qurʾān. She just has to be willing to listen to possibly a whole *juz'* or two at a time. That will ensure that you do your review properly and consistently.

I am an advocate of doing thorough review WHILE memorizing. The new memorization is actually the easiest part of the schedule because it usually takes only 1/2 hour. **The rest of your allotted time should be devoted to review and should be at least a *juz'* if possible.**

Are there certain habits that could deter one from retaining what is memorized?

èDon't listen to music or *nashīds*. You always want Qurʾān playing in your head and nothing elseñ

èObviously stay away from sins that you know will affect your memorization and review.

Remember you have to make your body a worthy vessel to contain the Qurʾān. Many times when I am tempted to do something that may not be the most favorable in Allāh's sight, I would ask myself, **òDo I want my Qurʾān to suffer as a result of this?ä**

Are there any special *du'ās* or special acts of *'ibādah* we could do aside from prayers to help?

è*Du'ā'* all the time

èIncrease your *tahajjud*

I love these *du'ās*:

ãOAllah, remind me of what I have forgotten from the Qur'ān and teach me from the Qur'ān of what I have yet to learn and provide me with the ability to read it through the night and dayã

ãOAllah, let the Qur'ān be the delight of my heart and the light of my chest and the remover of my sadness and the pacifier of my worriesã

Can you please give us an example of the schedule you had when you were memorizing?

The best memorization is done in the morning, after *Fajr*. I would stay up after *Fajr* to memorize my new portion, take a break, and then start reviewing. The review would be going over the past 10 pages of my new review. Then review at least one *juz'* from my old reviews which I would cycle through.

Every so often, get up and take a short break. Then you will be refreshed enough to continue. If you try to do it all in one go without any breaks, you will get tired and won't achieve as much as you could have.

How do you protect yourself from the *shayṭān* and his whispers that you're not worthy of memorizing and that you should just give up before the Qurʾān becomes a *ḥujjah* against you?

First of all, as Muslims, we are all required to be reading the Qurʾān constantly. So if you as a Muslim aren't having the Qurʾān a part of your daily life, it will already be a *ḥujjah* against you no matter what.

I can't think of a better way to have the Qurʾān in your life than to memorize it and then spend the rest of your life reviewing it, studying its meaning, its ways of recitation, etc.

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

Go for it! Don't even hesitate for a second. And put your whole effort forth for this amazing, life changing purpose. (No exaggeration)

Trust in Allāh. Making the intention to memorize Allāh's book is **one of the greatest things you can do for yourself**. Trust that Allāh will make a way for you to carry out what you have intended by providing teachers, abilities, etc. **Don't fret about the details, just make the intention and Allāh will take care of the logistics.**

Qāri'ah Sharifah Khasif (Malaysia)

~ May All#h preserve her

CEO of Sharifahkhasif Productions

Champion of Internation Qur'ān Competition

Host of "Akademi Al Quran" & "Kalam Suci" TV Programs

What was your motivation for dedicating your time in studying the Qur'ān?

My father motivated me and my older brother to master the Qur'ān. My official journey began at the age of 4 because my parents wanted me to and soon thereafter, I was motivated to do it myself. My late father was my teacher, may All#h have mercy on him. I completed my first *khatm* of the Qur'ān at the age of 5 and then started to memorize basic sŕahs from *juz' 'Amma* and main *sŕahs* such *Sŕat'l-Sajdah, Sŕat'l-Mulk, Sŕat'l-Kahf*.

What was your motivation for dedicating your time in studying the Qur'ān?

My father, may All#h *ta'āla* reward him and have mercy on him was my first Qur'ān teacher. He had me on a quite rigorous schedule. **I had to recite one-to-one with him after every ŕalāh (5 times a day) for about one hour each time.** This helped me improve my *tajwīd*. It was painfully slow at first, which was difficult, but Alhamdulillah, I'm grateful for it now. **I also studied some Arabic which helped a lot in my memorization.**

Since you were so young when you started, how do you remember those days when you were studying the Qur'ān?

They were the most fruitful years of my life in every aspect. In school, I was doing exceedingly well. At the same time, I was doing excellently well with my Qur'ān lessons.

Hifẓ did not affect my secular studies in the least bit. Rather, it only supplemented it in every good and righteous aspect. Of course, there were days when *shayṭān* would implant his evil whispers in my head. This occurred especially towards the end. Through many self battles, however, *alhamdulillah* I somehow fought till the end.

How do you remain consistent with your *ḥifẓ*?

I find that participating in Qurʾān competitions are extremely beneficial in this. It also boosts your confidence and self-esteem. I entered a Qurʾān competitions held at my father's company. I became the champion of the competitions 10 years in a row. Later, I participated in the national Qurʾān competition and became the champion in 2008 & 2009. In 2009, I participated in the International Qurʾān competition and alhamdulillah became the champion with the highest overall mark.

Now, I am just revising on my own. I'm in a new phase in my memorization. I listen to the recitation of a *sūrah* over and over again. This took the memorization of that *sūrah* to another level & the ease with which I would recite was far greater than with other *sūrahs*. I could recite it from memory without having to revise it first and without using the *muṣḥaf*. For other *sūrahs* I would have to recite while having the *muṣḥaf* with me. I'm still busy improving my *ḥifẓ* in this way.

What general advice do you have for sisters who want to embark on a journey with the Qurʾān?

The journey seems long, but the reward is everlasting. You can reap the benefits in both worlds. However, it's a trust to be kept until the Last Day.

Consistency must be maintained in revision even after completing the Qurʾān. Even harder than memorizing is revising. And at times, it can even be harder to re-memorize something you have forgotten. The best method is to be consistent in everything you do. Designate the time of day which you will dedicate to memorization and make sure to revise what you have already learned. But even before memorizing something new, be sure to revise what you have already learned

All thanks and praise is due to Allāh who guided us to this; and we could never have been guided if He had not guided us.

Hāfīzah Nasiba A-Noor

~ May All#h preserve her

Head of Hifz Department at Misk Academy
Completed hifz with Ijāzāh in Hafṣ ‘an ‘Āṣim
'Ashara Ṣughra student

What was your motivation for dedicating your time in studying the Qurʾān?

I read a booklet which was compiled of prophetic narrations and *āyāt* in regards to the virtues, benefits, and rewards for memorizing the Qurʾān. As soon as I completed reading that booklet, I came to the realization that I had no choice but to memorize the Qurʾān. One of the names for the Day of Judgment is *Yawm'l-Ḥasrah*, the Day of Regrets. **I knew if I did not dedicate an hour or two daily to this noble task, I would be full of regrets on the Day of Judgment. I didn't want neglecting the Qurʾān to be one of my regrets on that Day.**

In addition, like most people, I would pray behind an *Imām*, and I would feel saddened for not being able to understand the words of my Creator, and not being moved by the *āyāt* the same way as the *Imām*.

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

Sometimes we become so focused on our goal and desire of becoming a *ḥafīzah*, and we end up losing sight of our intentions. Constantly engage in purifying your intention, and remind yourself that you are memorizing the Qurʾān solely to attain the pleasure of All#h . **Even if you have started off with the right intention, it can easily get corrupted along the way.** From a *ḥadīth qudsi* recorded in Bukhari, we learn that of **the first people to be admitted into the fire is a reciter of the Qurʾān**, who intended through his or her recitation to be praised by people, and or to obtain other worldly gains. **Just as you set aside time to memorize and revise, you need to set aside time to purify your intention.**

How do you remain consistent with your *hifz*?

If there is one factor which determines a person's consistency in regards to the Qur'ān, it is the quality and frequency of their beseeching Allāh . While memorizing the Qur'ān is easy, remaining consistent can be quite challenging. The number of people who have started memorizing and then gave up, or who have memorized the Qur'ān and have forgotten it are too many to enumerate. **We must continuously ask Allāh to facilitate this for us, and grant us steadfastness.**

Also, come to the realization that you will never receive a blessing greater than the Qur'ān. As humans, we protect what we value. **If you truly internalize there is nothing in your life more important than the Qur'ān, you will make sure no distractions get in the way of your consistency.** That means not logging onto Facebook, Twitter, or any other social networking site until you complete your revision and memorization for the day.

Sometimes when it gets hard, you give up and it's hard to get back into momentum.

How do you keep going?

You have to continuously go back to your purpose of memorizing. Your motivation is what will drive you to put in the effort necessary for memorizing the Qur'ān. The best way to do this is by reading the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) where he mentions the virtues of the Qur'ān, and reward for memorization. Also, **before you begin memorizing, write down your reasons and motivation for memorizing, and keep it in a place where you can see it.** Whenever you lose focus, or incline towards giving up, go back to your purpose and *inshā'Allāh*, you will have more stamina and determination to continue on.

How do you keep balanced?

There is this fear of "if I start memorizing the Qur'ān, I won't have time for my other obligations." The truth is, when you sincerely dedicate time to the book of Allāh, Allāh will place *barakah* (blessings) in your time. Not only will you be able to memorize, you will find that you will have a surplus of time for other tasks, and that you can accomplish much with a small amount of time. We have examples of people who had demanding schedules, and were still able to complete their *ḥifẓ*.

The fear of losing balance also stems from a lack of time management. Set a schedule for yourself, and allocate time for your daily tasks. Once you set a schedule, you will realize that you have a more free time than you thought.

Are there certain habits that could deter one from retaining what is memorized?

Memorizing the Qur'ān is a lifestyle; everything that one does throughout their day will have an effect on their memorization.

There is no doubt our greatest hindrance to the Book of Allāh is our sins. Imam Shafi'ī once complained to his teacher about the weakness of his memorization, and his teacher advised him, "Abandon sin, for the knowledge of Allāh is light, and the light of Allāh is not bestowed upon a sinner." We need to continuously engage in *'istiḡfāf*, and work on minimizing our sins. Anytime you find an *āyah* difficult to memorize, ask Allāh for forgiveness. The difficulty might be as a result of a sin.

As well, addiction to entertainment can be a means of deterring one from memorizing. Part of "if", or preserving the Qur'ān in your heart entails guarding your eyes and ears from that which opposes its teachings.

Finally, you must eliminate music from your life. This is a given - if you want to love, memorize, or recite the Qur'ān on a daily basis.

"And what have not made for a man two hearts." (33:4)

Are there any special *du'ā's* or special acts of *'ibādah* we could do aside from prayers to help?

One of the best ways to improve your memorization of the Qurʾān is to get out of the habit of reciting *Sūrat'l-Asr*, *Al-Ikhlās*, and *Al-Kawthar* in your prayers. **Every time you memorize a new *āyah*, the first thing you should do is pray with it.** Once you get into the habit of praying with the verses you are memorizing, you won't have to spend as much time on revision.

One of the etiquettes of reciting the Qurʾān is to be in a state of *wuḍū*. **A student of Qurʾān should therefore remain diligent in being in the state of ritual purity at all times.**

Lastly, try to **incorporate within your life the *sunan* of the Prophet** (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), from fasting to daily *adkhār* (words of remembrance), and supererogatory prayers.

Should one study *tajwīd* and/ or *tafsīr* before starting *ḥifẓ*?

Tajwīd, *tafsīr*, and *ḥifẓ* are all inter-connected, and I would advise the serious student to simultaneously focus on each of the three, and not pick one over the other.

When it comes to *tajwīd*, there is unanimous agreement amongst scholars that it is an obligation upon every Muslim to be able to recite at least *Sūrat'l-Fātiḥah* with *tajwīd*, and one who neglects studying *tajwīd* is sinful. This is because the Qurʾān was revealed with *tajwīd*, and Allāh commands us,

“and recite the Qur'an with measured recitation” (73:4)

Tajwīd comes down to exercising your tongue through frequent recitation of the Qurʾān. There is no doubt that those who are actively engaged in memorizing, recite the Qurʾān most, and are in return improving their *tajwīd* in the process.

As for *tafsīr*, the Qurʾān is ultimately a book of guidance. Everything you do in relation to the Qurʾān - from memorizing, to studying any of its sciences - should result in attaining guidance. Every time you memorize a new verse, or recite the Qurʾān, you should come out transformed, a better person than you were before. However, this is only attainable upon studying *tafsīr*.

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

Hold firmly onto your intention of learning the Qurʾān, and never give up on memorizing it, reciting it fluently, and most importantly, embodying its teachings. **Out of His mercy, Allāh has placed ease in studying the Qurʾān.** Nonetheless, you will face obstacles, and challenges, but they are only there to increase your reward.

There is nothing that will aid you upon your journey with the Qurʾān more than *duʿāʾ*. Keep making *duʿāʾ* for Allāh to make it easy for you and to keep you sincere. **Allāh has made it possible for millions (and perhaps billions) before you to memorize and understand His book, and He is All-Able to make it possible for you as well.**

Shaykh Uthman Khan

~ May Allāh preserve him

*Head Teacher & Academic Dean of Jazriyyah Intistute
Ijāzāt in 'Ashara Kubra & Şughra
Connected to shortest chain for qirā'āt in the world*

What strategy worked best for memorizing and retaining the verses of the Qurān?

Consistency is the secret ingredient; without it you can't measure success properly. Thus, because there was consistency I ended up finishing. Similarly a push from my parents.

I wanted to give up when I was on the 2nd *juz'* looking at how much more I had to do. I wanted to give up on the 6th *juz'* because I was on holiday (**and getting back into memorization from a holiday is like spreading cold, hard butter on an un-toasted piece of bread**). I wanted to give up on the 12th *juz'* because *Sūrat Yūsuf* was one the hardest *Sūrah's* to memorize and it demotivated me from memorizing 2 pages a day. I had to go down to 3/4 page because *Sūrah Yūsuf* has a lot of new words in it.

I wanted to give up on the 17th *juz'* because 15th and 16th were a breeze to memorize but 17th for me was a huge speed bump. **Imagine going from a nice easy smooth flight to sudden turbulence** I wanted to give up on the 25th *juz'* because I had 5 left and I had no more motivation to finish. And believe it or not, the time I wanted to give up on the 25th *juz'* was by far the worst. I didn't have any motivation and I was ready to quit. Again my parents pushed me to continue and finish what I had started.

What worked best? **A good teacher and a good coach** Retaining it was through constant review - 10 pages a day Monday to Friday and weekends are to rest. Only 10 pages a day - not a page more but consistency.

How do you remain consistent with your *Ḥifẓ* and knowledge of *Qirā'āt*?

Teaching **I am ready to disown students who will study under me and won't teach.**

To measure my knowledge, 10% I learned as a student, 90% I learned as a teacher. It's the best way to retain.

Teaching helps one research and research helps one grow. That's how we will end up contributing to society. That's exactly how we will end up among the group of persons who on the Day of Judgement can proudly say, "We preserved the Qur'ān."

The *ḥadīth* says the best amongst us are the ones who learn and teach the Qur'ān. Why not be part of both, learner and teacher? **Teaching forces us to remain learners.**

As for memorization, *tarāwīḥ* for men-if you are a *ḥāfiẓ* male and are not leading *tarāwīḥ* then you are heading downhill. The most critical time to lead *tarāwīḥ* is right when someone finishes the Qur'ān. And it is key to lead in a community that you are not familiar with.

Also, reviewing 5 pages a day with consistency. People might say 10 or 20 pages but I would say just 5, that's more than enough but be consistent.

For females, just recite all the time. This will create a Qur'ān environment in the home and the children will grow up in this environment. Also, reviewing 5 pages a day with consistency.

What are some pitfalls or mistakes most people fall into when memorizing?

Worrying too much about reviewñ **Don't worry; you have your whole life to do it.** I have seen people worry too much about review and eventually didn't finish their *Hifz*. Why? Because they thought they will forget it. If your memorizing with such fears, **remove the fear and trust Allah.** Review is important but do not overdo it. Your teacher will help you memorize and your teacher will not be with you the whole timeñThus, I believe the worry of review is a useless worry.

Switching between too many teachers. This is more harmful than drinking a bucket of oil. Take one teacher and stick with one teacher until you finish. When a student switches between too many teachers, they feel rejected and unappreciated and it hurts them psychologically. Imagine in grade school and a particular class having many teachers. This is harmful.

Thinking they can memorize on their own. You can, but how many have? What is the ratio of persons who have finished on their own vs people who have completed with a teacher?

Sometimes when it gets hard, you give up and it's hard to get back into momentum. How do you keep going?

Motivation is keyñ **A teacher who will keep you motivated to learn and is upbeat.** Motivation can be many ways. What I would do is look at the end result. Similarly, incentives for oneself, it is key to treat yourself so use that as a motivation.

How do you keep balanced?

Consistency is a good way to do that. As I said earlier, the second you lack consistency you will fall and fall hard. I have seen this 'falling' happen many times. Similarly, **being humble and not having any pride.**

Are there certain habits that could deter one from retaining what is memorized?

èNot reviewing

èNot reading the Qurʾān in *Ṣalāh*

èLooking at those who are non-*Maḥram*

èDisrespecting your teacher (this is very serious) because the teacher can make *duʿāʾ* against you and you don't want that.

Can you please give us an example of the schedule you had when you were memorizing?

My schedule was very rigorous.

è1 hour after fajr

è6 hours in the day

è2 hours in the evening

However, I wouldn't recommend this schedule. I will say 1.5 hours in the evening (before dinner) and 1 hour in the morning and however much time you need to recite to the teacher. Only do *ḥifẓ* 5 days a week.

What general advice do you have for any sister who is considering embarking on a journey with the Qurʾān?

If you start something, finish it!ñ

Find a teacher and learn the Qurʾān with proper intention. Why are you memorizing the Qurʾān? Keep yourself self-motivated and remember that the greatest motivation is that by memorizing the Qurʾān you have put yourself in the realm of the preservers of the Qurʾān and by completing it you have officially gotten your citizenship in this noble land (realm)!ñ

You are Cordially Invited

About the Academy

Three women and the Qur'ân. It was a love story made in heaven.

Run by three dedicated sisters, *Misk* Academy launched in Ottawa with one goal in mind:

Make the sciences of Qur'ân accessible to all, exciting, and totally unscary.

We want you to not only love the Qur'ân and understand it, but to be able to do all that awesome stuff you hear the reciters do on your iPod.

Misk Academy has launched in Ottawa
with a future branch in Toronto (2014) insha Allah

Our Method

Misk Academy is semester based with three graduating streams:

1. Tajwīd/Qirā'āt
2. Ḥifẓ
3. Tafṣīr

You can embark on one, two, or all of these streams depending on your time, passions or interests.

We believe in baby steps. So we'll take you from level zero and walk you through our courses until you're ready to fly on your own.

Classroom Style

We're keeping it intimate. We want to see you, get to know you and bring you with us from one level to the next.

That's why we're keen on teaching at in-person classrooms throughout the city of Ottawa (Toronto Branch in 2014) with interactive presentations, teaching styles and material.

Better believe it's we're keeping you engaged :)

You are Cordially Invited

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