

The Holy Qur'an (Al-Qur'an-ul-Kareem)

The Golden Rules for Memorization:

1- Be Sincere:

You must clarify and purify your intention to get the fruit of this task. Thus, memorizing the Glorious Qur'an must be observed only for the Sake of Allah and for winning His Paradise, Pleasure and His Great Rewards. Almighty Allah says what may be interpreted as:

{Say, "Surely I have been commanded to worship Allah alone with sincere devotion."} [The Holy Qur'an, 39:11]

Thus, there is no reward whatever for those who read and memorize it to be seen, show off and over-praised by others. Also, the one who recites it intending to win worldly gains only is sinful.

If you do any good deed such as memorizing the Qur'an just to show off, it will not be accepted and you will be punished for that instead. People who do things only to show off are known as 'Al-Muraa-oon'. These people will be the first to be severely punished on the Day of Judgment as we read in the following Hadith: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says: "The first people who will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment, will be..... Next will be brought a person who had acquired knowledge, taught it and had studied the Qur'an. S/He will be shown the favors bestowed on him/her and will recognize them and will be asked: How did you use them? S/He will say. 'I acquired knowledge and taught it to others, and I read the Qur'an to Please You (O God!).' S/He will be told: 'You are a liar. You acquired knowledge only to be called a learned person, and you read the Qur'an so that you might be called a Qari' (reciter, hafiz), and you got that.' As per divine judgment s/he will also be dragged on his/her face and thrown into Hell..." Sahih Muslim

2- Be pious (Piety: Doing good deeds and quitting sins):

Doing good deeds and abstention from sins and disobedience has a profound impact on enhancing your ability to get and retain information. Sins, bad character, and acts of disobedience serve as obstacles to the mind's ability to learn, absorb and maintain information.

This is what is meant in Imam As-Shafi'i's famous lines:

I complained to Waki' about my poor memory: "Give up your sins!" was his advice to me; "For knowledge is a light, and the Allah's Light is not granted to sinners!"

This is also indicative of another truth, namely, that when a seeker of knowledge sets on the path of learning, and remains consistent and sincere in his/her pursuit, Allah grants him/her a light that increases his/her power to resist falling into wrong doings and sins.

Ibn Mas'oud, one of the Prophet's companions said: *"I feel that indeed someone will forget knowledge they had acquired because of sins they commit."* Al-Jami' by Al-Khatib

A man asked Imam Malik bin Anas, 'O Aba Abdillah! Is there anything that will improve my memory?' Imam Malik bin Anas replied, 'If anything will improve it, it is giving up sins.' Al-Jami' by Al-Khatib

3- Be Dutiful to Parents, Respectful to Teachers, and Kind to all around You:

Exert your utmost effort to keep your parents content with you and strive to please them. For this is indeed, one of the secrets of divinely granted success (tawfiq) and ease in one's affairs.

Maintaining good relations with all those around you (teachers, mates, neighbors, etc.) and performing all of your duties and obligations both within your household and elsewhere will give you a sense of serenity and stability. This in turn has a significant impact in facilitating your ability to concentrate on your memorization. Whereas, individuals who have problems with others, anxiety and stress as a result of not fulfilling their duties will predictably have a more difficult time in finding the peace of mind necessary to focus on their goal.

Allah ﷻ summarizes all this in one beautiful Aya. He says what may be interpreted as: "Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good and be dutiful to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the related neighbors, the unrelated neighbors, the companions by your side, the wayfarers (you meet), and servants. Verily, Allah does not like the arrogant and boastful ones." [The Holy Qur'an, 4:36]

4- Be Patient:

Life in general needs patience. Only through hard work and patience great people achieve their goals. Allah ﷻ says what may be interpreted as: " O you who believe! Seek help in patience and prayer. Truly! Allah is with those who have patience." [The Holy Qur'an, 2:153]

5- Supplication and Prayer to Allah ﷻ:

Allah ﷻ controls everything including our hearts and minds. If you want to memorize the Qur'an pray to Him for help and support. Make Du'a' for yourself to memorize the Qur'an especially in the times when Du'a' is most answered by Allah ﷻ such as after obligatory prayer and at the last third of night. Allah ﷻ says what may be interpreted as:

"And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicants when they call on Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, That they may walk in the right way" [The Holy Qur'an, 2:186]

O Allah! Help me memorize your Book, understand it, implement it and teach it to others to be among the best of people as my beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has said.

6- Correct Pronunciation and Recitation:

This will be possible only by listening to a skilled reciter (Qari' or Hafiz). The only way to become knowledgeable of the Qur'an is to take it orally from the skillful, as the Prophet ﷺ himself took it orally from Angel Gabriel. Also, the Prophet ﷺ used to recite the Qur'an once before Gabriel during the month of Ramadan every year. Consequently, the Prophet ﷺ taught it to his companions orally. The generations that followed took it the same way from the earlier ones.

Thus, taking the Glorious Qur'an orally after an excellent reciter is a must. One should always correct his/her recitation and should not depend on himself/herself, even if s/he is knowledgeable of Arabic because of the fact that the Qur'an has a special way of reading. So you cannot just open the Qur'an and start reading by yourself and memorizing without listening to a skillful Qari'. Modern technology can be very helpful in this regard. You can listen and watch skillful Qurra' (reciters) anywhere and anytime.

7- Apportion the Daily Number of lines to Memorize:

You should specify the amount you can bear daily, be it a given number of lines, pages, or a hizb (one-eighth of a juz').

8- Do Not Move to the Next Portion Till You Master the Present One:

You should not move to the next portion till you master the previous one. One way to perfect your portion is to make it your business day and night and to recite it during Prayers.

9- Stick to One Specific Copy of the Glorious Qur'an:

This is because people memorize things by sight as well as by hearing. The form of the verses and their locations on the page of the Qur'an are stamped in one's mind because of the frequent repetition and the act of looking at the copy itself.

Another important thing you should notice is that your eyes follow a specific direction depending on what you are thinking or doing. When you memorize, the direction of memorization is right and left, not downwards. The mistake many people make is that they put their mushaf low on the ground and then try to memorize. In order to fully utilize the power of your mind, you must keep the mushaf at eye level, and not dip your head.

10- Try to Understand What You Are Memorizing:

One of the greatest aides to memorizing the Glorious Qur'an is to understand the verses and recognize the relationship between them. Thus, you should learn Arabic and read some explanations of the intended verses and should understand how they are related.

11- Do Not Move from One Surah to Another Till You Connect its Beginning to its End:

After memorizing a whole surah of the Glorious Qur'an, you should not move to the next till you have mastered it perfectly. You should connect its beginning to its end, and your tongue should move with it smoothly and easily without exerting your mind in remembering the verses and continuing the

recitation. Rather, your memorization should be as smooth as water and you should recite it without any faltering whatsoever.

12- Recite Frequently before Others:

You should not depend only on your memorization. You should always recite before another memorizer or even one who just follows along in a copy of the Qur'an. It is preferable that that person be an excellent memorizer to notify the new memorizer with the things he/she might forget or recite inattentively.

13- Follow Up Frequently:

The Glorious Qur'an differs from other materials intended to be committed to one's heart as it is more fleeting from one's mind, as shown by Allah's Messenger, "By Him in Whose Hand my life is! It runs away (is forgotten) faster than camels that are released from their tying ropes." Sahih Al-Bukhari.

As soon as one who memorizes the Qur'an leaves it, it flees from him/her, and s/he rapidly forgets it. So, one must follow up frequently and continuously observe in order to preserve it. This means you should read at least half a juz' per day.

14- Pay Attention to Similarities:

The Glorious Qur'an has similarities in meanings, words, and verses. It is a fact that the Qur'an has more than six thousand verses, around two thousands of which are similar in one way or another. In some locations the similarity is exact, while in others there may be a difference of just one letter or one or a few words.

The more you pay attention to these similarities, the firmer your memorization gets. For example, in Surat-ul-Baqara we have these two similar verses:

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ (٤٨)

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15- Seize the Opportunity of the Golden Years to Memorize:

The successful person is the one who seizes the opportunity of his/her life on this earth, particularly early golden years from five to nearly twenty-three. Human memory during this period is in the best shape. Before five, one is too young to pay attention to memorizing, and after twenty-three his faculty to memorize begins to decline while his faculty of comprehension and understanding starts to increase. So, as much as possible, one should use these golden years to commit the Qur'an to memory.

Committing anything to one's heart during this early age takes place very fast, while forgetting it happens slowly. On the contrary, when one gets old s/he memorizes very slowly and forgets very quickly. Thus, the Arabic proverb is perfectly true that says:

“Learning in childhood is just like engraving on stones, while learning in adulthood is just like drawing on water”.

So you should avoid bad company and should not squander your energy on frivolous affairs that waste your precious time such as excessive talk and the like.

Organize your time and take advantage of the early hours of the day to study, as it is the most productive time of the day due to its blessing. Strive to benefit from every moment of your time, for it is the capital of the seekers of knowledge.

The early men and women of righteousness, and those who later followed in their footsteps, were the most vigilant about ensuring that every moment of their time was devoted to good acts. It is related about 'Āmir bin 'Abd Qays who was one of the pious Successors that somebody once told him, “Converse with me.” He said, “Hold the sun (i.e. halt it and keep it from moving) so that I may converse with you. For, time is moving and passing and it never returns once it has gone. Once lost, it can never be replaced or made up because for each time period was what could have filled it with good works.”

16- Recite in a beautiful and melodious tone:

You should recite aloud, first to follow the Prophetic Sunnah and second to perfect your memorization. Memorizing in a low voice does not help.

Intoning the Qur'an is endeared to the hearing and helps with memorizing, as it gets the tongue familiar with a given tune and an error is easily identified when the usual tune varies in one way or another. When this happens, the tongue feels the variation and stops to correct the recitation.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says: "The one who does not intone his/her recitation of the Qur'an is not one of us." Sahih Al-Bukhari.

This means to recite properly through applying all rules of Tajweed and to recite aloud in a way that is beautiful and that makes the Qur'an recitation special and different from any other kind of reading.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also says: "Beautify the Qur'an with your voices for a fine voice increases the Qur'an in beauty" Sunan Ad-Darimi.

Beautifying the voice in reciting the Qur'an should not be exaggerated to the extent we violate the rules of Tajweed.

It is forbidden to violate the rules of Tajweed for the sake of beautifying your reading.

17- Eat brain food.

The food you eat, the drinks you drink, directly affect your ability to excel in memorization of the Qur'an.

Do not eat fatty, unhealthy food. Do not drink soda. Eat a nutritious light breakfast, a nutritious light lunch, with almonds for snacks during the day. Honey and black raisin are believed to be very good for memory.