

Advice for Parents of Hifz Students: Prospective, Present, and Past

By Nawal Academy

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Memorizing the entire Qur'an is a dream many Muslim parents today have for their children. And indeed, this is a goal nobler than many if not all others. However, after children have memorized a number of *surahs* and perhaps even a *juz* or two of the Qur'an, there is a question that plagues many parents: *how do I know if my child is ready to commit to memorizing the entire Qur'an?*

Parents should be aware that doing *hifz* of the Qur'an is not a small task. It requires a tremendous amount of effort, focus, and dedication on behalf of the student, parent(s), and the teacher. Therefore, when deciding whether or not to enroll your children in a *hifz* program, you should make sure that you, the child, and the teacher are prepared for this huge and blessed commitment. If the child has a Qur'an teacher, ask the teacher if s/he feels your child is capable of doing *hifz* of the Qur'an. If the teacher thinks that the child indeed has the focus and persistence needed to memorize the Qur'an and that he does a very good job memorizing *surahs*, then you may consider enrolling the child in a *hifz* program. However, first you, the parent, must make sure that you are willing to expend the time and effort needed to support your child during this endeavor. If not, it may not be best to put this responsibility on the child's shoulders. Last, but certainly not least, the child should be asked if he or she is willing to strive to become a *hāfiz* or *hāfiza*. If the child says no, then the parent should drop the idea, at least until the child is willing to make this commitment.

Unfortunately, many parents do not follow this advice, which was given by *Shaykh* Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi Mujaddidi (db), a very well-known and authentic scholar, *hāfiz*, and spiritual guide from Pakistan. Parents often force their children to do *hifz*, when it is not *fard* (obligatory) on everyone to memorize the entire Qur'an. Children should only be enrolled in a *hifz* program if they are happy and willing to commit to this blessed task.

Okay, so you decided your child is ready to do start doing *hifz*. What next?

After children are enrolled in a *hifz* class, the children's parents and teachers should encourage them and teach him with love, care, softness, and gentleness. When children are taught by someone with these characteristics they soar and reach heights they may have never imagined.

In contrast, under no circumstances should the parents or the teacher beat children for not memorizing or doing well on their lessons. When parents and teachers show children such harsh behavior, there is a danger of them losing their desire to recite the Qur'an and love for Islam. How many students are there who memorized the Qur'an under a harsh teacher and, after completing the memorization, stopped revising the Qur'an and therefore forgot what they had worked so hard to memorize? How many *huffāz* went on to become astray and began leading a life of sin? There are unfortunately many such cases, and often the reason is that those students had been taught the Qur'an with harshness and force.

It is much better if a child happily memorizes half, or even a *juz*, of the Qur'an rather than being beaten and forced into memorizing the entire Qur'an.

The following are some additional things the parents of *hifz* students can do to help their children succeed:

- **Make *du'ā* for your child.** Parents' *du'ā* for their children is extremely valuable and it is the best gift you can give them. Allah (swt) is the only one who can truly help a person in any matter, which of course includes memorizing His Blessed words.
- **Help and encourage your child to abstain from sins.** Light and darkness cannot coexist in the same place. Similarly, by nature, the dazzling radiance of the Qur'an and the darkness of sins simply cannot gather in one place. Watching movies, missing prayers, listening to music, and engaging in other sins are displeasing to Allah (swt), and this has a detrimental impact on both students' memorization and on their connection with Allah (swt). However, parents must keep in mind that they should remind children to abstain from sins with love and softness rather than through fear and force.
- **Be a good role model.** When your children see you reading the Qur'an, then they will very likely be encouraged to do the same, Insha'Allah. The same goes for praying *salāh*, engaging in Allah's (swt) *dhikr* (remembrance), etc. Engaging in acts of *ibādah* causes a person's soul to grow, very similar to the way food causes a person's body to grow. A stronger soul will make it easier for your child to memorize the Qur'an, Insha'Allah.
- **Make sure your child is eating the right foods.** It is crucial to make sure that your child consumes only *halāl* foods. Consumption of *harām* foods is of course prohibited, and it may negatively impact a person's progress in his or her memorization of the Qur'an. There are several breads, cereals, etc. that contain *harām* ingredients and we must be very wary of the foods that enter our bodies and the bodies of our children. Also, make sure your children eat nutritious meals, that they maintain a balanced diet, and that they eat a healthy breakfast before class every morning so that they are energized for class, Insha'Allah!
- **Help your child create a schedule.** It is necessary for *hifz* students to devote at least a few hours every day for their memorization and revision. It is beneficial to create a set time for this task, as it will help ensure that neither memorization nor revision ever gets

“skipped.” The times after Fajr and after Maghrib are very blessed times for memorization and revision, but any time of the day that is convenient will work, Insha’Allah.

Of course, even if the parents and teacher put their maximum effort into helping a student, if the student is not willing to strive to achieve his or her goals, then there will be very little progress. The following are a few, but not all, of the qualities that should be found in every student willing to memorize the Qur’an. Some of these qualities come with time, so if your children are lacking in any of them, then you and their Qur’an teacher(s) should try your best to patiently and gently instill these qualities in them. Moreover, if you yourself are a person who is striving to memorize the Qur’an, check to make sure you are making an effort to obtain the following qualities:

- **Sincerity.** *Hifz* students should recognize that the only reason they are memorizing the Qur’an is to please Allah (swt). Attaining the pleasure of Allah (swt) is the purpose of every *mu’min’s* (believer’s) life, and everything he or she does should be a step towards that ultimate goal, Insha’Allah.
- **Devotion.** *Hifz* students must be aware of the blessing and responsibility that Allah (swt) has gifted them with. They should recognize that memorizing the Qur’an takes a great amount of time and effort and they should be willing to expend that time and effort on their memorization and revision.
- **Concentration.** When *hifz* students are memorizing their lessons or revising their previous lessons, they should be fully concentrating on what they are reading. All distractions should be eliminated and their attention should be on the blessed words of their Creator.
- **Self-Discipline.** Although parents are most certainly encouraged to remind and help their children practice their lessons, *hifz* students should recognize that this is *their* responsibility, given to them by Allah (swt). They should not need someone to constantly remind them to practice their lessons. They should know that practicing Qur’an may sometimes mean that they will have to wait a couple hours before getting to play or engage in other activities, but that they must finish their memorization and revision before play in order to progress and reach their goals.
- **Patience.** *Hifz* students should realize that some lessons are not as easy as others and that they might not always see the results of their efforts as soon as they like. *Hifz* takes time and students should not become frustrated if they are not reaching their goals quickly. *Hifz* students should know that although memorizing may sometimes seem a little difficult, they should never give up and that their efforts are never done in vain—for any effort to please Allah (swt) is never done in vain. *Hifz* students should know that if they keep trying their best to perfect their memorization of Allah’s (swt) words, Allah (swt) will make it easier for them and allow them to reach their goals, Insha’Allah.
- **Gratitude.** Allah (swt) says in the Qur’an: “If you express gratitude, I shall certainly give you more” (14:7). Although we can never thank Allah (swt) enough for the countless

blessings He bestows upon us, when *hifz* students are grateful to Allah (swt) for allowing them to memorize His blessed words, He will Insha'Allah make it easier for them to memorize the Qur'an. When the great *Imām* Abu Hanifa (rah) would understand a new concept, he would say "*alhamdulillah*," and thereafter Allah (swt) would increase his knowledge. *Hifz* students should make an effort to constantly thank Allah (swt) for all the blessings He has given them, particularly this blessing of memorizing the Qur'an. If possible, they should try to make it a habit to pray at least two *nafl* (optional) *rak'āt salāt-ul-shukr* (prayer of thanks) every day, Insha'Allah (however, parents should not force their children to pray these two *rak'āt*).

- **Humility.** It is natural for students, children and adults alike, to compare themselves to their peers, and sometimes students who memorize the Qur'an begin to think of themselves as better than others. However, it is very important for parents and educators to gently remind students that this opportunity of memorizing the Qur'an is a gift from Allah (swt) and that we have no reason to be arrogant because of it. Allah (swt) does not like arrogance and He can easily take that gift away, God forbid, and give it to someone else instead. *Hifz* students should be humble and should know that the fact that they are memorizing the Qur'an does not necessarily make them better than their peers. The heavier the fruit, the lower the branch bows. Similarly, the more knowledge Allah (swt) gives a person, the more humble the person should become, as we are absolutely nothing compared to Allah's (swt) infinite greatness.

Perhaps your child has already completed his or her memorization of the Qur'an, whether recently or years ago. Or perhaps you have completed *your* memorization of the Qur'an. In either case, *huffāz* must do their best to maintain a schedule of revision. It takes approximately 10,000 *focused* hours to excel in any field [of] the *dunya*, which means that it will take at least that much time to excel in a field [of] the *deen*. Hence, the time spent doing the actual memorization is just the formation of the base—the real excellence in *hifz* comes much later. ***Huffāz* and their parents alike often forget the importance of regularly revising the Qur'an after the memorization has been completed and students get busy with school and other responsibilities. However, it is crucial for *huffāz* to remember the gift and responsibility Allah (swt) has given them and, thus, to continue to consistently revise the Qur'an for the rest of their lives—which they will naturally be driven to do if they had a soft, encouraging, gentle, loving, and caring learning experience, Insha'Allah.**

Additionally, *huffāz* are encouraged to acquire knowledge of the *deen*, to teach the Qur'an to others if they get the opportunity, and to practice upon the Qur'an that Allah (swt) chose their hearts to preserve.

May Allah (swt) keep us on the straight path and may He make it easy for us and our children to excel in memorizing, retaining, and practicing upon the Qur'an with love and happiness. Ameen.

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