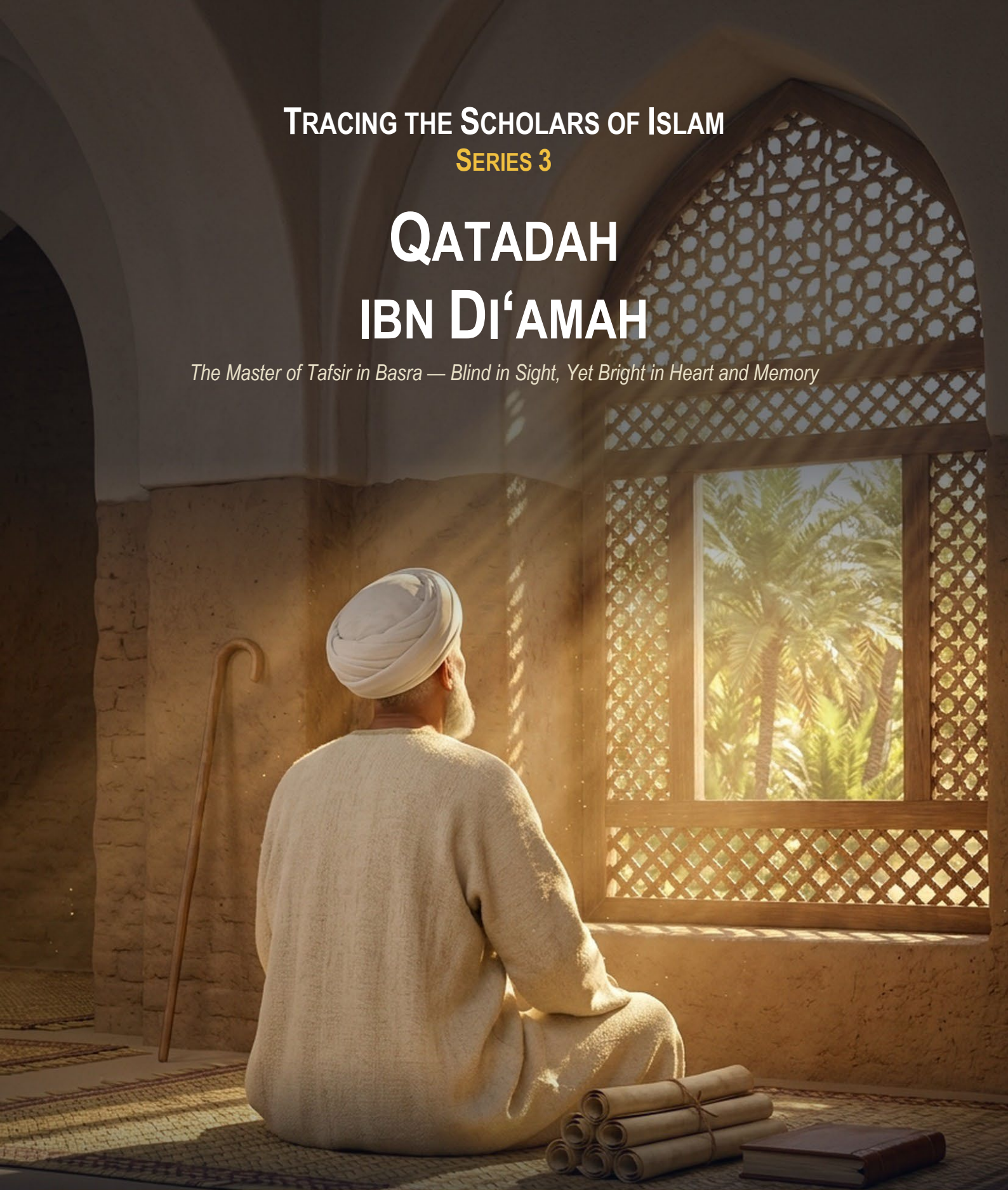
TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 3

# QATADAH IBN DI'AMAH

*The Master of Tafsir in Basra — Blind in Sight, Yet Bright in Heart and Memory*




**HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON**

**AK (KELANTAN)**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

### SERIES 3

# QATADAH

*The Master of Tafsir in Basra — Blind in Sight, Yet Bright in Heart and Memory*

بَلْ هُوَ ءَايَٰتٌۢ بَيِّنَٰتٌ فِي صُدُورِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمَ ۚ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ إِلَّا ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ

"Rather, the Qur'an is distinct verses [preserved] within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge. And none reject Our verses except the wrongdoers."

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:49

**HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who preserves the Qur'an within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family, his Companions, and the generation of the Tabi'un who memorised and conveyed his knowledge.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

**ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF**;

my dear children,

**MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA** and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

**FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL** and **FIRWAN**.

This third book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells of a Tabi'i who could not see with his eyes, yet whose memory amazed his own teachers. May his story remind us that a disability is no barrier to knowledge, and may this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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## ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook, in a **3D** illustration style, shows a Tabi'i scholar **drawn from behind, without a face** — because no true likeness of Qatadah exists, and the faces of the early scholars are not invented. He sits on a woven mat with his head slightly raised, as if **listening attentively**, and **a wooden walking staff** leans against the wall beside him.

Next to him are **rolled scrolls and a book left unopened** — a symbol of knowledge kept in memory, for Qatadah memorised what he heard.

**Golden late-afternoon light** streams through a wooden lattice window (mashrabiyya) and falls on his shoulders — an image of **the light of the heart** of a scholar who did not see with his eyes, yet whose knowledge gave light to others.

**Two gold lines** at the bottom frame the author's name, while the image runs in full to the edge of the page.

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# QATADAH IBN DI'AMAH

The third book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** remains in ***Basra***, with a student of al-Hasan al-Basri (Series 2) who became ***a leading master of tafsir and Hadith***: ***Qatadah ibn Di'amah as-Sadusi*** رحمه الله. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said of him: ***"He had the strongest memory among the people of Basra."***

More remarkable still, according to the books of biography, Qatadah ***could not see***. His knowledge was gathered through his ears and his memory — and his name fills the books of tafsir and Hadith to this day.

*Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box. Information from the books of history and biography is placed in brown "History Note" boxes, so that readers can distinguish it from authentic Hadith.*

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## PRESERVED WITHIN THE BREASTS

**SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:49**

بَلۡ هُوَ ءَايَٰتُۢ بَيِّنَٰتٞ فِي صُدُورِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡعِلۡمَۚ وَمَا يَجۡحَدُ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ إِلَّا ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ٤٩

Rather, the Qur'an is distinct verses [preserved] within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge. And none reject Our verses except the wrongdoers.

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/29:49

### COMMENTARY ON VERSE 29:49

Allah states that the Qur'an is ***"distinct verses [preserved] within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge"***. Qatadah narrated from his teacher, Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, about those who memorised the Qur'an in the time of the Prophet ﷺ:

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**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3810 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)**

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ جَمَعَ الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَرْبَعَةٌ، كُلُّهُمْ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ أُبَىٌّ، وَمُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ، وَأَبُو زَيْدٍ، وَزَيْدُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ. قُلْتُ لأَنَسٍ مَنْ أَبُو زَيْدٍ قَالَ أَحَدُ عُمُومَتِي.

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas رضى الله عنه said: **“The Qur’an was collected (memorised in full) during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ by four men, all of them from the Ansar: Ubayy, Mu‘adh ibn Jabal, Abu Zayd and Zayd ibn Thabit.”**

(Qatadah said:) I asked Anas: “Who is Abu Zayd?” He said: “One of my paternal uncles.”

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qattan, from Shu‘bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, Hadith No. 3810. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2465).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3810

## LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Notice Qatadah’s question: ***“Who is Abu Zayd?”*** He was not satisfied with an unclear name — he asked until it was clear. This is the quality of a Hadith scholar: ***precision about the names of the people*** who carry knowledge.

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## LEARNING AND TEACHING THE QUR'AN

Qatadah spent his life with ***the Qur'an***: memorising, explaining and teaching it. He was among those praised by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5027**

حَدَّثَنَا حَجَّاجُ بْنُ مِنْهَالٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مَرْثَدٍ، سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ». قَالَ وَأَقْرَأَ أَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فِي إِمْرَةِ عُثْمَانَ حَتَّى كَانَ الْحَجَّاجُ، قَالَ وَذَاكَ الَّذِي أَقْعَدَنِي مَقْعَدِي هَذَا.

**TRANSLATION:**

'Uthman رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."** (Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah) said: Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman (as-Sulami) taught the Qur'an from the caliphate of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and he said: "That is what has kept me sitting in this seat of mine."

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hajjaj ibn Minhal, from Shu'bah, from 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah, from Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith No. 5027.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5027

### LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The best of people are those who ***learn and teach*** the Qur'an. Blind Qatadah could not read the mushaf with his eyes, but he ***memorised*** it and ***taught*** its meanings to thousands of students.

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**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4937 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAYH)**

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ زُرَارَةَ بْنَ أَوْفَى، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهْوَ حَافِظٌ لَهُ مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَرَةِ، وَمَثَلُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهْوَ يَتَعَاهَدُهُ وَهْوَ عَلَيْهِ شَدِيدٌ، فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ».

**TRANSLATION:**

‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“The one who recites the Qur’an and has memorised it will be with the noble, righteous scribes (angels). And the one who recites the Qur’an, striving hard to keep it while it is difficult for him, will have two rewards.”**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam (ibn Abi Iyas), from Shu‘bah, from Qatadah, from Zurarah ibn Awfa, from Sa‘d ibn Hisham, from ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah ‘Abasa, Hadith No. 4937. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 798).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4937

## LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Not everyone finds reciting the Qur’an easy. Yet whoever ***strives even while stumbling*** receives ***a double reward***. Qatadah’s earnestness is the finest example: a disability does not close the door of the Qur’an.

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# WHO WAS QATADAH?

His full name was ***Qatadah ibn Di'amah ibn Qatadah as-Sadusi al-Basri***, with the kunyah ***Abu al-Khattab***. He was from the Arab tribe of Banu Sadus, and lived in Basra and Wasit. According to the books of biography, he was ***born in 61 AH*** and ***died in 117 AH*** (some say 118 AH).

## A MEMORY THAT AMAZED HIS TEACHERS

**Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib**, the imam of the Tabi'un in Madinah, said: "No one from Iraq has ever come to me with ***a stronger memory*** than Qatadah." **Muhammad ibn Sirin** described him as ***"the person with the strongest memory"***. **Imam Ahmad** said: "He had ***the strongest memory*** among the people of Basra." And **Abu Zur'ah** said he was ***among the most knowledgeable students of al-Hasan***.

## THE VERDICT OF THE HADITH SCHOLARS

**Ibn Sa'd:** "***Trustworthy, reliable, an authority in Hadith***." **Yahya ibn Ma'in** and **ad-Daraqutni:** "***Thiqah***." **Ibn Hibban:** "He was ***among the scholars of the people in the Qur'an and fiqh***." **Ibn Hajar:** "***Thiqah, thabt*** (trustworthy and firm)."

### HISTORY NOTE: TADLIS AND THE ACCUSATION OF QADAR — THE HONESTY OF HADITH SCIENCE

As with al-Hasan al-Basri, the scholars recorded that Qatadah ***was well known for tadlis***, sometimes narrating from someone with wording that did not make clear whether he had heard it directly.

Al-'Ijli mentioned that he ***was accused of holding the Qadari view*** (denying divine decree), but ***did not call others to it***; while Abu Dawud said there is no firm report that he truly held that view. Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim still narrated his Hadith — because his honesty and memory were acknowledged.

**REFERENCES:**

Sunnah.com: narrator page of Qatadah ibn Di'amah. https://sunnah.com/narrator/6458

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## THE JOURNEY OF A BLIND SEEKER

Qatadah grew up in ***Basrah*** in the same era as al-Hasan al-Basri (Series 2). The city was still home to Companions such as ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه, and circles of learning filled its mosque. Though he could not see, Qatadah never made his condition an excuse — he sat in those circles, listening and memorising.

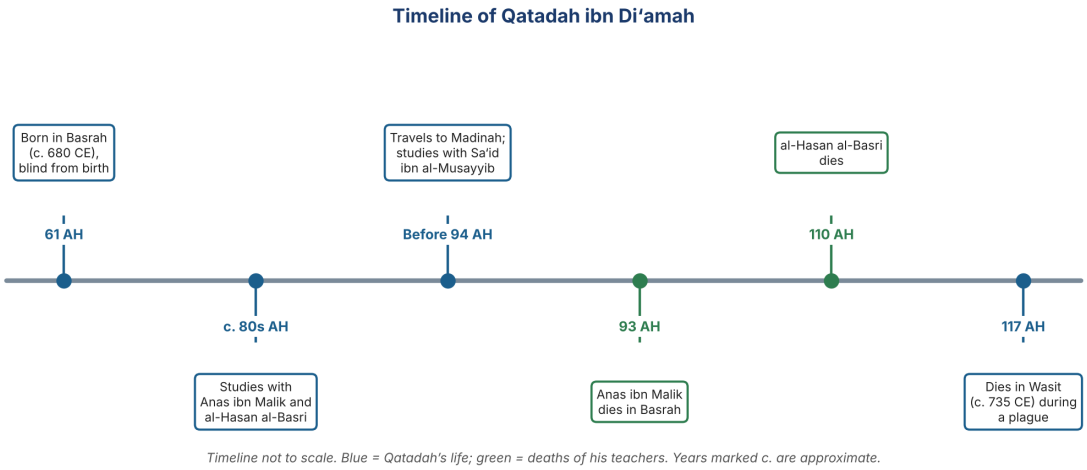



*Figure 1: Timeline of Qatadah ibn Di'amah.*

The learning of Basrah was not enough for him. He ***travelled to Madinah*** to study with ***Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib***, the leader of the Tabi'un of Madinah and son-in-law of Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه. For a blind man, a journey of that length in the age of camels and deserts was ***a great sacrifice*** for the sake of knowledge.

### HISTORY NOTE: EIGHT DAYS WITH SA'ID IBN AL-MUSAYYIB

Adh-Dhahabi in ***Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'*** relates that Qatadah stayed with Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib for ***a few days*** (eight are mentioned), asking him so many questions that Sa'id said to him in admiration: ***"Go, O blind one, you have drained me (of my knowledge)."***

These words are not an insult but ***praise*** from a great teacher to a student of extraordinary thirst for knowledge. They agree with Sa'id's authentic statement in the books of rijal that no one from Iraq had ever come to him with a stronger memory than Qatadah.

**REFERENCES:**

Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala', biography of Qatadah ibn Di'amah.

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## THE PATH TO PARADISE

The journey of blind Qatadah from Basrah to Madinah (chapter 4) is a deed promised a great reward by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2699**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى التَّمِيمِيُّ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِيَحْيَى - قَالَ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ بَطَّأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever relieves a believer of a hardship of this world, Allah will relieve him of a hardship of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes things easy for one in difficulty, Allah will make things easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal (his faults) in this world and the Hereafter. Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother. Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him, through it, a path to Paradise. No people gather in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquillity descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them among those who are with Him. And whoever is slowed down by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya at-Tamimi, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn al-'Ala' al-Hamdani, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from al-A'mash, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance and Supplication, chapter on the virtue of gathering to recite the Qur'an and remember Allah, Hadith No. 2699.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2699a

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## LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Every step in seeking knowledge is ***a step towards Paradise***. For Qatadah, the road was long and hard — but Allah ***made it easy*** for him, until he became one of the scholars with the strongest memory.

| THE DEED IN THE HADITH | ITS REWARD |
|---|---|
| Travelling a path to seek knowledge | Allah eases the path to Paradise. |
| Gathering to recite and study the Qur'an | Tranquillity, mercy and being mentioned by Allah. |
| Relieving another's hardship | Allah relieves his hardship on the Day of Resurrection. |

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## A STUDENT OF ANAS IBN MALIK

Qatadah's foremost teacher among the Companions was ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه, the servant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who lived long in Basra. Abu Hatim ar-Razi counted Qatadah among ***the most reliable students of Anas***. Qatadah asked Anas about the finest details — including how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited the Qur'an:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5045**

حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرُ بْنُ حَازِمٍ الأَزْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ عَنْ قِرَاءَةِ النَّبِيِّ، صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ كَانَ يَمُدُّ مَدًّا.

**TRANSLATION:**

Qatadah said: I asked Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه about the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ. He said: **"He used to prolong (the elongated letters) in his recitation."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muslim ibn Ibrahim, from Jarir ibn Hazim al-Azdi, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, chapter on prolonging the recitation, Hadith No. 5045.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5045

### LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Qatadah, a master of tafsir, wanted to know ***how*** the Qur'an was recited by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, not only what it means. In another narration through his student Hammam, Anas recited *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*, prolonging his recitation (Sahih al-Bukhari 5046).

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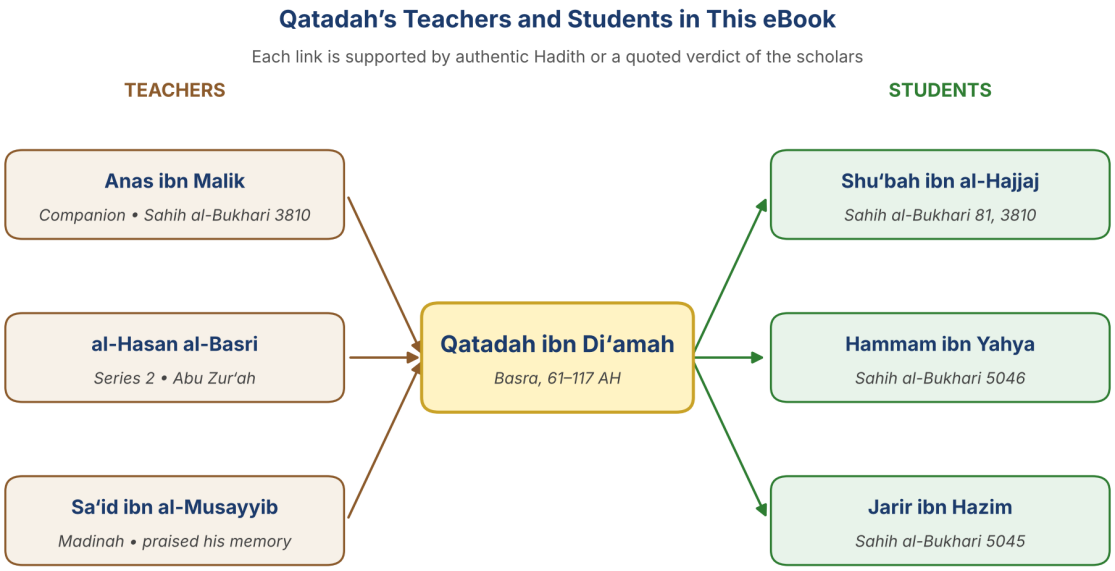
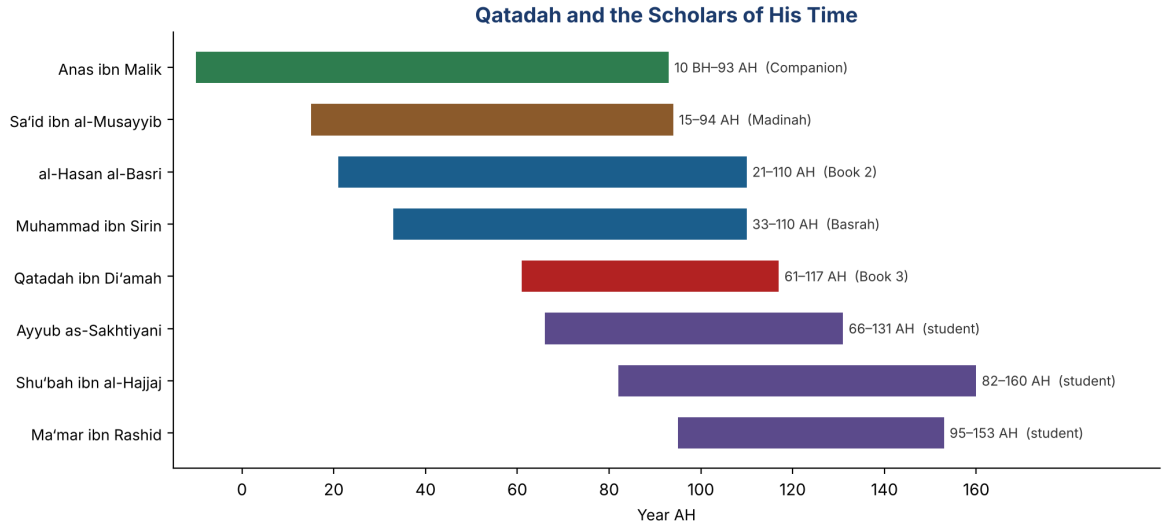



*Figure 2: Qatadah's teachers and students mentioned in this eBook.*

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## QATADAH AND THE SCHOLARS OF HIS TIME

Qatadah lived among ***the golden generation*** of Basrah. The figure below shows his teachers, peers and students by the years of their lives.




*Approximate years (some differ by a year or two between sources). Sources: adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'; Ibn Hajar, Taqrib at-Tahdhib.*

*Figure 3: Qatadah and the scholars of his time (approximate years).*

Qatadah learned from ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه and ***Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib***, sat in the circle of ***al-Hasan al-Basri*** (Book 2), and passed his knowledge on to ***Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani***, ***Shu'bah*** and ***Ma'mar***. Knowledge passed from one generation to the next like ***a torch handed on***.

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## BLIND EYES, A SEEING HEART

**SURAH AL-HAJJ 22:46**

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَآ أَوْ ءَاذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۖ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى ٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ وَلَٰكِن تَعْمَى ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلَّتِى فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾

So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/22:46

### COMMENTARY ON VERSE 22:46

Allah says: ***"it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts"***. Imam Ibn Kathir explains: ***"True blindness is not blindness of sight, but blindness of insight."*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 22:46

Imam al-Qurtubi quotes the words of ***Qatadah*** himself on this verse: ***"The seeing eye was given for (life's) needs and benefit, while the sight that truly benefits is in the heart."*** Tafsir al-Qurtubi 22:46

**HISTORY NOTE: QATADAH AND HIS SIGHT**

Books of biography such as ***Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'*** mention that Qatadah ***was born blind***. He sought knowledge by listening, and memorised what he heard until his own teachers were amazed by his memory.

His words on verse 22:46 — that the sight that truly benefits is the sight of the heart — feel so close once we know that the one who said them was a scholar who did not see with his eyes.

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## THE REWARD FOR LOSING ONE'S SIGHT

His teacher ***Anas ibn Malik*** رضى الله عنه narrated a Hadith qudsi giving glad tidings to everyone tested with the loss of sight:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5653 — HADITH QUDSI**

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ الْهَادِ، عَنْ عَمْرٍو، مَوْلَى الْمُطَّلِبِ عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ إِذَا ابْتَلَيْتُ عَبْدِي بِحَبِيبَتَيْهِ فَصَبَرَ عَوَّضْتُهُ مِنْهُمَا الْجَنَّةَ». يُرِيدُ عَيْنَيْهِ. تَابَعَهُ أَشْعَثُ بْنُ جَابِرٍ وَأَبُو ظِلاَلٍ عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: **"Allah said: If I test My servant with (the loss of) his two beloved ones and he is patient, I will compensate him for them with Paradise."** He meant his two eyes.

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Ibn al-Had, from 'Amr, the freed slave of al-Muttalib, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Sick, Hadith No. 5653.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5653

### LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Losing one's sight is a great test, and its reward is also great — ***Paradise*** for one who is ***patient***. Qatadah did not lament his loss; he used his hearing and memory to ***serve the Qur'an and the Sunnah***.

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## REFLECTION

Each of us is tested with some lack. The question is not ***what is lost***, but ***how we use what remains***.

| WHAT QATADAH LOST | WHAT HE USED |
|---|---|
| Eyesight | Sharp hearing and a strong memory. |
| Reading from books | Listening directly to teachers. |
| Ease of travel | The resolve to journey to Madinah. |

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# QATADAH THE MUFASSIR

Qatadah is among the ***most quoted mufassirun of the generation of the Tabi'un***. Open ***Jami' al-Bayan*** (Tafsir at-Tabari) or ***Tafsir Ibn Kathir*** and you will meet the phrase again and again: ***"Qatadah said…"***

## HOW DID HIS TAFSIR REACH US?

Qatadah's tafsir was memorised and recorded by his students, above all ***Ma'mar ibn Rashid*** and ***Sa'id ibn Abi 'Arubah***. Ma'mar's narrations from Qatadah were later compiled by ***'Abd ar-Razzaq as-San'ani*** in ***Tafsir 'Abd ar-Razzaq***, one of the oldest surviving books of tafsir. From books like these, at-Tabari and later mufassirun quoted Qatadah's words.

## FEATURES OF QATADAH'S TAFSIR

Qatadah's tafsir is known for being ***brief and clear***: he explains the meanings of words, mentions the ***occasions of revelation***, and links the verse to ***lessons for life***. His words on verse 22:46 in chapter 8 are one example — short, yet piercing the heart.

## A LESSON FOR US

The knowledge of a blind scholar, memorised by his students and recorded by the generations after him, ***is still read today*** — more than 1,300 years later. This is the blessing of ***knowledge that is taught*** and ***passed on with trust***.

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## THE CHAIN OF QATADAH'S TAFSIR

How are the words of a Basran scholar who died in 117 AH still read today? The answer is ***the chain of knowledge*** linking teacher to student, and student to book.

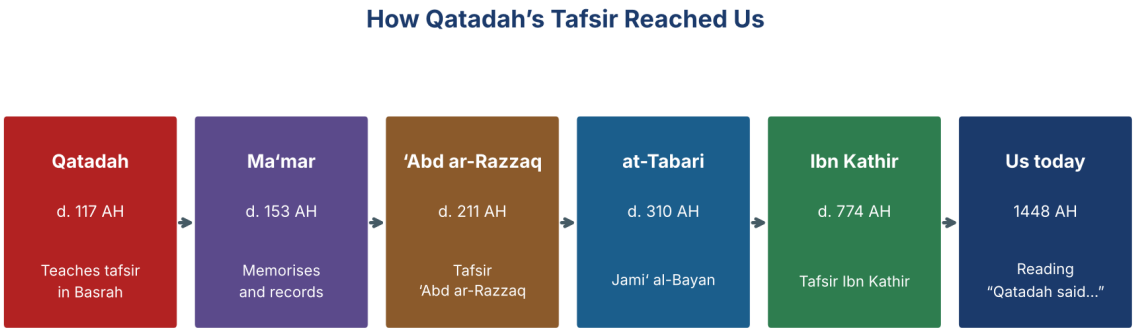



*Figure 4: One route by which Qatadah's tafsir reached us.*

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His student ***Ma'mar ibn Rashid*** memorised and recorded; ***'Abd ar-Razzaq as-San'ani*** compiled it into a book of tafsir; ***at-Tabari*** and later ***Ibn Kathir*** quoted it in their great works of tafsir — saying ***"Qatadah said…"***

| STAGE | ROLE IN PRESERVING THE TAFSIR |
|---|---|
| Teacher (Qatadah) | Explains and teaches in the circle of learning. |
| Student (Ma'mar) | Memorises and records carefully. |
| Compiler ('Abd ar-Razzaq) | Arranges the reports into a book. |
| Mufassirun (at-Tabari, Ibn Kathir) | Quote, assess and explain. |

## LESSONS

Knowledge that is ***conveyed faithfully*** and ***recorded carefully*** can outlive its owner — by more than 1,300 years in Qatadah's case.

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## MEMORY, LANGUAGE AND GENEALOGY

Qatadah's learning was not limited to tafsir and Hadith. The books of biography describe him as ***an expert in the Arabic language***, the ***genealogies of the Arab tribes*** ('ilm al-ansab) and the ***battle-days of the Arabs*** (ayyam al-'Arab). The linguists of his time consulted him on the meanings of words and old Arabic poetry.

### A REMARKABLE MEMORY

Qatadah's memory was the talk of the scholars. Among the words related in ***Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'*** and the books of rijal is his statement that he ***never asked a Hadith teacher to repeat*** what was read to him — hearing it once was enough.

> **HISTORY NOTE: WHAT THE SCHOLARS SAID ABOUT QATADAH'S MEMORY**
>
> It is related that Qatadah said: ***"I never said to a Hadith teacher: repeat it for me."*** His ears took the place of his eyes.
>
> Ma'mar ibn Rashid, his student, said that he had never seen anyone with ***a stronger memory*** than Qatadah.
>
> These are ***biographical reports*** (not Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ), but they support one another and are quoted by the imams of rijal.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'; Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib at-Tahdhib — biography of Qatadah.

### A LESSON FOR US

Qatadah shows that religious knowledge and the knowledge of language ***complete one another***: understanding the Qur'an requires mastery of Arabic. And a strong memory is born of ***full attention*** while learning — something ever harder in the age of smartphones.

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## THE ENVY THAT IS PERMITTED

Envy is usually blameworthy. Yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ named two situations ***worthy of envy*** — and one of them is knowledge that is taught:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 73**

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي خَالِدٍ، عَلَى غَيْرِ مَا حَدَّثَنَاهُ الزُّهْرِيُّ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ قَيْسَ بْنَ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم « لاَ حَسَدَ إِلاَّ فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَسُلِّطَ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ، فَهْوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا ».

**TRANSLATION:**

‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **“There is no envy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the way of truth, and a man whom Allah has given wisdom (knowledge) and he judges by it and teaches it.”**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaidi, from Sufyan ibn ‘Uyainah, from Isma‘il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qais ibn Abi Hazim, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, chapter on envying in knowledge and wisdom, Hadith No. 73. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 816).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:73

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## LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Qatadah is an example of one whom Allah gave ***wisdom***, and who then ***taught it***. We may "envy" him — by following his earnestness in seeking and conveying knowledge.

| HASAD (BLAMEWORTHY) | GHIBTAH (PERMITTED) |
|---|---|
| Wishing another's blessing would vanish | Wishing for the same blessing for oneself. |
| Breeds hatred and spite | Breeds zeal and effort. |
| Destroys good deeds | Increases good deeds. |

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## KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL BE TAKEN AWAY

Qatadah narrated from Anas a Hadith that is a reminder to every seeker of knowledge. Anas began it with moving words — for he was among the last Companions to pass away:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 81 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)**

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ لأُحَدِّثَنَّكُمْ حَدِيثًا لاَ يُحَدِّثُكُمْ أَحَدٌ بَعْدِي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «مِنْ أَشْرَاطِ السَّاعَةِ أَنْ يَقِلَّ الْعِلْمُ، وَيَظْهَرَ الْجَهْلُ، وَيَظْهَرَ الزِّنَا، وَتَكْثُرَ النِّسَاءُ وَيَقِلَّ الرِّجَالُ، حَتَّى يَكُونَ لِخَمْسِينَ امْرَأَةً الْقَيِّمُ الْوَاحِدُ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas رضى الله عنه said: I will surely tell you a Hadith that no one after me will tell you. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **“Among the signs of the Hour are that knowledge will decrease, ignorance will appear, fornication will become widespread, and women will increase and men decrease, until fifty women will have one man to look after them.”**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qattan, from Shu‘bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 81. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2671).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:81

### LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Knowledge will decrease when ***those who carry it depart***. Qatadah’s generation understood this, and so they raced to memorise and record what they heard from the Companions before they passed away — and the fruit of their effort has reached us today.

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## BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE

**SURAH TAHA 20:114**

فَتَعَٰلَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلۡمَلِكُ ٱلۡحَقُّۗ وَلَا تَعۡجَلۡ بِٱلۡقُرۡءَانِ مِن قَبۡلِ أَن يُقۡضَىٰٓ إِلَيۡكَ وَحۡيُهُۥۖ وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدۡنِي عِلۡمٗا ١١٤

So high [above all] is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth. And, [O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/20:114

Allah taught His Prophet to pray: ***"My Lord, increase me in knowledge"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 20:114

Yet the knowledge asked for is ***beneficial knowledge***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself sought refuge from knowledge that does not benefit:

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**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2722**

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لاِبْنِ نُمَيْرٍ - قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنْ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، وَعَنْ أَبِي عُثْمَانَ النَّهْدِيِّ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ، قَالَ لاَ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِلاَّ كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ كَانَ يَقُولُ «اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلاَهَا اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لاَ يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لاَ يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لاَ تَشْبَعُ وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لاَ يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا».

**TRANSLATION:**

Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه said: I will say to you only what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to say. He used to supplicate: **"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, senility and the punishment of the grave. O Allah, grant my soul its God-consciousness and purify it — You are the best to purify it; You are its Guardian and Master. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit, a heart that is not humble, a soul that is never satisfied, and a supplication that is not answered."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim and Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Numayr, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from 'Asim (al-Ahwal), from 'Abdullah ibn al-Harith and Abu 'Uthman an-Nahdi, from Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance, Supplication, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness, Chapter: Seeking Refuge From the Evil of Deeds, Hadith No. 2722.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2722

## LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Beneficial knowledge produces ***a humble heart*** and ***a God-fearing soul***. Qatadah's extraordinary memory was valuable because it was used to ***understand and convey*** the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

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## BELIEF IN DIVINE DECREE

In Qatadah's time, a group appeared in Basrah that ***denied divine decree*** (the Qadariyyah). Qatadah himself was accused of this view, though the accusation is not firm (chapter 3). The Qur'an affirms:

**SURAH AL-QAMAR 54:49**

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾

Indeed, all things We created with predestination.

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/54:49

***"Indeed, all things We created with predestination"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 54:49

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**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 8 (THE HADITH OF JIBRIL)**

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو خَيْثَمَةَ، زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، عَنْ كَهْمَسٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ يَعْمَرَ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ، - وَهَذَا حَدِيثُهُ - حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا كَهْمَسٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ يَعْمَرَ، قَالَ كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ قَالَ فِي الْقَدَرِ بِالْبَصْرَةِ مَعْبَدٌ الْجُهَنِيُّ فَانْطَلَقْتُ أَنَا وَحُمَيْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الْحِمْيَرِيُّ حَاجَّيْنِ أَوْ مُعْتَمِرَيْنِ فَقُلْنَا لَوْ لَقِينَا أَحَدًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَسَأَلْنَاهُ عَمَّا يَقُولُ هَؤُلاَءِ فِي الْقَدَرِ فَوُفِّقَ لَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ دَاخِلاً الْمَسْجِدَ فَاكْتَنَفْتُهُ أَنَا وَصَاحِبِي أَحَدُنَا عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَالآخَرُ عَنْ شِمَالِهِ فَظَنَنْتُ أَنَّ صَاحِبِي سَيَكِلُ الْكَلاَمَ إِلَىَّ فَقُلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّهُ قَدْ ظَهَرَ قِبَلَنَا نَاسٌ يَقْرَءُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَيَتَقَفَّرُونَ الْعِلْمَ - وَذَكَرَ مِنْ شَأْنِهِمْ - وَأَنَّهُمْ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنْ لاَ قَدَرَ وَأَنَّ الأَمْرَ أُنُفٌ. قَالَ فَإِذَا لَقِيتَ أُولَئِكَ فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْهُمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ بُرَآءُ مِنِّي وَالَّذِي يَحْلِفُ بِهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ لَوْ أَنَّ لأَحَدِهِمْ مِثْلَ أُحُدٍ ذَهَبًا فَأَنْفَقَهُ مَا قَبِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ ثُمَّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعَرِ لاَ يُرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرُ السَّفَرِ وَلاَ يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخِذَيْهِ وَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الإِسْلاَمِ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم الإِسْلاَمُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلاَةَ وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلاً. قَالَ صَدَقْتَ. قَالَ فَعَجِبْنَا لَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ. قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الإِيمَانِ. قَالَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلاَئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ. قَالَ صَدَقْتَ. قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الإِحْسَانِ. قَالَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ. قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ. قَالَ مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ. قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَمَارَتِهَا. قَالَ أَنْ تَلِدَ الأَمَةُ رَبَّتَهَا وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحُفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ يَتَطَاوَلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ. قَالَ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي يَا عُمَرُ أَتَدْرِي مَنِ السَّائِلُ. قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ.

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**TRANSLATION:**

Yahya bin Ya'mar said: The first person to speak about (the denial of) divine decree (qadar) in Basrah was Ma'bad al-Juhani. So Humaid bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Himyari and I set out for Hajj or 'Umrah, and we said: "If only we could meet one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we would ask him about what these people are saying about qadar." It was decreed that we met 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khattab رضى الله عنهما as he was entering the mosque. My companion and I flanked him, one on his right and one on his left. I thought my companion would leave the talking to me, so I said: "O Abu 'Abd al-Rahman, there have appeared among us people who recite the Qur'an and pursue knowledge — and he described their state — and they claim that there is no qadar, and that matters happen without being decreed beforehand." He said: "When you meet them, tell them that I am free of them and they are free of me. By the One by whom 'Abdullah bin 'Umar swears, if one of them had gold equal to Mount Uhud and spent it, Allah would not accept it from him until he believes in qadar."

Then he said: My father, 'Umar bin al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, told me: While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one day, there appeared before us a man whose clothes were extremely white and whose hair was extremely black; no signs of travel could be seen on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down facing the Prophet ﷺ, resting his knees against his knees and placing his palms on his thighs, and said: "O Muhammad, tell me about Islam." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Islam is that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, that you establish the prayer, pay the zakah, fast in Ramadan, and perform Hajj to the House if you are able to find a way to it."** He said: "You have spoken truly." We were amazed at him: he asks him and then confirms him. He said: "Tell me about iman." He said: **"That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, and that you believe in qadar, its good and its bad."** He said: "You have spoken truly." He said: "Tell me about ihsan." He said: **"That you worship Allah as though you see Him; and though you do not see Him, He surely sees you."** He said: "Tell me about the Hour." He said: **"The one asked about it knows no more than the one asking."** He said: "Then tell me about its signs." He said: **"That the slave-woman gives birth to her mistress, and that you see the barefoot, naked, destitute herdsmen of sheep competing in constructing tall buildings."** Then the man left. I stayed for a while, then he said to me: **"O 'Umar, do you know who the questioner was?"** I said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: **"He was Jibril; he came to you to teach you your religion."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Khaithamah Zuhair bin Harb, from Waki', from Kahmas bin al-Hasan, from 'Abdullah bin Buraidah, from Yahya bin Ya'mar; and from 'Ubaidullah bin Mu'adh al-'Anbari, from his father, Mu'adh bin Mu'adh, from Kahmas, from Ibn Buraidah, from Yahya bin Ya'mar, from 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, from 'Umar bin al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 8 (narration 8a).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:8a

## LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith begins with ***Ma'bad al-Juhani***, the first to speak of denying decree ***in Basrah*** — Qatadah's city. Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما answered with the Hadith of Jibril: belief in ***decree, its good and its bad***, is a pillar of faith.

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## LOVE FOR THE MESSENGER ﷺ

Through Qatadah, too, came the Hadith on ***the foundation of a believer's love***. Imam al-Bukhari narrates it through two chains — one of them through Shu'bah from Qatadah from Anas:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 15 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)**

حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عُلَيَّةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ صُهَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم ح وَحَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «لاَ يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **"None of you (truly) believes until I am more beloved to him than his father, his child and all people."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari through two chains: (1) from Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim, from Ibn 'Ulayyah, from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Suhayb, from Anas; and (2) from Adam, from Shu'bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Chapter on Loving the Messenger ﷺ Is Part of Faith, Hadith No. 15. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 44).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:15

### LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ must ***surpass love for family and all of mankind***. For a Hadith scholar like Qatadah, this love is shown by ***memorising, preserving and conveying*** his Sunnah precisely — without adding and without taking away.

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## THE CHARACTER OF A SCHOLAR

True knowledge gives birth to love among people. Among the most famous Hadith narrated by Qatadah from Anas is:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 13 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)**

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ - رضى الله عنه - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم. وَعَنْ حُسَيْنٍ الْمُعَلِّمِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «لاَ يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“None of you (truly) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qattan, from Shu‘bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه; and through a second chain from Husayn al-Mu‘allim, from Qatadah.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 13. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 45).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:13

### LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith is short but profound: complete faith requires us ***to want good for others*** as we want it for ourselves — including knowledge. This is the spirit of the scholars who taught without withholding knowledge.

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## DEATH DURING A PLAGUE

According to the books of biography, Qatadah ***died in the city of Wasit*** in 117 AH (some say 118 AH), when a ***plague*** struck. His teacher, Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, had narrated glad tidings about the one who dies of plague:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2830**

حَدَّثَنَا بِشْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَاصِمٌ، عَنْ حَفْصَةَ بِنْتِ سِيرِينَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «الطَّاعُونُ شَهَادَةٌ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Plague is martyrdom for every Muslim."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Bishr ibn Muhammad, from 'Abdullah (ibn al-Mubarak), from 'Asim (al-Ahwal), from Hafsah bint Sirin, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Chapter on the Seven Kinds of Martyrdom Besides Being Killed, Hadith No. 2830.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2830

### LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A Muslim who ***dies of plague***, patient and hoping for reward, is promised ***the reward of a martyr***. This Hadith has brought comfort to Muslims in every age of epidemic — including our own.

### REFLECTION

Qatadah left this world with ***knowledge already spread*** and ***students to carry it on***. Death did not cut off his reward, for ***beneficial knowledge*** continues to flow to him — as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in the Hadith explained on the "Support & Donations" page of this eBook.

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## ETIQUETTE DURING A PLAGUE

Qatadah died while a plague was raging (chapter 19). Islam not only promises reward to those who die of plague, but also teaches ***etiquette and preventive measures***:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5728**

حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصُ بْنُ عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي حَبِيبُ بْنُ أَبِي ثَابِتٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنَ سَعْدٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ، يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِالطَّاعُونِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلاَ تَدْخُلُوهَا، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلاَ تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا». فَقُلْتُ أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَهُ يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا وَلاَ يُنْكِرُهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ.

**TRANSLATION:**

Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما narrated to Sa'd (ibn Abi Waqqas) رضى الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: "**If you hear of a plague in a land, do not enter it; and if it breaks out in a land while you are in it, do not leave it.**" (Ibrahim ibn Sa'd said:) I asked, "Did you yourself hear him narrate it to Sa'd, and Sa'd did not deny it?" He replied, "Yes."

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hafs ibn 'Umar, from Shu'bah, from Habib ibn Abi Thabit, from Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, from Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما, who narrated it to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Medicine (Kitab at-Tibb), chapter on what has been mentioned about the plague, Hadith No. 5728.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5728

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## PLAGUE: PUNISHMENT OR MERCY?

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3474**

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا دَاوُدُ بْنُ أَبِي الْفُرَاتِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ بُرَيْدَةَ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ يَعْمَرَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَتْ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنِ الطَّاعُونِ، فَأَخْبَرَنِي «أَنَّهُ عَذَابٌ يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَقَعُ الطَّاعُونُ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لاَ يُصِيبُهُ إِلاَّ مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلاَّ كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ شَهِيدٍ».

**TRANSLATION:**

‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the plague, and he told me: **“It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whomever He wills, and Allah has made it a mercy for the believers. There is no one in whose land the plague occurs and who stays in his land, patient and hoping for reward, knowing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has decreed for him, except that he will have the reward of a martyr.”**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musa ibn Isma‘il, from Dawud ibn Abi al-Furat, from ‘Abdullah ibn Buraydah, from Yahya ibn Ya‘mar, from ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Hadith No. 3474.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3474

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## LESSONS

These two Hadith contain ***the principle of quarantine*** — neither entering nor leaving a plague area — and ***the calm of faith***: for the patient believer, plague becomes ***a mercy*** and ***the reward of martyrdom***.

| TEACHING OF THE HADITH | PRACTICE TODAY |
|---|---|
| Do not enter a plague area | Respecting travel restrictions. |
| Do not leave a plague area | Quarantine to protect others. |
| Patience and hoping for reward | Calm, prayer and no panic. |

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## ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Several stories about Qatadah circulate in lectures and books. The following table distinguishes what is established from what needs checking.

### THE STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

| POPULAR STORY | STATUS |
|---|---|
| Qatadah was a student of Anas ibn Malik and narrated his Hadith. | Established (Sahih al-Bukhari 13, 81, 3810, 5045). |
| His memory was praised by Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, Ibn Sirin and Imam Ahmad. | Established in the books of rijal. |
| He was born blind. | Mentioned in the books of biography (Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'). |
| He held the Qadari view. | Accused (al-'Ijli), but there is no firm report that he held it or called to it (Abu Dawud). |
| His exchange with Abu Hanifah about whether Sulayman's ant was male or female. | Well known in some books, but its chain cannot be confirmed. Not included. |

### REFLECTION — KNOWLEDGE PUT TO THE TEST

The story of Qatadah teaches us that even great scholars are assessed fairly: ***their merits acknowledged, their weaknesses recorded***. That is the trust of knowledge.

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# LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

## LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

**First: The Qur'an is preserved within the breasts.** Memorisation is a legacy from the time of the Prophet ﷺ (29:49; Sahih al-Bukhari 3810).

**Second: Ask until it is clear.** Qatadah asked, "Who is Abu Zayd?" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3810).

**Third: Learn how to recite, not only the meaning.** Qatadah asked about the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ (Sahih al-Bukhari 5045).

**Fourth: A disability is no barrier to knowledge.** The sight that benefits is the sight of the heart (22:46).

**Fifth: Seek knowledge before it is taken away** (Sahih al-Bukhari 81).

**Sixth: Knowledge gives birth to love** (Sahih al-Bukhari 13).

**Seventh: Travel for knowledge.** The blind Qatadah travelled from Basrah to Madinah.

**Eighth: Love the Messenger ﷺ above all else** (Sahih al-Bukhari 15).

**Ninth: Be patient when tested.** Plague is martyrdom for every Muslim (Sahih al-Bukhari 2830).

**Tenth: Patience over loss is rewarded with Paradise** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5653).

**Eleventh: Ask for beneficial knowledge** (20:114; Sahih Muslim 2722).

**Twelfth: Believe in divine decree** (54:49; Sahih Muslim 8).

**Thirteenth: Observe the etiquette of plague** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5728).

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## CONCLUSION

Qatadah ibn Di'amah رحمه الله died in 117 AH, leaving behind tafsir and Hadith quoted by almost every book of tafsir after him. With this third book, we complete three masters of tafsir from the generation of the Tabi'un. In sha' Allah, **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** will continue with the next figure in chronological order: ***Imam Abu Hanifah***. And Allah knows best.

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# GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## GLOSSARY

| TERM | MEANING |
|---|---|
| Tabi'un | The generation who met and learned from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. |
| Hafiz | One with an exceptional memory — in Hadith, one who memorises many Hadith with their chains. |
| Tadlis | A narrator reporting with wording that misleadingly suggests he heard it directly. |
| Qadariyyah | A sect denying Allah's decree; rejected by Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. |
| Thiqah, thabt | A trustworthy narrator with a firm memory. |
| Ta'un (plague) | An infectious epidemic causing many deaths. |
| Tafsir bil-ma'thur | Tafsir based on reports: the Qur'an, Hadith, and the words of the Companions and Tabi'un. |
| Hadith qudsi | A Hadith in which the Messenger ﷺ attributes words to Allah, other than the Qur'an. |

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**1.** Qatadah could not see, yet he became one of the scholars with the strongest memory. What "shortcomings" do we use as excuses?

**2.** Why was Qatadah willing to travel far to Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib when Basrah was full of scholars?

**3.** How does Qatadah's knowledge still reach us over 1,300 years later? What knowledge will we pass on?

**4.** What does loving the Messenger ﷺ more than family and self mean in daily life?

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**SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261**

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/2:261

**SURAH SABA' 34:39**

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/34:39

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

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**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

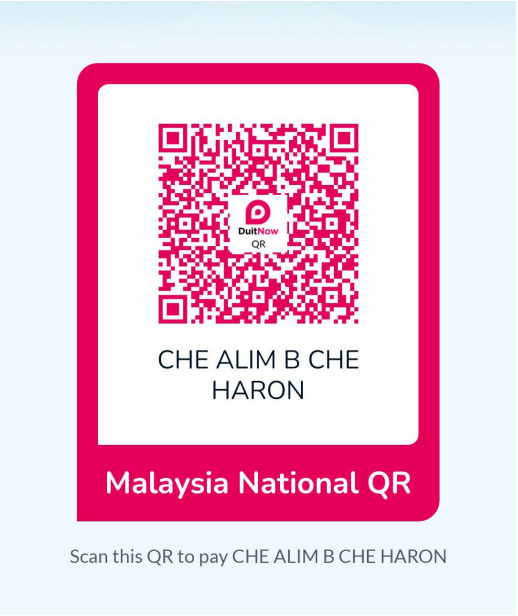
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