بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

How to Respect Newspapers Which Contain Verses of the Qurʾān?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: Verses of the Qurʾān, aḥādīth, and religious content are usually printed in newspapers. People touch and read them without wudū, and then leave them lying around here and there. After several newspapers have been accumulated, they sell them as scrap. Please provide guidance on the precautions that should be taken regarding these matters.

Answer

If a Qurʾānic verse or its translation is written on a newspaper page, it is not permissible to touch the portion of the newspaper page containing the verse or its translation without wudū, nor the corresponding portion on the opposite side of that page. However, it is permissible to touch the remaining surrounding area of the page and the rest of the newspaper without wudū. The reason for this is that the newspaper page containing the verse also has other content; it does not contain only the verse or the translation. Rather, the verse and its translation are only on a small portion of the page. Therefore, it is permissible to touch the remaining part of the page and the rest of the newspaper without wudū, as this does not constitute touching the Qurʾānic verse or its translation. This ruling is similar to that of touching the surrounding portion, other than the verses and their translations, of books containing religious rulings without wudū.

Furthermore, prior to selling the newspapers as scrap, one must ensure that any verses, aḥādith, their translations, religious content, and other sacred writings, words, and the names of Allah Almighty, the prophets, angels علیہم السلام, the Companions, and the pious saints رحمۃ اللہ تعالی علیہم are carefully separated. Then the rest of the newspaper can be sold as scrap. As for those separated portions, they should be collected in a clean bag and carefully kept in a respectful place, or they can be buried or immersed in a deep sea, river, or large canal after tying a heavy stone to the bag.

Method of Immersing in Water and Burying Them:

The method of immersing them in water is to place a heavy stone inside the bag (containing these sacred writings) and then put it into a deep river or the middle of the sea so that it sinks to the bottom of the water and cannot come back out to a place where there is a risk of it being disrespected. They should not be put into shallow waters because doing so generally causes them to be carried out to shore, and then they are severely disrespected. Therefore, before placing the bag in the water, make a few tears so that water fills the bag and it immediately sinks to the

bottom. The best method is to wrap them in a pure piece of cloth and bury them in the ground. The method of doing this is to dig a laḥd (side niche) for it. That is, dig a hole and then hollow out the wall in the direction of the qiblah large enough for the Qurʾāns and the sacred papers to fit in the hole; this way, dirt will not fall onto them. Similarly, a box-like grave can be dug by digging a pit, placing the papers inside, then covering it with planks to form a roof, and placing soil over this roof, just as a grave is prepared for a deceased person. This is so that soil does not fall upon them and no one steps on them.

It is also necessary according to sharīʿah to take the precaution of not burying the Qurʾān and other sacred papers in a waqf cemetery, because cemeteries are endowed for the burial of deceased Muslims. Therefore, it is not permissible to bury sacred papers in them or to dig a well for this purpose, because this constitutes changing the use of the waqf, which is impermissible.

Touching books containing religious content other than the Qurʾān without wudū is permissible. Thus, it is stated in Tanwīr al-Absār Wa al-Durr al-Mukhtār:

(الکتب الشرعیة) فانه رخص مسها بالید

Translation: Imām Aʿzam permitted touching religious books without wudū.

It is stated in Radd al-Muḥtār:

قال فی شرح المنیة: وجه قوله انه لا یسمی ماسا بالقرآن

Translation: It is stated in Sharḥ al-Munyah: The reason for Imām Aʿzam's saying is that such a person will not be considered to be touching the Qurʾān. (Radd al-Muḥtār ʿAlā al-Durr al-Mukhtār, Vol. 01, p. 352, Publ. Quetta)

However, it will likewise not be permitted to touch the portion containing the verses and their translations in such books without wudū. But it will be permitted to touch the remaining area of the page without wudū. Thus, Radd al-Muḥtār states:

ان کتب التفسیر لا یجوز مس موضع القرآن منها وله ان یمس غیره، وکذا کتب الفقه اذا کان فیها شیئ من القرآن

Translation: Within the books of tafsīr, the one who is not in the state of wudū is not permitted to touch the portion where the Qurʾān is written, but he is permitted to touch the remaining area. The same ruling is for the books of fiqh which contain Qurʾānic verses. (Radd al-Muḥtār ʿAlā al-Durr al-Mukhtār, Vol. 01, p. 353, Publ. Quetta)

In newspapers and books, it is not permissible to touch the portion where the verse is written or the corresponding portion on the opposite side of that page without wudū. Thus, The Imām of Ahl as-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمة اللہ تعالی علیه was asked:

اگر کسی اردو کتاب یا اخبار میں چند آیاتِ قرآن بھی شامل ہوں، تو اس کو بلا وضو چھونا یا پڑھنا، جائز ہے یا نہیں؟

Translation: If an Urdu book or a newspaper contains some Qurʾānic verses, it is permissible to read and touch it without wudū?

He replied:

کتاب یا اخبار جس جگہ آیت لکھی ہے، خاص اُس جگہ کو بلا وضو ہاتھ لگانا، جائز نہیں، اُسی طرف ہاتھ لگایا جائے جس طرف آیت لکھی ہے، خواہ اس کی پشت پر، دونوں ناجائز ہیں۔ باقی ورق کے چھونے میں حرج نہیں، پڑھنا بے وضو جائز ہے۔

Translation: It is not permissible to touch the exact portion of the book or newspaper on which the verse is written without wudū. Whether one touching the side on which the verse is written or the corresponding portion on the opposite side,

both are impermissible. There is no harm in touching the remaining area of the page, and there is no issue in reading it without wudū. (Fatāwā Razawiyah, Vol. 04, p. 366, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

When asked regarding selling newspapers as scrap, the Imām of Ahl as-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمۃ اللہ تعالی علیہ replied:

جبکہ ان میں آیت یا حدیث یا اسمائے معظمہ یا مسائلِ فقہ ہوں، تو جائز نہیں، ورنہ حرج نہیں۔ ان اوراق کو دیکھ کر اشیائے مذکورہ ان میں سے علیحدہ کرلیں، پھر بیچ سکتے ہیں۔

Translation: If they contain verses, aḥādīth, sacred names, or rulings of fiqh, then it is not permitted to sell them. Otherwise, there is no issue. Carefully look through the pages and separate the aforementioned things from them, then the remainder can be sold. (Fatāwā Razawiyah, Vol. 23, p. 400, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

Regarding immersing things containing sacred writings in water and burying them, it is stated in al-Durr al-Mukhtār:

الکتب التی لا ینتفع بھا یمحی عنھا اسم اللہ و ملائکتہ و رسلہ و یحرق الباقی، و لا باس بان تلقی فی ماءٍ جارٍ کما ھی، او تدفن، و ھو احسن

Translation: The names of Allāh, the angels, and the prophets should be erased from the books which can no longer be used, and the rest of it can be burned. There is no issue in immersing the books in the water in their current state or burying them. Burying it is better. (Al-Durr al-Mukhtār Maʿa Radd al-Muḥtār, Vol. 09, p. 696, Publ. Quetta)

Sadr al-Sharīʿah, Muftī Muḥammad Amjad ʿAlī Aʿzamī رحمۃ اللہ تعالی علیہ states:

قرآن مجید پرانا بوسیدہ ہوگیا، اِس قابل نہ رہا کہ اُس میں تلاوت کی جائے اور یہ اندیشہ ہے کہ اس کے اوراق منتشر ہو کر ضائع ہوں گے، تو کسی پاک کپڑے میں لپیٹ کر احتیاط کی جگہ دفن کر دیا جائے اور دفن کرنے میں اس کے لیے لحد بنائی جائے، تاکہ اس پر مٹی نہ پڑے یا اس پر تختہ لگا کر چھت بنا کر مٹی ڈالیں کہ اس پر مٹی نہ پڑے۔ مصحف شریف بوسیدہ ہوجائے، تو اس کو جلایا نہ جائے۔

Translation: If the Qurʾān has become warn out and is no longer possible be read from, and there is a fear that the pages will scatter and get wasted, then it is permissible to wrap it in a pure cloth and bury them in a safe place. A laḥd should be dug for burying it so that dirt does not fall onto them. Alternatively, a slab can be placed over it, and then soil can be put on top of the slab so that the dirt does not fall on it. If a muṣḥaf is worn out, it should not be burned. (Bahār-e-Sharīʿat, Vol. 03, pt. 16, p. 495, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madīnah, Karachi)

It is stated in Waqār-Ul-Fatāwā:

قرآن پاک کے بوسیدہ اور پرانے اوراق اور وہ اخبارات جن پر قرآنی آیات و احادیث وغیرہ لکھی ہوئی ہوتی ہیں، ان کو جمع کرنا اور اس کے بعد ایک مقام پر دفن کر دینا۔۔۔ سب سے زیادہ مناسب ہے۔ ملخصا

Translation: Collecting old and worn-out pages of the Qurʾān and the newspapers containing verses, aḥādīth, and other sacred text and then burying them in one place is most appropriate. Summarized. (Waqār-Ul-Fatāwā, Vol. 02, p. 100, Publ. Bazm-E-Waqāruddīn, Karachī)

It is not permissible to change the use of a waqf. Thus, it is stated in Al-Fatāwā al-ʿĀlamgīrī:

لا یجوز تغییر الوقف عن ھیاتہ

Translation: It is not permissible to change a waqf from its state. (Al-Fatāwā al-ʿĀlamgīrī, Vol. 02, p. 490, Publ. Quetta)

The Imām of Ahl as-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمۃ اللہ تعالی علیہ states:

ایک وقف جس غرض (مقصد) کے لئے وقف کیا گیا ہے، اُسی پر رکھا جائے۔

Translation: A waqf should be kept for the purpose for which it was endowed. (Fatāwā Razawiyah, Vol. 16, p. 231, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

وَاللہُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُہ اَعْلَم صَلَّی اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّی اللہُ عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم knows best.)

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