

# Why Viewing Quran When Reciting Is Better Than Reciting By Heart? Can You View It In An Impure State?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

## Question

What do the scholars of Islam say about the following two matters:

1. Can someone who is in the state of major ritual impurity (which necessitates ghusl) look at the Quran intending to earn reward?
2. It is said that looking at the Quran whilst reciting it is better than reciting it by heart. Why is this? Will this be the case in every situation?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

A man or woman, who is in the state of major ritual impurity, can look at the Quran without touching it. If they intend to earn reward, they shall be rewarded. Looking at the Quran is described as the right of the eyes in Hadith. Let it be clear, one who needs ghusl, due to major ritual impurity, is not permitted to recite the Quran even from memory.

Looking at the holy Quran is an act of worship. The Companion Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

اعطوا أعينكم حظها من العبادة قيل: يا رسول الله وما حظها من العبادة قال: النظر في المصحف والتفكير فيه والاعتبار عند عجايبه

“Grant your eyes their share of worship.” It was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what is their share of worship?” He declared, “Looking at the Quran, reflecting upon it, and contemplating its wonders.”<sup>1</sup>

Regarding he who is in the state of major ritual impurity, it is stated in *al-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

ولا يكره النظر اليه اى القران لجنب وحائض ونفساء

Regarding this, it is mentioned in *Fatāwā Shāmī*:

لانه لم يوجد في النظر الا المحاذاة<sup>2</sup>

Mufti Amjad ‘Alī al-A‘zamī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ says:

There is no harm if all of them (one without wuḍū', one in need of ghusl, women during menses/lochia) look at the Quran, even if they view the words and understand them, but read in their mind.<sup>3</sup>

2. Reading the Quran whilst looking upon it has been declared as better than reading from memory in various narrations. This is because the former involves looking at the Quran and touching it too, both being acts of worship. Commentators of hadith Have declared this

<sup>1</sup> *Shuʿab al-Īmān li al-Bayhaqī*, vol. 2, p. 348, published by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Durr al-Mukhtār wa Radd al-Muhtār*, vol. 1, p. 349, published in Quetta.

<sup>3</sup> *Bahār-i-Sharīʿat*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 327, published by Maktabat al-Madinah

excellence based on a general state in which there is no increase in inner humility, whether one is reading directly or from memory.

Otherwise, if reading from memory increases one's humility then this will be better, for in worship the real standard is that of inner humility.

It is reported in *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* with reference to *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*, that the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

قراءة الرجل القرآن في غير المصحف ألف درجة وقراءته في المصحف تضعف على ذلك إلى ألفي درجة

Reciting the Quran without the muṣḥaf is a thousand grades, and reading the Quran whilst looking at the muṣḥaf is increased upon that to two thousand degrees.<sup>4</sup>

Imam Daylamī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ reports that the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

فضل قراءة القرآن نظراً على من يقرأه ظاهراً كفضل الفريضة على النافلة

The excellence of reciting the Quran whilst looking at it over the one who recites it from memory, is like the virtue of the obligatory action upon the voluntary.<sup>5</sup>

‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf al-Munāwī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ mentions below this narration:

فالقراءة نظراً في المصحف أفضل لأنها تجب القراءة والنظر وهو عبادة أخرى نعم إن زاد خشوعه بها حفظاً فينبغي كما في البجوع تفضيله لأن المدار على الخشوع

ما يمكن اذ هو روح العبادة وراسها<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the narration found in *Mishkāt*, Allāmah ‘Alī al-Qārī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ writes:

من هذا اخذ جمع بان القراءة نظراً في المصحف أفضل مطلقاً وقال آخرون: بل غيباً أفضل مطلقاً ولعله عملاً بفعله عليه الصلاة والسلام والحق التوسط فان زاد

خشوعه وتدبره واخلاصه في احدهما فهو الافضل والا فالنظر لانه يحبل على التدبر والتأمل في البقرة أكثر من القراءة بالغيب<sup>7</sup>

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Diḥlawī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ writes:

قال النووي: ليس هذا على اطلاقه بل ان كان القارئ من حفظه يحصل له من التدبر والتفكير وجمع القلب والبصر أكثر مما يحصل له من المصحف فالقراءة من

الحفظ أفضل وان استويا فمن المصحف أفضل وهذا مراد السلف<sup>8</sup>

It is stated in *Fatāwā Qādī Khān*:

وقراءة القرآن في المصحف أولى من القراءة عن ظهر القلب لما روى عبادة بن الصامت رضى الله تعالى عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم انه قال: افضل عبادة

امتى قراءة القرآن نظراً ولان فيه جمعاً بين العبادتين وهو النظر في المصحف وقراءة القرآن<sup>9</sup>

Muftī Amjad ‘Alī al-A‘ẓamī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ says:

Reading the Quran by looking at it is better than reciting from memory, as it involves looking, reading, and touching it. These are all acts of worship.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 1, p. 666, *al-Maktabat al-Islāmī*

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Gharā’ib al-Multaqaṭah min Musnad al-Firdaws li Ibn Ḥajar*, vol. 5, p. 997

<sup>6</sup> *Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr*, vol. 4, p. 575

<sup>7</sup> *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 4, p. 372

<sup>8</sup> *Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 4, p. 572

<sup>9</sup> *Fatāwā Qādī Khan*, vol. 1, p. 146, printed in *Karachi*

<sup>10</sup> *Bahār-i-Sharī‘at*, vol. 1, part. 3, p. 550, printed by *Maktabat-al-Madinah*

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

**Answered By:** *Mufti Abu Muhammad Ali Asghar Attari*

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