

Etiquette and rules of Reciting and handling Al-Qur'an-il-Kareem

Allah ﷻ has encouraged us to recite Al-Qur'an-al-Kareem in many Ayat. Allah ﷻ says:

((إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ أَنْ آعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (٩١) وَأَنْ أَتْلُو الْقُرْآنَ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ (٩٢))) النمل

This may be interpreted as: "I have been commanded only to worship the Lord of this town (Makkah), Him Who has sanctified it and to Whom everything belongs, and I am commanded to be of those that submit to Allah (91), **and to recite the Qur'an**, and if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their own souls, and if any stray, say: "I am only one of the warners." [Al-Qur'an, An-Naml, 27:91-92]

He ﷻ also says: ((إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ (٢٩) لِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ (٣٠))) فاطر

This may be interpreted as: "Verily, those who recite Allah's Book, perform prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, look forward to a trade that will never perish (29) That He may pay them their wages in full, and give them (even) more, out of His Grace. Verily! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Appreciative." [Al-Qur'an, Fاطر, 35:29-30]

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says: "No people gather in one of Allah's Houses (mosques), reciting Allah's Book and studying it among themselves except that tranquility will descend upon them, mercy will envelope them, the angels will surround them, and Allah will make mention of them amongst those who are in the high ranks of heaven."

Sahih Muslim

He also says: "...Will not any of you go to the masjid and learn or read two verses from Almighty Allah's Book? (For) that is better for him/her than two she-camels, and three (verses) are better for him/her than three (she-camels), and four (verses) are better for him/her than four (she-camels). And the number (of verses read in total) is better than the same number of camels." Sahih Muslim

Abu Thar ﷺ asked the Prophet ﷺ, 'O Allah's Messenger, advise me.' He said, 'Have taqwa (piety; doing good deeds and avoiding sins) of Allah, for surely it is the crux (head) of the whole religion.' 'Give me more,' I said. He said, 'Recite the Qur'an for it will be light for you on earth and a treasure for you in Heaven.' Sahih Ibn Hibban

The Qur'an is Allah's Book. It is the greatest Book. Therefore we must treat it with the utmost respect, love and care.

Some rules and etiquette that one should follow during recitation:

1- Sincerity:

It is the most important thing you should have when you want to do any kind of worship. Sincerity is a basic condition for any deed to be accepted by Allah ﷻ. You have to recite Al-Qur'an-al-Kareem only to seek Allah's pleasure and rewards, not for showing off or for worldly gains.

Allah ﷻ says: ((وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ (٥))) البينة

This may be interpreted as: "And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion and keeping religion (worship) pure for Him; to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the straight and right religion." [Al-Qur'an, Al-Bayyinah, 98:5]

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says: "Surely, all actions are but judged by intentions and, verily, every person shall have but that which s/he has intended..." Sahih Al-Bukhari

So you should recite the Qur'an to follow Allah's command and to seek His pleasure and rewards.

2- Purity of the heart:

Al-Qur'an is a light and guidance from Allah ﷻ who says:

((يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا (١٧٤))) النساء

This may be interpreted as: "O people, there has come to you a conclusive proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light." [Al-Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:174]

We should purify and clean our hearts before reciting the Qur'an in order to be ready for receiving its light, understanding its meanings, and benefiting from it in the best way. Cleaning the heart is done through *istighfar* (asking Allah to forgive you) and repentance to Allah ﷻ.

This is similar to this example: if you have a piece of land that you cultivated, prepared for growing plants in and then sowed the seeds in, it will give you great results at the time of harvest. On the other hand, if you throw the seeds without cultivation or preparation, then birds will pick them and eat them up. Thus, you will have nothing to reap.

Allah ﷻ mentions the purity of the heart before mentioning the purity of the body when He says:

((...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ (222)) البقرة

This may be interpreted as: " Truly, Allah loves those who constantly turn to Him in repentance and loves those who keep themselves clean" [Al-Qur'an, Al-Baqara, 2:222]

You are prevented from touching the Mushaf with your hand without being *mutawaddi'* (ritually pure and clean), and also your heart will be prevented from getting the Qur'an's great and sublime meanings unless it is purified from sins and enlightened with the light of awe and respect for the Qur'an. Imam Al-Ghazali in *Al-Ihya'*

3- Cleanliness of body, place and clothes:

- When you want to touch Al-Qur'an-al-Kareem you have to be *mutawaddi'* (having wudu'; ritual ablution).

It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Don't touch the Qur'an unless you are ritually purified (taher;mutawaddi')." At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer*

According to some scholars, when necessary, you can hold the Mushaf (copy of the Qur'an) if you are not *mutawaddi'* but without touching its words. For example, you are travelling for a long distance and you need to review, but you cannot make wudu'. Another exception is given for young kids who are memorizing the Qur'an when it is difficult for them to do wudu' every now and then.

-However, it is permissible to recite the Qur'an from memory (without Wudu'), but it is better to be *mutawaddi'*.

-It is not permissible to physically touch or even recite the Qur'an from your memory if you are in need of ghusl (ritual bathing).

-According to some scholars, girls can read the Qur'an in order not to forget it or in order to teach it to others even if they are in need of ghusl (ritual bathing).

-It is recommended to brush your teeth with a tooth stick (*siwak*) or tooth brush, remove food particles from between them, and to freshen your mouth before reciting, since it is the way through which the Qur'an passes.

-You should set in a pure and clean place (the best is the masjid), and you should be wearing pure clothes when reciting.

4- Facing the direction of prayer (Al-Qiblah):

It is recommended to face the Qiblah during recitation because it is the best setting. You also should sit up straight and not lean back or aside while you are reciting from the Mushaf.

5- Holding and handling the Mushaf Properly:

Always remember that it is Allah's Book. It is the greatest Book on earth and in heaven. Handle it with utmost love, respect and care. Allah ﷻ says:

((...وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ (٣٢) ((الحج

This may be interpreted as: "...And whoever honors and respects the Symbols of Allah, then it is truly the outcome of the piety of the heart." [Al-Qur'an, Al-Hajj, 22:32]

So, you must not:

Leave it on the ground, put it on your stretched legs, lean upon it, put it or keep it behind your back or close to your feet, flip its papers as you do with normal books, stretch your legs towards it or put any book or thing on it.

It is disliked to turn the pages of the Qur'an by getting some saliva on your fingers.

You can hold it with your hands or put it on a stand.

If your Mushaf is in a bag or whatever do not set on it or put the bag in a way that someone might step on or over it.

You should respect everything related to the Qur'an such as your Qur'an assignment book, tafseer books and hadith books.

Always remember that you are holding Allah's words in your hands. So how will you handle it?

6- At-Ta'wwuth and Al-Basmalah:

You should begin your recitation of any aya from the Qur'an with ta'wwuth (saying: A'outhu billahi minash shaitanir rajeem; I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan). Allah ﷻ says: ((فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ (٩٨) ((النحل

This may be interpreted as: "So when you want to recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Shaitan (Satan), the outcast (the cursed one)." [Al-Qur'an, An-Nahl, 16:98]

So if you recite any aya whether from the beginning of the surah or the middle, you should say at-ta'wwuth.

While if you start the surah from its beginning, you should start it with At-Ta'wwuth and Al-Basmalah (saying: Bismillahir rahmanir Rahim; In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). Except for surat-ut-tawba. It should not be started with Al-Basmalah at all.

7- At-Tarteel: (Proper Recitation = Reciting with Tajweed):

The only correct way to recite the Qur'an is the way of the Prophet ﷺ which he received from Allah ﷻ and taught it to his companions. Muslim Scholars deduced the rules of tajweed from the way that authorized reciters (huffaz who have an ijaza) recited the Qur'an with.

You, as a Muslim should do your best to recite the Qur'an in the same way Allah ﷻ revealed it, i.e. with tajweed. Allah ﷻ says: ((...وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا (٤))) المزمّل

This may be interpreted as: "...and recite the Qur'an in a slow, (pleasant and distinct tone and) style." [Al-Qur'an, Al-Muzzammil, 73:4]

When our mother; the mother of believers As-Sayyida Ummu Salama (may Allah be please with her) was asked about the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ she said: "It was very clear, letter by letter." Sunan At-Tirmithi.

Abdullah Bin Abbas ؓ said: "reciting *Itha Zulzilat* and *Al-Qaria*' leisurely with tarteel and reflection is dearer to me than reciting *Al-Baqara* and *Al-Imaran* fast and with no tarteel." Imam Al-Ghazali in Al-Ihya'

So we should recite the Qur'an with tarteel that makes every letter clear and distinct from the other by applying all the rules of tajweed.

Our mother; the mother of believers As-Sayyida A'isha (may Allah be please with her) narrated that the Prophet's speech was so perfect and clear that you can count the letters while he is speaking. Sahih Al-Bukhari

This was his normal speech, and this is how his recitation was. He used to give every letter its right complete.

This is the definition that was given to tajweed by many scholars; giving each and every letter its right complete. So give each letter its due for each letter counts as ten hasanat (good deeds).

If you don't recite the Qur'an properly, you might change the whole meaning upside down.

For example: **وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ**

This means: remember when Abraham's Lord tested him...

If you read it **وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبَّهُ**

It becomes: remember when Abraham tested His Lord.... (This is completely wrong)

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ (١) لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

This means: O disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship. If you do not make the madd for the (لا) clear in this Aya it turns to:

O disbelievers! I will worship what you worship.

These are only some examples of mistakes you might commit if you don't read properly.

8- Recite in a beautiful and melodious tone:

Try to make your recitation beautiful and rhythmic with the condition that this must not affect the rules of Tajweed.

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, harmonious 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 recitation.

9- Consider and feel that Allah is addressing you in His Book:

Consider yourself as the addressee in every address (command, recommendation, etc.) in the Qur'an. Allah says: **((هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيُنذَرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (٥٢))** إبراهيم

This may be interpreted as: "This is a proclamation (Message) for all people that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that their God is none but the One True God, and that people of understanding may take heed." [Al-Qur'an, Ibrahim, 14:52]

This should make you do your best to understand it and implement it because the purpose behind revealing the Qur'an is to make it your guide in all your life affairs.

Uthman, Ibn Mas'oud and Ubai (may Allah be pleased with them) said that the Prophet ﷺ used to recite to them ten ayat and not to move to the next ten unless they learn their meanings. So he used to teach them the Qur'an and implementing it at the same time." Al-Bayan by Abu Amr Ad-Dani.

10- Pondering and reflecting on the meanings:

Allah ﷻ says: ((كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (٢٩))) ص

This may be interpreted as: "This is a blessed Book which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to ponder over its verses, and for those with understanding to take heed." [Al-Qur'an, Saad, 38:29]

He ﷺ also says: ((أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا (٢٤))) سورة سيدنا محمد ﷺ

This may be interpreted as: "Will they not, then, ponder over this Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" [Al-Qur'an, Muhammad, 47:24]

This reflection will lead to interaction and reaction with the heart and sometimes with the tongue to every Aya in an appropriate manner.

It is recommended to pause at verses that promise Allah's favor, mercy, Jannah, etc. to long for Allah ﷻ and ask of His bounty; and at verses that warn of His punishment, Hell Fire, wrath, etc. to ask Him to save you from that.

Huthayfa رضى الله عنه reported: I prayed with Allah's Messenger ﷺ one night and he started reciting al-baqara. I thought that he would bow at the end of one hundred verses, but he proceeded on; I then thought that he would perhaps recite the whole surah in a rak'ah, but he proceeded and I thought he would perhaps bow on completing this surah. He then started an-nisa', and recited it; he then started Ali-'imran and recited leisurely. And when he recited the verses which referred to the Glory of Allah, he glorified (by saying subhanallah-how perfect and glorified Allah is),

and when he recited the verses which tell (how the Lord) is to be begged, he would then beg (from Him), and when he recited the verses dealing with protection and seeking refuge with Allah, he sought (His) protection and refuge, then he bowed..." Sahih Muslim.

Examples:

-It is recommended to say: "Ameen" which means: O Allah please respond!
after Al-Fatihah (because it ends with dua').

-It is recommended to say: "Bala" which means: Yes indeed, after the last aya of surat-ut-teen. ((أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ (٨))) التين

This may be interpreted as: "Is not Allah the Wisest and the Most Just of all rulers and judges?" [Al-Qur'an, At-Teen, 95:8]

-It is recommended to say: "Allahumma ajirni minannar" which means: O Allah protect me from Hell-Fire after the last aya of surat-ul-qari'a and after other ayat speaking about Hell-Fire.

11- Khushu' (Having your heart humbled and connected with Allah during recitation):

It means focus, concentration and discarding all other thoughts from the heart.

Some signs of khushu' are humbleness, crying and shivering.

All these signs should be true and sincere not artificial and fake.

Abdullah Bin Mas'oud رضي الله عنه said: "The Prophet ﷺ said to me, 'Recite to me.' I said, 'O Allah's Messenger! You want me to recite to you though the Qur'an was revealed to you?' He said, 'Yes.' So I recited surat-an-Nisa', and when I reached this Aya:

{فَكَفَيْتَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ، وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا} he said, 'This is enough.' I turned to him finding his eyes shedding tears." Sahih Al-Bukhari

That Aya may be interpreted as: "How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against them all?" [Al-Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:41]

Khushu' can be reached only by reflection on the meanings and avoiding all kinds of distraction. Allah ﷻ says: ((يَا يَحْيَىٰ خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا (١٢)) مريم

This may be interpreted as: "O Yahya (John)! Hold fast the Scripture with all your strength." And We gave him Wisdom even as a youth. " [Al-Qur'an, Maryam, 19:12]

"Some scholars said that this indicates taking the Qur'an with serious resolve and hard work. Taking it with serious resolve means to be fully focused on it during recitation away from anything else. It was said to one of our righteous predecessors: 'do you talk to your self about anything during reciting the Qur'an?' he replied: 'Is there anything dearer to me to talk about?'" Al-Ihya' by Al-Ghazali.

12- Sujoud At-Tilawa:

It is prescribed for the reader and the listener in obedience to Allah ﷻ and in contradiction and disobedience to Satan.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says: "If a son of Adam reads a verse of prostration and prostrate, Satan withdraws crying and saying, 'woe to me, a child of Adam was ordered to prostrate and s/he prostrated, and for her/him is paradise, and I was ordered to do it but I did not so the Fire is for me.'" Sahih Muslim

There are 14 places in the Qur'an where we are asked to prostrate.

There is a sign in the Qur'an next to each aya which has sujoud-ut-tilawa.

13- Listening to the Qur'an whenever it is recited:

When the Qur'an is being recited by anyone whether in person or through audio means we have to listen to it:

Allah ﷻ says: ((وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (٢٠٤)) الأعراف

This may be interpreted as: "So, when the Qur'an is being recited, listen to it with attention, and be silent that you may receive mercy." [Al-Qur'an, Al-A'raf, 7:204]

It is very disrespectful to talk or play while the Qur'an is being recited.

Let us read how the Jinn listened to the Qur'an and see what their reaction was:

Allah ﷻ says:

((وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفْرًا مِنَ الْجِنَّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ (٢٩) قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٣٠) يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٣١)) الأحقاف

This may be interpreted as: " And (remember) when We sent towards you (O Muhammad) a group of the jinn, (quietly) listening to the Qur'an, when they stood in the presence thereof, they said: "**Listen in silence!**" And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners. (29) They said: "O our people! Verily! We have heard a Book (this Qur'an) sent down after Musa (Moses), confirming what came before it, it guides to the truth and to a Straight Path. (30) O our people! Respond (with obedience) to Allah's Caller, and believe in him. He (Allah) will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment.(31) " [Al-Qur'an, Al-Ahqaf, 46:29-31]

14- Pause your recitation at non suitable conditions:

You should pause your recitation at non suitable conditions such as yawning. Because when reciting, one is addressing one's Lord in intimate conversation, while yawning is from the Devil.

You should not interrupt one's recital from moment to moment with human words, unless necessary.

Avoid cutting off reading to talk to others, playing with carpet, etc.

Avoid eating or drinking while reading. If you need to eat, take a break.

15- Do not recite the Qur'an out aloud over others who are reciting:

This might cause to spoil it for him/her or make them resent what they hear, making it as if it were some kind of disliked competition.

You should recite with a low voice:

When you think by so doing you will be showing off.

When there are some people praying next to you.

When there are some others who are reciting next to you or sleeping next to you.

On the other hand, it is recommended to recite aloud on other conditions.

For example, to stay awake and be attentive, push drowsiness away, correct pronunciation, benefiting others who would like to listen, etc.

16- Do not say I forgot Aya such and such!

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " بئس ما لأحدهم أن يقول: نسيت آية كذا وكذا بن نسي واستذكروا القرآن فإنه أشد نقصاً من صدور الرجال من النعم بعقلها. صحيح مسلم

Allah's Messenger ﷺ says: "It is bad of one who says, 'I forgot aya such and such!' (He should instead of using this expression say): I have been made to forget it (by the devil). Recall and refresh the Qur'an in your mind because it is definitely more apt to escape from the mind than camels when they are released from their tying ropes." Sahih Muslim.

17- Keep the Mushaf in a safe place after you finish:

After you finish reciting the Qur'an keep the Mushaf in a safe place because people might step on or go over it unwillingly.

Keep it away from the reach of little children and those who do not understand the holiness of this Greatest Book.

May Allah make us of those who treat His Book with the utmost respect, love and care!

Amen.