

## **Reciting from a Copy of the Qur'an (Mus-haf) In Salah (Prayer)**

[http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/1096\\_01-02-2011/reciting-from-a-copy-of-the-qur%92an-%28mus.haf%29-in-salah-%28prayer%29.html](http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/1096_01-02-2011/reciting-from-a-copy-of-the-qur%92an-%28mus.haf%29-in-salah-%28prayer%29.html)

In the Hanafi School, there are two opinions regarding performing Salat while reciting from a copy of the Qur'an (mushaf).

Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him), the head of this School, is of the opinion that it is impermissible to perform Salat while looking in and reciting from a Mushaf, or while reciting from any other area such as Qur'anic verses inscribed inside the Mihrab. Doing so will invalidate one's prayer, whether one is an Imam, follower or praying alone, and whether it is an obligatory (fardh), Tarawih or a voluntary (nafl) prayer.

The second opinion is of the two students of the Imam – namely Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (may Allah have mercy on both). According to them, one's prayer is not invalidated by reciting from a copy of the Qur'an (mushaf), although this practice is considered to be disliked (makruh).

It is stated in the famous Hanafi Fiqh primer, Maraqi al-Falah:

**“(Amongst those things that invalidate prayer) is to recite, that which one has not committed to memory, from a Mushaf even if one does not hold the Mushaf, due to being inspired by an external element. However, if one has committed the text to memory and does not hold the Mushaf, then the prayer is not invalidated, due to the absence of [excessive] action and external inspiration.”**

(Maraqī al-Falah with the commentary of Tahtawi, P: 336)

Imam al-Kasani (may Allah have mercy on him) states:

**“If the one offering prayer recites from a Mushaf, then his prayer is invalidated according to Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him). According to Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, [however], his prayer is valid but it is disliked. Imam Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) states that it is not [even] disliked.”**

(Bada'i al-Sana'i 1/236)

Imam al-Haskafi (may Allah have mercy on him) states:

**“(Amongst those things that invalidate prayer) is to recite from a Mushaf meaning from anything upon which the text of the Qur'an is inscribed, under all circumstances (mutlaqan), because it amounts to taking [external] inspiration, unless if one has committed to memory that which one is reciting, and recites without holding the Mushaf. And it is said that one's prayer will not be invalidated unless one recites a complete verse... Imam Shafi'i considers it [reciting from a**

**Mushaf] to be permitted without dislike and Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad consider it to be permitted with dislike, due to imitation of the people of the book (ahl al-Kitab), meaning if one intends imitation...”**

The commentator of Haskafi’s al-Durr al-Mukhtar, Imam Ibn Abidin (may Allah have mercy on him) expands on the above text by stating that reciting verses of the Qur’an from a Mushaf or from elsewhere such as the Mihrab invalidates one’s prayer according to Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him), whether one recites a small amount or a large amount, and whether one is an Imam or praying alone.

He further states that there are basically two reasons given for this position of Abu Hanifa. The first reason is that holding the Mushaf in one’s hand, reading from a text and turning over the pages amounts to excessive extraneous action (amal al-kathir). The second reason is that reciting from a Mushaf results in taking inspiration (talaqqi) from it, and as such, it is as though one’s recitation of the Qur’an in Salat is inspired from another person.

Based on the second reasoning, he says, one’s prayer would be invalidated whether one holds the Mushaf in one’s hand or not, whilst looking at the first reasoning, there would be a difference in the ruling between holding the Mushaf in one’s hand and placing the Mushaf elsewhere. The second reasoning is more correct. As such, regardless of whether one was to hold the Mushaf and turn the pages or not, the prayer would be invalidated.

The only exception is the situation where one recites the verses of the Qur’an depending on one’s memory, but merely has the Mushaf open in front of him. This is so because the recitation is primarily based on one’s memory, and not taking inspiration from the Mushaf.

He adds that some Hanafi jurists declared the prayer to be invalidated only if one recites an amount equal to Surat al-Fatiha. However, others said, prayer will be invalidated if one recites one complete verse from a Mushaf. This, according to him, is the more correct position.

(See: Radd al-Muhtar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar 1/624)

Imam Badr al-Din al-Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) states in his commentary of Sahih al-Bukhari titled, Umdat al-Qari:

**“Reciting from a Mushaf invalidates one’s prayer according to Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him), since it amounts to excessive action. However, it is permitted according to Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on them), because recitation by means of looking into the Mushaf is a form of worship (ibadah). However, it is disliked, since in it there is imitation of the people of the book. This [position of permissibility] is also the position of Imam Shafi’i and Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on them), and according to Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him), one’s voluntary (nafli) prayer is not invalidated by reciting from a Mushaf.”**

(Umdat al-Qari sharh Sahih al-Bukhari 4/314)

In light of all of the above, in the Hanafi School, it remains impermissible to recite from a copy of the Qur'an (mushaf), whether in a Fardh prayer, Tarawih prayer or Nafl prayer. If one does so, whether one is an Imam or praying alone, one's prayer will be invalidated according to the position of Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him). The basic Hanafi Fiqh primers (mutun), such as Maraqi al-Falah, merely convey this position of Abu Hanifa and consider reciting from a Mushaf to be amongst those things that invalidate one's prayer.

## Evidences

The main evidence for this position of the Hanafis is that there are several Ahadith where the one unable to recite the Qur'an by means of memory is instructed by the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) to glorify Allah (tasbih) and praise Him (hamd) in prayer, rather than recite from a Mushaf.

Sayyiduna Rifa'a ibn Rafi' (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said to a man whilst teaching him how to perform Salat: **"...Then if you have portions of the Qur'an memorized, recite it, otherwise praise Allah, the Exalted, and utter the takbir, and utter the tahlil (la ila ha illallah)..."**

(Sunan Abi Dawud no: 857 and Sunan Tirmidhi no: 302)

Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that a man came to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) and said: **"I cannot memorize anything from the Qur'an; so teach me something which is sufficient for me."** He (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: **"Say: Glory be to Allah, and praise be to Allah, and there is no god but Allah, and Allah is Most Great, and there is no might and no strength to do anything but with Allah's help."** He replied: **"O Messenger of Allah! This is for Allah, but what is for me?"** He said: **"Say: O Allah! Have mercy on me, and sustain me, and keep me well, and guide me."** When he stood up, he made a sign with his hand [indicating that he had earned a lot]. The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: **"This man has filled up his hand with good."**

(Sunan Abi Dawud no: 828 and Sunan Nasa'i no: 795)

Imam Zafar Ahmad Uthmani (may Allah have mercy on him) states in his I'la al-Sunan that both these Hadiths indicate that whosoever is able to recite verses of the Qur'an by means of memory must recite as much as desired. However, if one is incapable of learning and memorizing a portion of the Qur'an which is necessary in prayer, then one will resort to the Dhikr of Allah. Had reciting from a Mushaf been permitted, the jurists (fuqaha) would have deemed it necessary and the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) would have directed it, because resorting to the Dhikr of Allah should have been an option only if one is even incapable of reciting from a Mushaf. This clearly indicates that reciting from a Mushaf is not a "legitimate" recitation with which one's prayer is deemed valid.

(See: I'la al-Sunan 5/59-60)

As pointed out earlier, it is permitted according to the Shafi'i and Hanbali Schools to recite from a Mushaf in Fardh and Nafl prayers, whether one has memorized the portion one is reciting or not. According to Imam Malik, it is permitted to do so in Nafl and Tarawih prayers.

(See: al-Majmu' of Imam Nawawi and Kasshaf al-Qina' of Bahuti 1/361)

Their proof is the report recorded by Imam al-Bukhari in his Sahih without a chain of transmission (mu'allagan) that **"Sayyida A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) would pray behind her slave Zakwan, who would recite from a Mushaf."**

(Sahih al-Bukhari 1/245 and Fath al-Bari 2/239)

The Hanafi jurists (fuqaha) present various explanations for this report:

a) Imam Zafar Ahmad Uthmani states that Zakwan had actually memorized the portion which he was reciting, whereas the condition for the impermissibility of reciting from a Mushaf [according to the Hanafis] is that the one reciting has not memorized that which he is reciting in prayer. As such, Zakwan's recitation was not dependant on external inspiration; but rather on his own memory. However, he would merely keep the Mushaf open to assist him for a word or two, which does not invalidate the prayer.

(See: I'la al-Sunan 5/61)

b) Imam Badr al-Din al-Ayni states in his commentary of the Hidayah that the meaning of this report is that Zakwan would recite and memorize portions of the Qur'an from the Mushaf prior to commencing prayer. Thereafter, he would stand up, commence his prayer and recite by means of memory that which he had memorized.

(al-Binaya fi sharh al-Hidayah 2/427)

c) Imam al-Kasani states in his Bada'i al-Sana'i that it is possible this report is describing two separate states, meaning Zakwan would lead in prayer, and would recite from the Mushaf in other than the state of prayer.

(Bada'i al-Sana'i 1/236)

Nevertheless, in conclusion, this is a matter differed upon by the jurists of the four Sunni Schools of Islamic law. The Hanafi School does not permit reciting from a copy of the Qur'an (mushaf) during Salat, with Imam Abu Hanifa of the opinion that one's Salat is invalidated should one do so. The other Imams have allowed this practice, but one should be cautious in terms of making too many movements whilst carrying the Mushaf, since it may invalidate the prayer according to them as well.

Finally, in the Hanafi School, praying behind an Imam who is reciting from a Mushaf invalidates the prayer of the follower. As such, one should avoid praying behind such an Imam.

However, this may be difficult to apply in mixed communities where there are many non-Hanafis or where such practices are common. In such a case, one may pray behind a Shafi'i or Hanbali Imam who is reciting from a copy of the Qur'an and thus follow the positions of Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on both). This is closer to unity and helps avoid Fitna.

And Allah knows best

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