

Point of Benefit

Is it permissible to pay someone to teach the Qur'aan?

Researched By

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Al-Hamdulillaahi Rabbil 'Aalameen was-Salaatu was-Salaamu 'Alaa Muhammadin wa 'Alaa Aalihi wa-Sahbihi Ajma'een.

Payment in exchange for teaching of the Qur'aan is not without the following matters:

- (a) It is a portion of *Razq*: subsistence-food, allowance, or the like provided by the state's treasury (*Baytul-maal*). In this case it is permissible to take.
- (b) It is an unconditional payment: the teacher does not set payment as a pre-condition. So, in this case, it is permissible to pay him for his teaching.
- (c) It is a form of *Ji'aalah*: Setting up a reward, allowance, or the like for carrying on a permissible task within a specified or unspecified period. For example, to state that whoever teaches my son the Qur'aan or half of it, I will give him such and such. This is permissible. Even the majority of the scholars who see that it is forbidden to receive wages on teaching the Qur'aan, said that it is permissible to take the *Ji'aalah* and the *Razq* from *Baytul-maal*.
- (d) It is a conditional payment: The teacher will only teach in exchange for specified wages. **There are two main views for the 'Ulamaa' as to the permissibility of this case: (1) Impermissible, and (2) Permissible.**

The First View: It is impermissible

This is the famous view of the *math-hab* of Imaam Ahmad (رحمه الله), and the saying of Imaam Abu Haneefah (رحمه الله), 'Ataa', Ad-Dahaak bin Qays, and Az-Zuhree (رحمهم الله), and some contemporary scholars. They based their view on certain evidences, amongst which:

- (i) The *hadeeth* of 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Shibil (رضي الله عنه) who said: "I heard Allaah's Messenger-ﷺ- saying: 'Recite the Qur'aan and exceed not the limits therein and turn not away from it, **and eat not with it and amass not wealth therewith...**'"¹

The textual aspect for the impermissibility lies in the Prophet's saying: "**And eat not with it** [don't make a means of sustenance] **and amass not wealth therewith.**" Taking wages for the teaching of the Qur'aan is considered of "**eating with the Qur'aan and amassing wealth therewith.**"²

¹Reported by Ahmad, Abu Ya'la, Al-Bayhaqee, and At-Tabaraanee in Al-Kabeer and Al-Awsat. Al-Haafith ibn Hajar said: "Its *isnaad* is strong." [Fath, vol. 9, p. 82], and Al-Albaanee stated that its *isnaad* is *saheeh* [As-Saheehah, vol. 1, p. 466].

²According to advocates of the **second view**, this text does not necessitate prohibiting what the student may pay willingly to the teacher. In addition they directed the prohibition as being specific to recitation only. They also pointed out that some scholars criticized the narration of this *hadeeth* considering it weak, and thus it cannot stand to oppose the authenticity of the *ahaadeeth* in the *saheehayn* and which they consider more explicit in allowing wages on teaching the Qur'aan. Those in support of the **first view** consider that the *ahaadeeth* pertaining to the prohibition strengthen one another.

- (ii) The *hadeeth* related by ‘Ubaadah ibn As-Saamit (رضي الله عنه) in which he told of his teaching of the Qur’aan to some people of *Ahlu-Suffah*³ and that one of them gave him a bow as a gift. ‘Ubaadah said: “It is only a bow and not money.” He then asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about it and he (ﷺ) said: “If you are pleased that you would be encircled by it a ring of fire around your neck [on the Day of Resurrection], then accept it!”⁴
- (iii) The *hadeeth* narrated by Ubay ibn Ka’b (رضي الله عنه) who said: “I taught someone the Qur’aan and he gave a bow as a gift. I mentioned this to the Prophet (ﷺ) who said: “If you take it then you would be taking a bow of fire.” So, I returned it.”⁵

The proof of prohibiting the wages is deduced from the threatening torment on the Day of Resurrection for the one who takes a gift for teaching the Qur’aan. If it is prohibited to accept a gift for teaching the Qur’aan, then by all means the prohibition on taking wages is even greater.⁶

- (iv) The *hadeeth* of Jaabir (رضي الله عنه) in which it is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) entered the Mosque while some people were reciting the Qur’aan. Thereupon, he (ﷺ) said: “Recite, all is well. In the future there will appear people who will straighten it (the Qur’aan) as an arrow is straightened.⁷ They will recite it quickly and not slowly (or it means that they will get the reward in this world and not in the here after).”⁸ In another narration: “Recite it before there appear people who will recite it and straighten it as an arrow is strained, They will get their reward for it in this world and will not get it in the hereafter.”⁹

³*Ahlu-Suffah*: Those were poor people from the *Muhaajireen* who were driven away from their homes and had no money, or families, nor a place to stay. The Prophet (ﷺ) and the companions (رضي الله عنهم) assisted them, and he (ﷺ) allowed them to stay in a courtyard by his Mosque.

⁴Reported by ibn Maajah in his *Sunan* (no. 2157). It is considered weak by many scholars like ibn Al-Madeenee and others.

⁵*Sunan* Ibn Maajah (no. 2158). Imaam Ath-Thahabee said: “Its *isnaad* is *mudtarib* (confounding). Al-Albaanee stated that its *isnaad* is weak as in *al-Irwa’*’ (no. 1493). He, however, considered the *hadeeth* of ‘Ubaadah ibn As-Saamit (see above), and another weak *hadeeth* narrated by Abud-dardaa’ (رضي الله عنه): “Whoever takes a bow in exchange for teaching the Qur’aan, Allaah will hang upon him a bow of fire on the Day of Resurrection,” as supporting evidence that elevates the *hadeeth* of Ubay to the degree of *saheeh*. Note: A *hadeeth* is considered *mudtarib* if it is reported through various conflicting narrations with no possibility of preponderating. This may affect the *isnaad* as well as the text, and it necessitates the weakness of the *hadeeth*.

⁶The **second view**: The *hadeeth* of ‘Ubaadah and that of Ubay are weak, and that the Prophet (ﷺ) knew that they taught the Qur’aan purely for Allaah’s sake, so he disliked for them to take anything in return. There is no harm, however, that the teacher who teaches the Qur’aan for Allaah’s sake, and does not ask for tuition, accepts from the student what the latter gives him willingly. In addition, the **second view** holds that the *ahaadeeth* of prohibition is more directed to cases of taking money in exchange for recitation of the Qur’aan, not for *ta’leem* (teaching the Qur’aan), and that *ta’leem* and recitation are two different matters.

⁷Apparently in reference to those who exceed the limits in the way of pronunciation of the words of the Qur’aan while in recitation. And Allaah knows best.

⁸Collected by Abu Daawood in his *Sunan* (Engl. Transl. vol. 1, no. 829). Al-Albaanee stated that its *isnaad* is *saheeh* (*as-Saheehah*, vol. 1, no. 259).

⁹*Ibid*, *hadeeth* no. 830.

- (v) The *hadeeth* of ‘Imraan bin Husain (رضي الله عنه) who said: “I heard Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saying: ‘Recite the Qur’aan and seek with it Allaah, the Blessed and the Most High’s, reward for there will be those after you who will recite the Qur’aan seeking people’s reward therewith.’”¹⁰

The aspect of prohibition lies in the clarification by the Prophet (ﷺ) that the recitation of the Qur’aan is such that one seeks with it the reward from Allaah, not a reward from the people in the form of payment of wages.¹¹

The Second View: It is Permissible

This view is held by Imaam Maalik, Imaam Ash-Shaafi’ee, Imaam Ahmad (in a second narration), some Hanafiyyah, Abu Qalaabah, Abu Thawr, Ibnul Munthir, and many contemporary scholars. The evidences upon which they relied included the following:

- (i) The *hadeeth* of ibn ‘Abbaas (رضي الله عنهما) in *saheeh al-Bukhaaree* in which he narrated that some of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by some people, and one of those people had been stung by a scorpion. One of the companions recited *soorat al-Faatiha* on the stung person for a sheep as his fees. The patient got cured and the man brought the sheep to his companions who disliked that and said, “You have taken wages for reciting Allaah’s Book.” They referred the matter to the Prophet (ﷺ) who said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "إِنَّ أَحَقَّ مَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ"

“You are perfectly entitled to take wages for Allaah’s Book.”¹²

Imaam al-Bukhaaree added: As-Sha’bee¹³ said, “The teacher should not fix the tuition, but if he is given something, he should accept it.” Al-Hakam¹⁴ said: “I have never heard anybody saying that it is disliked for the teacher to take tuition.”¹⁵ ...

- (ii) The *hadeeth* of Abee Sa’eed al-Khudree (رضي الله عنه) in *as-saheehayn* reporting the story of some of the Prophet’s companions who came across an Arabian tribe who did not entertain them. The chief of the tribe was bitten

¹⁰Reported by Imaam Ahmad and At-Tirmitheer who said: “This *hadeeth* is *hasan*, though its *isnaad* is not that strong.” Al-Albaanee said, “At-Tirmitheer declared it *hasan* though its *isnaad* is weak, because of the many supporting narrations, and that this terminology by At-Tirmitheer is clarified in his book *as-Sunan* (4:400).” [*as-Saheehah*, vol. 1, no. 257; the Shaykh (رحمه الله) mentioned some of the supporting narrations, two of which are sighted above (i. and iv)].

¹¹In response to this, the **second view** states that the evidence from this *hadeeth* is only regarding the prohibition of seeking reward, and this is not the same as taking payment in exchange for teaching.

¹²Reported by *al-Bukhaaree* in his *saheeh* (vol. 7, no. 633) and in vol. 3, p. 263. People of the **first view** hold that what is intended here is the reward in the Hereafter. According to the **second view**, the context of the *hadeeth* totally disapproves this opinion.

¹³As-Sha’bee, ‘Aamir bin Sharaaheel bin ‘abd Al-Hamadaani (d. 103Hj or later). He encountered five hundred of the *sahaabah*. [See *Siyar A’alaam an-Nubalaa’*, vol. 4, p.249].

¹⁴Al-Hakam bin ‘Utaybah al-Kindee, Abu ‘Abdillaah, the scholar of al-Koofah (d. 113Hj) [*ibid*, vol. 5, 208].

¹⁵Although these sayings pertain to knowledge in general, supporters of the **second view** see no difference because, according to them, the *salaf* did not differentiate between learning the Qur’aan or other disciplines of knowledge.

by a snake (or stung by a scorpion). The tribe asked the companions to treat the chief with *ruqya* (Qur’anic recitation as a treatment). The companions conditioned that they pay them in exchange for the *ruqya*. The tribe accepted and the chief was cured after the recitation of *soorat al-Faatiha* on him. The tribe presented a flock of sheep to the companions according to the agreement. The companions consulted with the Prophet (ﷺ) before taking the sheep. He (ﷺ) said: “**Take it and assign a share for me.**”¹⁶

These evidences were considered by the advocates of the first view as proof for the permissibility to take wages in exchange for *ruqya* not for teaching the Qur’aan. The response was that there is no difference between the two; if it is permissible to be paid in exchange for *ruqya*, which is part of the Qur’aan, then it is also permissible to take fees for teaching the Qur’aan, because *ruqya* is of the Qur’aan.

- (iii) The *hadeeth* of Sahl bin Sa’d (رضي الله عنه) in *as-Saheehayn* in which a woman presented herself to the Prophet (ﷺ) for marriage, and a destitute man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to marry her to him. He did not have anything to pay for her dowry. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: “How much of the Qur’aan do you know (by heart)?” The man said: “I know such *soorah* and such *soorah*,” and he named them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “**I have married her to you for what you know of the Qur’aan.**”¹⁷

This is considered a proof permitting the teaching of the Qur’aan in exchange for dowry, and if this is allowed in marriage, then by all means it is permissible in cases where teachers are to be hired out to teach the Qur’aan.¹⁸

Discussion: The evidences of the second view are stronger and more authentic in regard to their confirmation than those of the first view. The **closest** position is that the prohibition is directed more towards taking gifts, wages and the like for the **recitation** of the Qur’aan when, **in the beginning of Islaam**, there was a need to spread the Qur’aan in the hearts of the believers. Still, however, the evidences of the first view, **cautions that it is better not** to take wages for teaching the Qur’aan and thus limits the view of permissibility to befit the need and circumstances.

¹⁶Reported in *saheeh al-Bukhaaree* (vol. 7, no. 632) and in *saheeh Muslim* (vol. 3, no. 5458).

¹⁷Reported by Bukhaaree (*saheeh al-Bukhaaree*, vol. 7, No. 54), and Muslim (*saheeh Muslim*, vol. 2, No. 3316).

¹⁸According to supporters of the **first view** the Prophet (ﷺ) gave this woman in marriage to this destitute man without a dowry honouring him for what he knew of the Qur’aan, and that he (ﷺ) did not set up the teaching of the Qur’aan as *sadaaq* (dowry). However, according to the **second view**, this opinion is refuted by the narration in Muslim: “**I have given her to you in marriage for the part of the Qur’aan which you know.**” Also, the **first view** points out that this permission is peculiar to this case only, based upon a *hadeeth* reported in Sa’eed bin Mansour’s *Sunan*. In it the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a woman in marriage to a destitute man and said: “Give her the *soorah* (which he knew) as her *sadaaq* and it should not be a dowry for anyone after you.” In response, advocates of the **second view** see that (a) this constitutes no evidence that this story is the same as the one reported in *as-Saheehayn*, and (b) there is dispute regarding this additional statement in the sense that it is limited to this report, but not in *as-saheehayn* and *as-sunan*.

Given, the weak situation of Muslims nowadays, **and the attachment of many of them to this worldly life**, and knowing that in certain communities situations may arise such that there is a genuine need to teach the Qur'aan, then:

- (i) **If the teachers are available and there are those who teach without taking payment in return, then they should be preferred.**

- (ii) **If the only teachers available are those who ask for tuition for their teaching, or that the teachers who do not request tuitions are few in number, then hiring teachers from the former category to fulfill the needs of the community is permissible due to necessity. In this case it is better to chose from those teachers who are in need, not the rich ones. Shaykul-Islaam Ibn Taymmeeyah (رحمه الله تعالى) stated that it is permissible to hire needy teachers to teach the Qur'aan. In this way the teacher intends to teach it purely for Allaah's sake and takes the wages to spend on himself and his family, assisting him on his worship of Allaah.¹⁹ It is noted that even some of the scholars who held the first view approved giving wages for teachers on the condition that they are full-time teachers and that the scope of hiring should not exceed the needs of the communities.**

- (iii) **If the available teachers do not set up conditions for their teaching, and the students, their parents or the community at large, pays them for their services, then I hope, inshaa'Allaah, that this would be permissible. AND ALLAAH KNOWS BEST.**

The slave hoping for Allaah's Forgiveness,
Saleh As-Saleh.
24th Dhul Hijjah, 1427.

¹⁹See *Majmoo' Fataawaa ibn Taymeeyah* (vol. 30, pp. 205-207).