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RECITING QUR'AN: MUS`HAF OR IPHONE?



Reciting Qur'an: Mus`haf or iPhone?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Question: Many, especially in Ramadān, begin to recite the Qur`ān from the iPhone. Is there more reward for the recitation of the Qur`ān from a Mus`haf?

This is a matter that goes to one's personal preference. I don't think anyone can say with certainty that the recitation from the Mus`haf is more reward than the recitation from a digital device. The main reward for the recitation of the Qur`ān, the reward where one will attain a Hasanah for each letter and that's multiplied by tenfolds — that reward is based on recitation. Recitation is the movement of the lips. Not moving the lips is contemplation. The person may, Inshā`Allāh, get reward for contemplating the Qur`ān if he looks at it and thinks about its verses without moving the lips, but that's not recitation. For it to be recitation the lips must move.

Take this scenario for example: If someone gives an oath, for example, and he says, *"I'm not going to read this certain Sūrah."* Then he opens the Qur`ān and looks at that Sūrah, pondering up it with his eyes, but not moving his lips — that person did not violate his oath because he's looking, he's pondering, he's contemplating, but he's not reciting. If one is able to move his lips in Salāh to recite Sūrat Al-Fātihah but ponders upon it with his heart without moving his lips, that Salāh is invalid because he didn't recite Al-Fātihah.

The point for us here is that a person who moves his lips in the recitation of the Qur`ān is a reciter who will attain the ten Hasanāt per letter Inshā`Allāh, and of course, in blessed times like Ramadān, the deed is many more folds than that. Attaining that reward, it doesn't matter if one is reciting from the Mus`haf, from an iPad, a computer, an iPhone, any digital device, or even from memory. You choose the means that you're comfortable with, the means that boosts your Īmān and attains you a present heart, the means that increases your Kushū'.

Some said it's better for one to recite from the Mus`haf *even* if he memorized the Qur`ān. Why? They said because looking into the Mus`haf is an additional 'Ibādah that occupies the eyes, so he gets the reward for recitation and the reward for looking into the Mus`haf. They said one gets ten Hasanāt per letter, and on top of that the reward for looking with his eyes at the Mus`haf. There are several weak and fabricated Marfū' Ahādīth that state that looking into the Mus`haf is an 'Ibādah, it's a worship — none of them are authentic. What attains one more Kushū' and Tadabbur is the method one should use.

What I personally recommend, if one has the choice between reciting from a digital device or the Mus`haf, I definitely would choose the Mus`haf and that's a personal preference because there are many unique characteristics in reciting from a Mus`haf. It's sufficient to know that the Mus`haf is referred to as Kitāb Allāh. The phone or the computer are not referred to as Kitāb Allāh. One can go into the restroom with a phone, but he shouldn't do that with a Mus`haf. The Mus`haf must be placed in a respectable place and the iPhone can be placed anywhere. The Mus`haf is sacred to the point that one who purposely desecrates the Mus`haf by insulting it, placing Najāsah on it, throwing the Mus`haf into filth, or stepping on it — that person is a Kāfir by Ijmā', he's a Murtadd by Ijmā'. It's not permissible to place something on the Qur`ān that is considered unclean or dirty, even if it's pure, even if it's not Najāsah, like saliva, for example. Ulamā' spoke strongly against what many do of putting the saliva on their fingers when they flip the pages of the Qur`ān — they spoke strongly against that even though saliva is not Najas. This shows the high regard of the Mus`haf. And I've discussed the issue of whether a woman on her menstrual days or a person who's not on Wudū' can touch the Mus`haf, which was in the *Gems of Ramadān* and the lecture was "Women in Ramadān".¹ One can refer to the ruling on that matter in that talk. The fact that Ulamā' even dispute whether one can touch the Mus`haf while he's not on Wudū' shows the elevated status of the Mus`haf. The iPhone or the computer are not held at high honor. The Mus`haf is a symbol of Islām and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

¹ [Full series](#) and [lecture](#) are available on the site.

ذٰلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمِ شَعْبَةَ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوٰى الْقُلُوْبِ

That [is so]. And whoever honors the symbols [i.e., rites] of Allāh - indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.²

It's from the Taqwā of the heart to honor the symbols of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and the Qur'ān is one of them.

Another issue is that there might be distractions when one recites the Qur'ān with an iPhone or a digital device because the phone is used for tens of other purposes, like communicating, and that may cause distractions while someone is reciting the Qur'ān. He may get a call or may habitually open other apps that distract him from the recitation of the Qur'ān. So, my personal preference would be the recitation from the Mus`haf, but the bottom line is it goes back to one's personal preference in what attains him more Khushū' and Tadabbur, والله أعلم.

² [22:32]