

Receiving payment for teaching Qur'aan

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What is the ruling regarding receiving payment for teaching Qur'aan and Sharee'ah-related knowledge?

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee (May Allaah the Most High preserve him): All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Know that the majority of scholars consider that it is permissible to receive payment for teaching Qur'aan. They based their arguments on what is established in Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas (May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said : **“The payment that you receive the most deservedly is what you are given for Allaah’s Book”**¹ and on what was established in two “Saheehs” (of Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim) concerning the woman whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) married to a man on the condition that he teaches her what he knows of Qur'aan², and the Prophet’s (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying to `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab (May Allaah be pleased with him), **“What Allaah (Mighty and Majestic is He) grants you from this property, without asking or being greedy for it, you would take it, increase it or give it in charity. Otherwise, you should not covet it”**³.

However, the argument of the Hanafites and those who agreed with them is the hadeeth narrated on the authority of `Ubaada Ibn As-Saamit (May Allaah be pleased with him) who

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of “Medicine” (hadeeth 5737), Ad-Daaraqutnee in his Sunan (hadeeth 3082) and Al-Baihaqee in his Sunan, on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas (May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them).

² Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of “The Merits of the Qur'aan” (hadeeth 5029) and in chapter of “Marriage” (hadeeth 5132) and Muslim, chapter of “Marriage” (hadeeth 3454), on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa`d (May Allaah be pleased with him).

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of “Zakaat” (hadeeth 1473), Muslim, chapter of “Zakaat” (hadeeth 1045) and An-Nasaa'ee, chapter of “Zakaat” (hadeeth 2605), on the authority of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab (May Allaah be pleased with him). The wording stated in the hadeeth is said by An-Nasaa'ee. See As-Silsilah As-Saheehah (2209).

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said: "I taught some persons of the people of As-Suffah⁴ writing and the Qur'aan. A man of them presented to me a bow. I said, "It cannot be a reckoned property; may I shoot with it in Allaah's path?". But when the Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) was informed about it, he said, "If you want to have a necklace of fire on you, accept it"⁵ This hadeeth has other versions and arguments which prove its authenticity. The same meaning of this hadeeth is narrated on the authority of Ubay Ibn Ka`b , `Abd Ar-Rahmaan Ibn Shibl and `Imraan Ibn Hossayn. They interpreted the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas as meaning by "Payment" "Reward". Others hold the opinion that this hadeeth is abrogated by other hadeeths speaking about the warning against someone who receives payment in return for teaching the Qur'aan. Among these hadeeths, that of `Uthmaan Ibn Al-`Aas who said, "The last instruction of Allaah's Messenger (*peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) to me is that I should select a Muezzin who would not seek wages against the Adhaan (call to prayer) he called."⁶ The majority of the scholars refute the argument of the Hanafites and stipulate that the hadeeth of `Ubaada has in its chain of narration Al-Mugheera Ibn Ziyaad upon which there is divergence (among scholars of hadeeth). As for the other versions of the hadeeth, all are not valid and cannot be used as arguments. That is why they considered preponderant the hadeeth reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas (May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them) which is mentioned in Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, as there is no divergence as regards the narrators of this hadeeth; using thus the unanimous preponderance to prove that the narrator is trustworthy, this is one of the aspects of preponderance as regards the chain of narration, by considering each case of the narrators.

And even if we suppose that these hadeeths make us think that it is not permissible and that they can be used as arguments, we will answer by saying that these hadeeths do not absolutely contain a statement of prohibition, but they are only events which can be interpreted differently in order to be reconciled with the authentic hadeeths as it is indicated by Ibn Hajar⁷, and Ash-Shaukaanee⁸ in Nayl Al-Autaar⁹.

As for the interpretation of the term "Payment" by "Reward" in the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas (May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them), it is far from the reality, as the context of the hadeeth does not allow such interpretation. Moreover, saying that it is abrogated is discredited by the fact that abrogation cannot be proven by probability.

⁴ As-Suffah: a covered courtyard in Al-Masjid An-Nabawee (The Mosque of the Prophet) in which the poor used to take shelter.

⁵ Reported by Aboo Daawood, chapter of "Payment" (hadeeth 3416), An-Nasaa'ee, chapter of "Commerce" (hadeeth 2157) and Ahmad (hadeeth 23357), on the authority of `Ubaada Ibn As-Saamit (*May Allaah be pleased with him*). It is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in As-Silsilah As-Saheehah (1/1/515).

⁶ See some of these hadeeths and the elements that support them in Irwaa' Al-Ghaleel (5/316) and in As-Silsilah As-Saheehah (1/1/517).

⁷ Reported by At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Prayer" (hadeeth 209), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "The call to the prayer" (hadeeth 714), on the authority of `Uthmaan Ibn Abee Al-`Aas (*May Allaah be pleased with him*). This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in Irwaa' Al-Ghaleel (5/316).

⁸ See Fath ul-Baree (4/573).

⁹ See Nayl Al-Awtaar by Ash-Shawkaanee (7/35).

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Some scholars chose to reconcile these hadeeths, which seem at first sight contradictory. The most obvious way of reconciliation is to interpret the hadeeth reported by Ibn `Abbaas by saying that it states permissibility in general, including teaching the Qur'aan, the Sharee'ah sciences and receiving payment for the recitation of the Qur'aan, when one is asked to do it, and for making exorcism; but there is exception [from that general rule], which consists of teaching the Mukallaf (a person meeting the conditions to be held accountable for his actions); apart from the latter, all is included in the general rule. This is the opinion of Ash-Shawkaanee¹⁰.

In my opinion, it is permissible to get a payment as a source of sustenance for devoting oneself to perform the acts of worship duly. This is not in fact a payment for the acts of worship, but it is for the support given to offer them. The reason is that if the teachers of the Qur'aan devote themselves to seek for their sustenance and that of their family, this will cause the loss of the holy Qur'aan and Sharee'ah by losing those who bear them. This neither annuls the fact that it is an act of worship, nor stains the sincerity; otherwise, the fighter would not merit the spoils. In addition, teaching the Qur'aan and religious sciences helps spreading Islam and its tenets. This is why the Shaafi`ites stated, exceptionally, a fatwa authorising to get a payment for teaching the Qur'aan, the jurisprudence and the hadeeth, renouncing then the opinion of their School [which says that it is not permissible to get a payment for the acts of worship] by way of Istihsaan¹¹ and agreeing the overwhelming majority of the scholars.

All this is to be said only if the teacher is not paid by the concerned authorities or any other part. If he receives a payment from the ministry, it will not be valid for him to take additional money from the students' parents, because the determined work is paid, so by which right would he take additional money? Except if he does an additional work, without even being neither negligent as regards the original work nor causing irregularity in its process; in this case, he can bring help to himself and his family by providing them with sustenance and necessary things by taking the determined additional money for the determined additional work.

However, if he charges a second person to do his work in case of need, the latter should not take money for doing the work on which the first. Yet, he can give his substitute from his money, without the substitute asking him from it.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*). Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection. **Algiers, Dhu Al-Hijja 12th, 1420H. Corresponding to March 19th, 2000.**

¹⁰ See *Wabl Al-Ghamaam* by Ash-Shawkaanee (2/161).

¹¹ *Istihsaan*: is the fact that Al-Mujtahid (studious jurist) does not apply, in a determined case, a text, a *Qiyaas* (deduction by analogy) or a general rule which includes the given fact as a whole. Al-Mujtahid, due to a necessity, a general use, a hidden *Qiyaas* or another proof that requires renunciation, gives up the given rule and adopts another one that brings benefit.