

The Forty-sixth Greater Sin: Disrespect of Qur'an

The fourth method to ascertain whether a particular sin is Greater is to see what is the opinion of the religious scholars about it. Its seriousness must be established among the religious people from the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams to the present day. To insult the sacred things whose respect is Wajib upon us is Harām and a Greater sin. For example the Holy Qur'an, the Ka'ba, Makkah Mukarama, Mosques, the tombs of the infallibles (a.s.) and the Martyrs of Karbala etc. It is Wajib to accord respect to all of them and any act of disrespect towards them is a Greater sin. In the following pages we shall briefly discuss the legal rulings with regard to each of them.

Respecting the Qur'an is one of the Necessities of Faith

Every Muslim knows that Qur'an is the word of the Creator of the Universe. It is the most sacred and honourable book of the Islamic world. Nothing is more venerated than Qur'an. The Holy Prophet (S) has mentioned it as the 'Greater weighty object'. Thus he (S) says,

"Indeed I leave behind for you two heavy things. The Qur'an is the greater heavy thing and this wasi (legatee) of mine ('Ali) and my two sons (Hasan and Husain) and their descendants and successors (the Imams) are the lesser heavy thing."¹

The Best Reward

Describing the greatness and virtues of Qur'an, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says,

"On the day of Qiyāma the Qur'an will say: O Allah! Some of Your servants have accorded full respect to me. They protected me and did not allow anything of mine to be wasted. However, some other people have wasted me. They did not fulfill my rights and they falsified me.

Then Allah (S.w.T.) shall say, 'By My Honour, Majesty and High position, today I shall appoint the best

of the rewards for your sake and also decree the worst punishment for your sake.”²

It is related from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said, the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) says,

“By My Honour, Majesty and High position today I will honour the one who has honoured you and indeed disgrace the one who has disgraced you.”³

Every Muslim is aware of the fact that insulting the Qur’an is a Greater Sin. Insulting Qur’an is insulting Allah (S.w.T.) and disrespect of the seal of the Prophets (S).

The Messenger of Allah (S) says,

“On the Day of Qiyāma I shall be the first one to appear before Allah and accompanying me will be my family and the Book of Allah. After this my Ummah will enter. Then I will ask my nation how they dealt with the Book of Allah and my Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.).”⁴

Disrespect of Qur’an and Qur’anic Laws

In order to conclude whether a particular act is an act of disrespect or not, we should take into consideration the general view held in this matter. Any act of disrespect, verbal, by action or gesture which is commonly understood as disrespect for Qur’an, is therefore Harām. But it is Harām only if the intention of the person is to insult the religion of Islam and the Shari’a of the Chief of the Prophets (S). In other circumstances his action would tantamount to infidelity and he is a renegade. Since disrespect of Qur’an is Harām and it is one of the necessities of faith if one wilfully tramples the Qur’an under his feet, or throws it in Najasat his action is evidently an act of disrespect of religion and denial of respect for Qur’an. In these circumstances this man is an infidel. It is allowed to spill his blood except that he confesses, that it was in a bout of anger and that he was not in his senses.

At this juncture we feel it is necessary to mention important points with regard to the duty of respecting the Qur’an and prohibition of causing disrespect to it.

1–It is Harām to defile or cause disrespect to the cover of Qur’an, its covering, the pages, the letters and the printed matter. It is Harām to make them Najis (impure) and Wajib to make it tahir (pure) if it is causing disrespect to it.

2–It is Harām to write Qur’an with Najis ink. If it is written with a Najis ink or if after writing it becomes Najis, it should be purified and if it is not possible to purify it, the written part should be obliterated.

3–It is Harām to hand over Qur’an to a Kafir if he is going to cause disrespect to it or touch the letters. But according to some scholars, however, it is not permitted under any circumstance; if it is given it is Wajib to take it back from him.

4–If any of the sacred objects like the Qur’an, the pages containing religious inscriptions or names of

infallibles, the soil of Karbala etc. accidentally fall in the toilet it is Wajib to remove them and make them tahir, even if their removal incurs lots of expenses. Till the time they are not removed it is Harām to use this toilet. If it is not possible to extract it, the toilet must be permanently sealed so that it can never be used in the future.

The removal of sacred objects from Najasat and their purification is not Wajib only on the owner or those who have made them Najis, it is Wajib upon all those Muslims who are aware of it. But it is a Wajib al-Kifai, that is if one performs it, others are relieved of their duty. If in spite of all of them being aware of it, none of them performs this duty, all of them shall be held responsible.

5–It is Harām to touch the letters of the Qur’an without Wuzu (ritual ablution), whether with hands or lips or with any other part of the body. There are detailed laws for this and those who wish to learn more should refer to Urwathul Wuthqa, section of Wuzu, Masla nos. 1–19.

6–At the conclusion Makasibul Muhrima Shaykh Ansari writes that a group of scholars believe that selling and buying Qur’an is Harām. Their decision is based on a tradition that we cannot narrate here. On the basis of this we should only make intention of buying and selling the covering and paper etc and not ‘the cost of Qur’an’. The buyer should pay the cost with the intention of giving hadiya to the seller.

An Important Reminder

A person who is imbued with the Marefat of Allah (S.w.T.) and a superior level of understanding of the greatness and majesty of Allah (S.w.T.), would consider the Qur’an with the utmost respect. He will accord as much respect to it as possible, and yet consider himself deficient in fulfilling the rights of the word of Allah (S.w.T.). Such a person will never dare to touch the Qur’an without Wuzu. That is he will not even touch the cover or the margins of Qur’an without Wuzu or with a Najis hand, whether wet or dry. He will not carry it without being with Wuzu. If he has to always carry Qur’an with him, he will always remain with Wuzu. One should not turn ones back to Qur’an or stretch our legs towards it. Not to place anything on top of Qur’an. Sit facing the Qibla while reciting the Qur’an. Qur’an should be recited in a pleasant tone, slowly and with thinking upon the meaning. Qur’an itself says,

“Do they not then reflect on the Qur’an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks.” (Surah Muhammad 47: 24)

If someone else is reciting it we must listen to it carefully as commanded by Almighty Allah,

“And when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.” (Surah al-Arṣ 7: 204)

If one is present in an assembly where people do not show importance to Qur’an and would not listen attentively one should not recite the Qur’an there.

The book *Gulzar al-Akbari* records from Abul Wafa Hirwi that he said: I was reciting the Holy Qur'an in the royal court one day. The people present over there were busy talking to each and they were not listening to it carefully. That night I saw the Messenger of Allah (S) in my dream. The colour of his face had changed and he was angry. He said to me, "Do you recite the Qur'an in an assembly where people remain busy among themselves and do not pay heed to it? Indeed from today (because you had not observed the respect of Qur'an) you shall not be able to recite the Qur'an, except if Allah's will is there."

I awoke at once and found myself dumb-mute. But since he (S) had said 'Except as Allah wills' I was hopeful that one day I shall be able to speak again. After four months I saw the Holy Prophet (S) in my dream again, He said, "You have indeed repented."

"Yes! O Messenger of Allah (S)", said I.

He said, "Allah turns towards those who turns towards Him." (those who repent).

Then he said,

"Put out your tongue."

I put out my tongue and he touched it with his index finger and said as a warning,

"When you are reciting the Qur'an in an assembly where people are not listening to it carefully, you must stop the recitation as long as the people present there do not agree to listen to the Divine words." When I awoke my speaking ability had been restored.

In the 40th chapter of the above book some anecdotes are mentioned in connection with the respect of sacred objects, places and personalities etc. Just as disrespect of Qur'an is *Harām* the disrespect of the collections of traditions of fourteen *Ma'sūmīn* (a.s.) is also *Harām*. For example *Sahifa Sajjadiya*. Like throwing them or stepping upon them. If it is generally regarded as an act of disrespect, it is *Harām*.

1. *Safinat'ul-Bihar* Vol. 1 page 132

2. *al-Kafi* Vol. 2 page 597

3. *al-Kafi* Vol. 2. page 602

4. *al-Kafi*

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