

## **May a Menstruating Woman Recite Qur'aan?**

### **Question**

Is it permissible for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'aan? I have been told that it is permissible according to some scholars (e.g. Imaam Maalik and Ibn Taimiyyah). I have also been told that those who do not permit it do not have any sound evidence. Could you please comment?

### **Answer**

Imaams Abu Haneefah, Shaafi'ie, Ahmad, Sufyaan Thawri, Ibn Mubaarak, and Ishaq were of the opinion that it is impermissible for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'aan. In fact, Imaam Tirmidhi noted in his Sunan that this was the opinion of most of the 'ulamaa among the Sahaabah, Taabi'een and those who came after them.<sup>1</sup> Yes, Imaam Maalik and Ibn Taimiyyah (and a few others) are of the opinion that a menstruating woman may recite Qur'aan.

The first opinion is based primarily on the hadith of Ibn 'Umar (ra) that the menstruating woman and the person in janaabah should not recite Qur'aan.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there are other arguments which will be mentioned later, Insha Allah. The argument of the proponents of the second opinion is that the

---

<sup>1</sup> Sunan at-Tirmidhi V.1 Pg.236

<sup>2</sup> Sunan at-Tirmidhi V.1 Pg.236

hadith of Ibn Umar (ra) is weak. According to the muhadditheen all the ahaadith which the sub-narrator, Isma'il bin 'Ayyaash, narrated from Hijaazi and 'Iraaqi narrators are weak. In this particular instance, Isma'il bin 'Ayyaash narrated from Moosa bin 'Uqbah who is a Hijaazi.

### **Our Answers**

1. The hadith of Ibn 'Umar (ra) may be weak, but the opposition do not even have any hadith (neither strong nor weak) to substantiate their opinion. In such an instance, many fuqahaa (e.g. Imaam Abu Haneefah) prefer practicing on the weak hadith instead of resorting to qiyaas (analogical reasoning).
2. Ibn Abi Haatim quoted his father as saying that the error in the hadith of Ibn 'Umar (ra) is that it is narrated as the speech of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam whereas it is actually the speech of Ibn 'Umar (ra). Technically speaking, it supposed to be mawqoof instead of marfoo'. However:
  - a. Shaikh Ahmad Shaakir disputed the validity of this claim arguing that Abu Haatim provided no substantiation.<sup>3</sup>
  - b. Moulana Dhufir Ahmad 'Uthmaani's response was that there is no harm if this hadith is the speech of Ibn 'Umar (ra) instead of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam because in issues of this nature the speech of a Sahaabi should be treated like the speech of Rasulullah sallallahu

---

<sup>3</sup> Sunan at-Tirmidhi V.1 Pg.236

alaihi wasallam. Moulana's actual words were: "because in such cases the mawqoof is like the marfoo".<sup>4</sup>

3. There is no consensus with regards the claim that Ibn 'Ayyaash's narrations from Hijaazi and 'Iraaqi narrators are weak. Yahya bin Ma'een, Ya'qoob bin Sufyaan and Yazeed bin Haroon regard him as reliable irrespective of who he narrates from (even when he narrates from Hijaazi or 'Iraaqi narrators). In fact, Yazeed bin Haroon used to regard Ibn 'Ayyaash as better than Sufyaan Thawri. He would also say, "I have not seen a person with a better memory then Isma'il bin 'Ayyaash".<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, there is consensus regarding his reliability concerning the ahaadith of the people of Shaam.
4. The most that could be said regarding Ibn 'Ayyaash is that there is fear of error in his narration from a Hijaazi or 'Iraaqi narrator when he is the only person narrating that particular hadith. Having said that, Ibn 'Ayyaash is not isolated in narration of this hadith from Moosa bin 'Uqbah. Daara Qutni recorded a second chain of this hadith in which Mugheerah bin Abdir-Rahmaan narrated this hadith from Moosa bin 'Uqbah. The fact that another person, Mugheerah bin Abdir-Rahmaan, narrated the same hadith as Ibn 'Ayyaash dispels the possibility of error in his narration.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> I'laa-us-Sunan V.1 Pg.376

<sup>5</sup> Ma'aarif-us-Sunan V.1 Pg.446

<sup>6</sup> Ma'aarif-us-Sunan V.1 Pg.446

**Note:** Hafidh Ibn Hajar discredited the chain of Mugheerah due to it being narrated through Abdul Malik bin Maslamah. However, Shaikh Ahmad Shaakir disagreed with Ibn Hajar on the basis of the authentication of Daara Qutni and Ibn Sayyidin-Naas.<sup>7</sup> Acknowledging Ibn Hajar's objections, Moulana Bannawri also described the chain of Mugheerah as good and strong.<sup>8</sup>

### **A Second Hadith in Our Favour**

'Aaisha (ra) narrated that Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam would rest his head in her lap and recite Qur'aan while she was in her menses.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Daqeeq Al-'Eid explained that if it were permissible for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'aan, there would have been no perception of impermissibility of doing so while resting one's head in his menstruating wife's lap. (If it were permissible for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'aan, it would be 'more' permissible for her husband to do so while resting his head in her lap.) Accordingly, there would be no need for 'Aaisha (ra) to actually mention this. Hence, this hadith proves that it is impermissible for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'aan.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Sunan at-Tirmidhi (footnotes) V.1 Pg.238

<sup>88</sup> Ma'aarif-us-Sunan V.1 Pg.446

<sup>9</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaari Hadith 297 and 7549

<sup>10</sup> Fath-ul-Baari V.1 Pg.479

### **A Third Hadith in Our Favour**

Abdullah bin Rawaaha (ra)'s wife saw him sleeping with his slave-girl. Infuriated, she went to fetch a knife with the intention of probably killing him. However, by the time she got back with the knife, he was no longer with the slave-girl. Thus, when his wife confronted him, he denied sleeping with the slave-girl and asked her, "Did the Rasul of Allah not prohibit a person in janaabah from reciting Qur'aan?" She replied positively. Thus, he recited to her a few Arabic couplets. Unaware that these were not aayaat of the Qur'aan, his wife backed off. When Ibn Rawaaha (ra) informed Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam of what transpired, he sallallahu alaihi wasallam laughed but did not reprimand him.

This incident is often cited in support of the opinion of the jamhoor (majority). However, its chain of transmission is weak.<sup>11</sup>

### **Qiyaas (Analogical Reasoning)**

Considering the many commonalities between the menstruating woman and the person in janaabah (both of them are not permitted to enter a masjid, perform salaah and tawaaf etc.), the former has been compared to the latter with regards Qur'aan recitation. 'Allaamah Khattaabi explains that if Qur'aan recitation is impermissible for a person in janaabah, it should be more impermissible for a menstruating woman "because her

---

<sup>11</sup> Sharh-ul-Muhadhab V.2 Pg.

impurity is more severe than the impurity of janaabah".<sup>12</sup> This is probably reference to the fact that menstruation invalidates saum but janaabah does not.

Imaam Maalik (ra) rejected the above qiyaas (reasoning) arguing that there is a difference between the two forms of impurity because:

- Removal of janaabah is possible by taking ghusl (or tayammum in the absence of water) whereas removal of menses is not possible. Instead, she has to wait for the bleeding to stop.
- Due to the length of the menstrual period, preventing a menstruating woman from reciting Qur'aan may disadvantage her memorization. Non-recitation during the menses may lead to forgetfulness. On the contrary, the period of janaabah is short and does not affect Qur'aan memorization.<sup>13</sup>

### **Our Response**

1. It is quite apparent from the preceding discussion that the hadith of Ibn 'Umar (ra) is the primary source of the jamhoor and that the qiyaas-based argument is a secondary source. Hence, the objections raised against such qiyaas do not affect the overall argument.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ma'aalim-us-Sunan V.1 Pg.66

<sup>13</sup>

2. Furthermore, if we consider the discussion on the hadith of Ibn Umar (ra), would such objections not constitute preference of logic over textual evidence?
3. The similarities between janaabah and menstruation are based on the premise that both are forms of impurity. That being the case, the differences referred to by Imaam Maalik (ra) do not disqualify comparison of menstruation to janaabah because ultimately, both are still impurities. In fact, menstruation is a greater impurity than janaabah. Moreover, the wisdom in disallowing a person in janaabah from reciting Qur'aan is respect for the Qur'aan. It is disrespectful to recite Qur'aan in a state of impurity. Is this meaning not present in the state of menstruation also?<sup>14</sup>

Abu Hudhaifa Muhammad Karolia

Jaami'ah Mahmoodiah

23<sup>rd</sup> Rabi'-ul-Awwal 1439 / 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

<sup>14</sup> At-Ta'leeq-us-Sabeeh V.1 Pg.225