

Handling the Qur'an

A. Etiquettes of handling the Noble Qur'an

This is indeed the noble Qur'an.
Kept in a secure Book.
None may touch it, except with ablution.
(Surah Al Waqiah)

The classical scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l Jama'at (The Four Schools of Thought) are unanimous in their interpretation of the above verses that a person has to be spiritually and physically clean (a Muslim in a state of ritual purity, i.e. in wudu) in order to handle the Arabic book of the Qur'an (mushaf).

What follows is the thoughts of Imam Muhammad ibn Ahmad Qurtubi (Rehmatullahi alaih) who was a great Qur'an Scholar and renowned exegisate of the Qur'an al-kareem.

Allah the Supreme states in the Noble Qur'an :(Surah Hajj Verse 30 & 32)

'So it is; and whoever reveres the sacred things of Allah – that is then a goodness for him in the sight of his Lord; the inarticulate animals are lawful to you except those the forbidding of which is recited to you, therefore shun the filth of idols, and avoid false speech'.

'So it is; and whoever reveres the symbols of Allah – this is then part of the piety of the hearts'.

The above verses of the Noble Qur'an, were revealed during the course of Hajj undertaken by the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The symbols (or signs) of Allah are several – such as the Beloved Prophet, the Sacred Ka'ba, the Two Sacred Mosques, the Station of Ibrahim, the hillocks of Safa and Marwa, the miracles of the Beloved Prophets, the alternation of Night and Day etc., and undoubtedly the Noble Qur'an itself. In fact each and every Ayah (verse) of the Noble Qur'an is in itself one sign of Allah. Those who denied the Ayahs of the Noble Qur'an have been reprimanded in the Qur'an itself – that they deny the signs of Allah!

On several occasions in the Qur'an and Hadith it has been strictly prohibited to defile those things which Allah has deemed sacred. And the Sign of Allah which we Muslims perhaps deal with the most is the Noble Qur'an. It is therefore imperative to know the proper manners of handling the Noble Qur'an – some of which are mentioned below:-

1. It is the inviolability of the Qur'an: not to touch the Qur'an except in the state of ritual purity in ablution (wuzu) Allah the Supreme states “None may touch it, except with ablution.” [Surah Waqiah -79]
2. Not to recite it when in need of obligatory bath.

3. It is unlawful (haraam) for someone not in the state of ablution to carry a Qur'an, even by a trap or in a box , or touch it, whether its writing, the spaces between its lines, its margins, binding, the carrying strap attached to it, or the bag or box it is in. States Allah the Supreme in “None may touch it, except with ablution.” [Waqiah -79] It is however permissible to carry books of Sacred Law (Shari'ah), Hadith, or Qur'anic tafsir, provided that most of their text is not Qur'an.
4. When one finishes reading the Qur'an, not to leave it open.
5. Not to place other books upon the Qur'an, which should always be higher than all other books, whether they are books of Sacred Knowledge or something else.
6. To place the Qur'an on one's lap when reading; or on something in front of one, not on the floor.
7. Not to wipe it from a slate with spittle, but rather wash it off with water; and if one washes it off with water, to avoid putting the water where there are unclean substances or where people walk.
8. When writing the Qur'an to do so in a clear, elegant hand.
9. Not to write it on the ground or on walls, as is done in some new mosques.
10. When passing it to someone, pass it with respect. Not to toss or throw it towards someone.
11. Not to enter the lavatory carrying the Noble Qur'an. This is a great sin, and if done so on purpose, it is Kufr (blasphemy).
12. Not to enter the lavatory wearing an amulet (Taweez) having words from the Qur'an, unless it is encased in leather, silver, or other, for then it is as if kept in the heart.
13. If one writes it and then drinks it (for cure or other purpose), one should say the Bismillah at every breath and make a noble and worthy intention, for Allah only gives to one according to one's intention.

The above amply illustrates the importance of handling the Qur'an al-kareem with the deepest respect.

We hear some people say “Respect should be in the heart”. True. But does this mean that there is no need to handle the Book with respect? Definitely incorrect to deem so. Actions reflect your inner feelings. Only a fool would claim to have respect in the heart if his actions are to the contrary!

There are some who also say “the Qur'an needs to read or adhered to in practice”. True. But does this mean that there is no need to handle the Book with respect? Definitely incorrect to deem so. Only an ignoramus would claim to be following the Qur'an while going against the Quran's injunction of having deep respect for it.

Wearing a finger ring with the name of Allah inscribed on it, is a Sunnah of the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him.) But the reverence of the inscribed words is so great, that we are commanded to take it off when going to the toilet.

A man named Bishr was coming home drunk one rainy night and who saw a piece of paper with some writing on it in the mud. Upon closer examination he saw that the writing was the name of God in Arabic, ALLAH. He picked up the paper, cleaned it, and placed it in a high place in his house. Later on he had a dream in which he heard Allah tell him: Because you raised our Name high, We shall raise up your name in this world and the next. Bishr became a great saint who is known even to many non-Muslims. (Qushayri's "Sufi Principles", and Fariduddin Attar's "Memorial of the Saints").

Rukya

(B). Rukya

Allah the Creator of all things has placed particular characteristics in the things that He has created. Poison kills, Medicine cures, Fire burns, Water cools, Food nourishes, a drink quenches thirst, etc.

Narrated Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him):

I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "Whoever takes seven 'Ajwa dates in the morning will not be effected by magic or poison on that day." (Sahih Bukhari)

These are material things, which cause what Allah has characterized them with. It is Allah Who is the Creator, and in reality the One who is creating the effect.

This is so with the usage of the Qur'an too. The words we recite or write from the Noble Qur'an give rise to the effect that is natured in them by Allah. Treating oneself with Taweez containing verses of the Qur'an is similar to treating oneself with medication. By using medication, one merely places his trust in Allah and uses the medication as a means of cure. The effect in the means is with the Will of Allah so too is the usage of the Taweez.

There are several proofs which clarify this, SOME OF WHICH are:-

1. The Noble Qur'an contains two well-known Surahs – Surah Falaq and Surah Naas - which are also called Al-Muawidhatan (the two warders – or the two Taweez). These two Surahs were revealed after an evil spell had been cast on the Beloved Prophet by some Jews.

2. Narrated `Aisha (Allah be well pleased with her):

Whenever Allah's Apostle became ill, he used to recite Al-Muawidhatan (i.e. the last two Suras of the Qur'an) and then blow his breath and passed his hand over himself. When he had his fatal illness, I started reciting Al-Muawidhatan and blowing my breath over him as he used to do, and then I rubbed the hand of the Prophet over his body. (Saheeh Bukhari)

3. Narrated Abu Sa`id (Allah be well pleased with him):

Some of the companions of the Prophet went on a journey till they reached some of the 'Arab tribes (at night). They asked the latter to treat them as their guests but they refused. The chief of that tribe was then bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and they tried their best to cure him but in vain. Some of them said (to the others), "Nothing has benefited him, will you go to the people who resided here at night, it may be that some of them might possess something (as treatment)," They went to the group of the companions (of the Prophet) and said, "Our chief has been bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and we have tried everything but he has not benefited. Have you got anything (useful)?" One of them replied,

"Yes, by Allah! I can recite a Rukya, but as you have refused to accept us as your guests, I will not recite the Rukya for you unless you fix for us some wages for it." They agreed to pay them a flock of sheep. One of them then went and recited (Surat al-Fatiha): 'All the praises are for the Lord of the Worlds' and puffed over the chief who became all right as if he was released from a chain, and got up and started walking, showing no signs of sickness. They paid them what they agreed to pay. Some of them (i.e. the companions) then suggested to divide their earnings among themselves, but the one who performed the recitation said, "Do not divide them till we go to the Prophet and narrate the whole story to him, and wait for his order." So, they went to Allah's Apostle and narrated the story. Allah's Apostle asked, "How did you come to know that Surat al-Fatiha was recited as Rukya?" Then he added, "You have done the right thing. Divide (what you have earned) and assign a share for me as well." The Prophet smiled thereupon. (Saheeh Bukhari)

Another version of the same incident is narrated as under:-

4. Narrated Ibn `Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him)

Some of the companions of the Prophet passed by some people staying at a place where there was water, and one of those people had been stung by a scorpion. A man from those staying near the water, came and said to the companions of the Prophet, "Is there anyone among you who can do Ruqya as near the water there is a person who has been stung by a scorpion." So one of the Prophet's companions went to him and recited Surat-al-Fatiha 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 Allah's Book." When they arrived at Madinah, they said, ' O Allah's Apostle! (This person) has taken wages for reciting Allah's Book" On that Allah's Apostle said, "You are most entitled to take wages for doing a Ruqya with Allah's Book." (Sahih Bukhari)

The proofs of using words from the Qur'an al-kareem or the beautiful names of Allah, as a means of healing and warding off evils are so many that it is impossible to list them.

It is reported that the evil Pharaoh (Firaun) had the words "Bismillah AlRahman AlRaheem" inscribed on one of the walls of his palaces. Due to this, Allah delayed his due punishment for several years, although the unbeliever claimed himself to be a God, and whereas Sayyadina Moosa (peace and blessings be upon him) had once prayed to Allah to punish the Pharaoh for his misdeeds (Tafseer Naeemi). Such is the effect of the Noble Qur'an!!

The Noble Qur'an is therefore used not only by recitation but also by inscribing its words on paper (or other material) to gain the effect placed in them by Allah. Almost every Muslim household will have some wall frame containing the images of Sacred Places with words from the Noble Qur'an inscribed, in order to gain the blessings of Allah. We find in one very famous Hadith a prohibition of using live images as such:-

Narrated Abu Talha (may Allah be pleased with him):

I heard Allah's Apostle saying; "Angels (of Mercy) do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or a picture of a living creature (a human being or an animal). (Saheeh Bukhari).

We can therefore assume that the opposite is also true - the angels of Mercy do come to houses where the Qur'an is kept, or its words are inscribed in a frame.

As proven above, the use of Rukyias is a Sunnah and yet some people oppose its use. They cite the following Hadith which prohibits the use of Rukyias which were used by people at the times of ignorance, and which contained polytheistic words.

The Beloved Prophet – (peace and blessings be upon him) said: The people were displayed in front of me and I saw one Prophet passing by with a large group of his followers, another Prophet passing by with only a small group of people, another Prophet passing by with only ten (persons), another Prophet passing by with only five (persons), and another Prophet passed by alone. And then I looked and saw a large multitude of people (sawâd ‘azîm), so I asked Gibreel: “Are these people my followers?” He said: “No, but look towards the horizon.” I looked and saw a very large multitude of people. Gibril said: “Those are your followers, and there are seventy thousand of them in front of them who will neither have any reckoning of their accounts nor will receive any punishment.” I asked: “Why?” He said: “They used not to treat themselves with cauterization nor amulets, nor to see auguries and omens in birds, and they relied solely upon their Lord.” On hearing this, ‘Ukkasha ibn Mihsan stood up and said to the Prophet - “Invoke Allah to make me one of them.” The Prophet said: “O Allah, make him one of them.” Then another man stood up and said to the Prophet: “Invoke Allah to make me one of them.” The Prophet said: ‘Ukkasha has preceded you with this request.” (Saheeh Bukhari)

Here in this Hadith the word amulets denotes the Jahili Rukyias used by the ignorant. These are made with spells, incantations, charms, magic etc., which are forbidden in religion. This is what the Beloved Prophet meant in the above Hadith. It does not relate to the Rukya according to the Beloved Prophet’s Sunnah consisting of using some verses of the Qur’an or the permitted supplications for treatment.

5. *It is reported in a Hadith that there is no harm in reciting formulas for cure if this does not involve Shirk. (Abu Dawud).*

6. Narrated Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him):

I have memorized two kinds of knowledge from Allah's Apostle . I have propagated one of them to you and if I propagated the second, then my pharynx (throat) would be cut (i.e. killed). (Saheeh Bukhari)

The following Ahadith are proofs of written Rukyias:-

7. *As for Ta'weez, Hadhrat ibn Amr ibn al-Aas (Allah be well pleased with him) used to write some words and hang it on the necks of children. (Abu Dawud).*

8. *Yahya related to me from Malik that Humayd ibn Qays alMakki (Allah be well pleased with him) said, "A man came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with the two sons of Jafar ibn Abi Talib. He said to their nursemaid, 'Why do I see them so thin?' Their nursemaid said, 'Messenger of Allah, the evil eye goes quickly to them. Nothing stops us from asking someone to make talismans (using ayats of Qur'an) for them, except that we do not know what of that would agree with you.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Make talismans for them. Had anything been able to precede the decree, the evil eye would precede it.' " (Muwata – Imam Malik)*

9. *Yahya related to me from Malik from Yahya ibn Said from Sulayman ibn Yasar that Urwa ibn azZubayr (Allah be well pleased with him) told him that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) entered the house of Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. There was a child weeping in the house, and they told him that it was from the evil eye. Urwa said, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Why do you not find someone to make a talisman to protect it from the evil eye?' " (Muwata – Imam Malik)*

10. When Egypt was conquered by the Muslims, there was a custom to throw a girl in the Nile River on the 11th night of one of the non-Arabic months in order that the Nile would continue to flow. It was believed that without throwing a girl into it, the Nile would not flow. Amr Ibn al-As wrote to the Caliph 'Umar concerning this custom. 'Umar sent a message to the Nile saying: "If you were flowing before by your own power, we do not want you to run;

and if Allah is the one who makes you flow, we ask the Almighty to make you flow." Amr Ibn al-As threw the letter of 'Umar into the Nile one day before the Christian commemoration of the crucifixion. The following morning they woke up to find the river flowing stronger and had gone up 48 feet in one night. (Ibn Hajar, in *Al-Sawa'iq*). A large Taweez, written with black ink on cloth, is on display in the Museum attached to the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore. It is written by none other than Ameer al-Momineen Sayyadina Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

The Noble Qur'an, thus when written, becomes a perpetual sort of supplication to Allah by the one who is wearing it or has it inscribed somewhere. We can summarize the above two chapters to say that:-

- (a) It is obligatory on all Muslims to handle the Noble Qur'an with the deepest respect.
- (b) It is legal (jaez) to use the Qur'an al-kareem as a means of warding off evil (Taweez) and writing it down to gain the benefit that Allah has kept in it.

786 - Numerals

Allah – beginning with the name of – the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All Praise to Allah Almighty (the Lord of the Creation) – and countless blessings upon our Master the Most Beloved Muhammad, and upon his progeny and followers.

C. WHY USE NUMERALS

The science of numbers and numerology existed among the Arabs before the advent of Islam. It is nothing new. In fact the decimal system which is widely used all over the world came also from the Arabs. Perhaps mathematics would not have made such advances, without the decimal system. (The only reason binary codes are used in computer languages that they have only two numerals, and each numeral represents a positive and negative sign - a requirement for the only two electrical charges – i.e. positive and negative.)

The Arabs had evolved numerology in their language, each number letter representing a letter of the Arabic alphabet. (Alif is 1, Ba is 2, Jeem is 3, Daal is 4, etc., right upto Dhaad which is 1000).

We also know that the Noble Qur'an, as it is, came in the Arabic language because we human beings need a language to understand it. Allah does not need sound, words, or alphabets to convey His message. His speech transcends the physical barriers that humans face. Many a times, the revelation came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) not in the form of words, but in the form of just alphabets, or like the ringing of bells etc, as in evident form the following Hadith.

Narrated Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

Al-Harith bin Hisham asked Allah's Apostle "O Allah's Apostle! How is the Divine Inspiration revealed to you?" Allah's Apostle replied, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell, this form of Inspiration is the hardest of all and then this state passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp what he says." (Saheeh Bukhari).

It is also evident that if Allah willed, the Noble Qur'an al-kareem could have been revealed in any other language or as a mathematical code.

D. THE QUR'AN IS ALSO A NUMERICAL MIRACLE

One of the challenges that the Noble Qur'an al-kareem puts forth to the world is that no one can ever bring a Book that is equal to it. Not only is the challenge in terms of richness of language, but also in its consistency and lack of mistakes or contradiction. Detailed research has shown that the Qur'an is also a mathematical miracle – some of the examples are:- Al-Muddathir, verses 30 & 35, says;

(30)Dominated by Nineteen. (35)It is indeed one of the great (miracles)

These verses tell us that the number Nineteen was designated by God to prove that the Qur'an is from God and that, as the instrument of authentication, it is a great miracle. At the outset, please remember that Allah is Wahid (One). As per numerical values, this also adds up to 19!!

The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters $114 = 19 \times 6$

The first chapter of the Qur'an is Al-Fatihah and its first verse is the "Bismillah". It consists of nineteen alphabetic letters. $19 = 19 \times 1$

The word Allah, occurs 2698 times in the Qur'an $2698 = (19 \times 142)$

The word AlRahmaan occurs 57 times ($57 = 19 \times 3$)

The word AlRaheem occurs 114 times ($114 = 19 \times 6$)

The occurrence of all the words of the "Bismillah" in multiples of nineteen demonstrates that it cannot be the product of chance alone. An attempt to compose any text to contain a designated number of letters, the sum of which is a multiple of any specific number, will quickly demonstrate its impossibility.

Surah 9, Bara'ah (Taubah) , is the only chapter in the Qur'an that is not preceded by the "Bismillah". This would make the number of "Bismillah" in the Qur'an 113. If one counts 19 chapters, beginning with chapter 9, one arrives at chapter 27 An-Naml; this chapter has 2 "Bismillah", one, un-numbered, at the head, and the other in verse 30, thus making the number 114 to match the number of chapters in the Qur'an. ($114 = 19 \times 6$) The foregoing is only a minute fraction of the miracle God refers to at chapter 74, Al-Muddathir, verse 35, as one of the great miracles. "It is indeed one of the great miracles."

E. NUMBERS IN SOME COMMANDS FOUND IN QUR'AN AND HADITH

1. Allah multiplies the reward of good deeds from 10 to 700 times.
2. Reciting the Surah Ikhlas 3 times, gives the reward of reciting the entire Qur'an.
3. Reciting the Surah Kafiroon 4 times, gives the reward of reciting the entire Qur'an.
4. Praying in congregation multiplies the reward 27 times.
5. We have been guided to recite the words 'SubhanAllah' 'AlHamdulillah' and 'Allahu Akbar' 33 times each.

F . SUMMARY

The earliest of the Ulema, Sayyadina Ali bin Abu Talib being one of them used the science of Numerals to write Taweez using verses from the Noble Qur'an, and using the beautiful names of Allah the Supreme. We cite the reasons again:-

1. It is obligatory on all Muslims to handle the Noble Qur'an with the deepest respect.

2. The taweez so prepared can be worn at all times, even carried to the washroom provided it is fully covered.
3. No one without ablution may be able to touch the sacred words.
4. It may not be defiled if fallen into the hands of infidels.
5. It may not be inadvertently thrown into rubbish.
6. Using numbers also gives one great benefit – that is reducing the size of the Rukya (taweez). Entire verses or Surahs of the Noble Qur’an can be written down in a few figures, which makes it easier to write, wear or carry.

G. OBJECTIONS TO USING NUMBERS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Using the numerical values, the word Allah adds up to 66. Bismillah AIRahmaan AIRaheem, adds up to 786. Muhammad adds up to 92. Wahid equals 19. There have been objections that the use of 786 (or other numbers) to write Rukya / Taweez is incorrect. The objections and their answers are as below:-

Objection # 1

This is a Bidat. It was not done before.

The Answer :

Numerology existed before the advent of Qur’an. Therefore it is not something new. The Sahaba were the first to use numerology in writing Rukya.

Objection # 2

The Most Beloved Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Suliaman (peace and blessings be upon them) did not write 786 in the letters they wrote to the kings or queens. Instead they used the full words “Bismillah AIRahmaan AIRaheem.”

The Answer :

The answer is very simple. The infidels who got these letters for the first time, would never be able to understand what 786 meant. The Bismillah was written in order for them to understand it, and to know that the letters are coming from the Prophets, who are the bondmen of Allah.

Objection # 3

People will start replacing the Bismillah with the numbers 786 in the Noble Qur’an al-kareem.

The Answer :

No one will ever do that, because the Noble Qur’an is meant to be read.

Objection # 4

786 is also the numerical total of the words Hari Krishna (a Hindu deity). It will therefore lead to blasphemy.

The Answer :

This is absolutely wrong. The (I) after Hari is not a vowel like (Ya) in Arabic. It is the equivalent of “Kasra” (Zer) which has no value in numerology. So too is the (I) in word Krishna. Further, the letter (N) is not the ‘noon’ we know in Arabic – in fact it has no equivalent in Arabic at all!. The (a) in word Krishna is not a vowel like (alif or hamzah) in Arabic. The total of the words Hari Krishna would not be 786.

There is no danger of Shirk here. The objection that it may become blasphemy if the numbers match, is so absurd it makes one wonder. For example, when the polytheists of Makkah accepted Allah to be one more God (in addition to the numerous they had), did the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stop calling the real God as Allah??. If the polytheists of this age start praying to their deities in the manner we offer our Salat, will then our Salat become a blasphemy?? If the above were true, should we then remove the number ‘1’ (one) from the digits because Allah is One? Or remove the number ‘19’ (nineteen) from the digits because Allah is Wahid which totals 19? Or remove the number ‘66’ (sixty six) from the digits because the word Allah totals 66? Or remove the number ‘786’ from the digits because Bismillah adds up to 786?

Thousands of Christians gather to hear the Pope every year. Millions of Hindus attend the Kumbh Mela and take a dip in the river Ganges. Does this mean we should stop performing Hajj, or stop taking a bath in a river? The Christians preach Christianity, the Hindus their own religion. Does it mean that we should stop preaching Islam?

Should we stop calling Allah as “Rahmaan” because the polytheists also call their idols merciful? Should we stop calling Allah “Great” because the polytheists call their idols great? The list is endless, and the objection extremely senseless.

Objection # 5

If one fears abuse of the letter, etc. ‘Bismillaah al-Rahmaan al-Raheem’ should be recited verbally at the beginning of the letter which will suffice for the written script.

The Answer :

What if you want to write the Bismillah or other words for cure?? Just reciting them will not make a written Rukya.

Objection # 6

People do not put their trust in Allah, but put their trust in the Rukya itself.

The Answer :

This is an objection against using Rukya, not for using numbers in them. It has already been established that using Rukya is a Sunnah of the Beloved Prophet as well as the Sahaba.. People believe that the Rukya is a means and its effect is given by Allah, which is already explained in the previous paragraphs.

And Allah knows best.

All Praise to Allah (the Lord of the Creation) – and countless blessings upon our master the Beloved Prophet Muhammad, and upon his progeny and followers. May Allah keep us on the Straight Path – Aameen.