118244 - Touching the Mus-haf and Books of Tafsir without Wudu

the question

There are Mus-hafs that have a cover made of thick cloth – is it permissible to touch them for one who is not in a state of purity? What is the ruling on touching the edges of the pages of the Mus-haf to turn the page, as there are those who regard it as permissible to hold it? When can we say concerning books of Tafsir that it is a Tafsir that it is permissible for menstruating women to read from, and when can we say that it comes under the rulings on Mus-hafs and it is not permissible for a menstruating woman to touch it?

Summary of answer

1. It is not permissible for one who is in a state of impurity to touch the Mus-haf without a barrier, according to the majority of jurists.
2. The covers of the Mus-haf that are attached to it come under the same ruling as the Mus-haf itself, so it is not permissible to touch them without Wudu.
3. It is permissible for the one who is in a state of impurity – minor or major – to touch books of Tafsir according to the majority of jurists.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is it permissible to touch the Mus-haf without Wudu?

It is not permissible for one who is in a state of impurity to touch the Mus-haf without a barrier, according to the majority of jurists, because of what it says in the letter of `Amr ibn Hazm (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent to the people of Yemen, in which it says: "No one should touch the Quran except one who is in a state of purity." (Narrated by Malik, 468; Ibn Hibban, 793; Al-Bayhaqi, 1/87)

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The Hadith in the book mentioned was classed as authentic by a number of Imams in terms of the Isnad (chain of narrators) and in terms of its been a widely-circulated Hadith.”

Ash-Shafi`i (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Ar-Risalah: “They did not accept this Hadith until it was proven to them that it was the letter of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Ibn `Abd Al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This is a letter that is well known to the scholars of the Prophet’s biography, and its contents are well known to the scholars; it is so well known that there is no need for an Isnad, because it is like a Mutawatir report (one that is narrated by so many from so many that it is inconceivable that they could have agreed upon a lie); this is why people are aware of it and have accepted it ." (At-Talkhis Al-Habir, 4/17)

The Hadith was classed as authentic by Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) in Irwa’ Al-Ghalil, 1/158

Is it permissible to touch the cover of the Mus-haf without Wudu?

The covers of the Mus-haf that are attached to it [that is, they are attached to it with adhesive or stitches, etc] come under the same ruling as the Mus-haf itself, so it is not permissible to touch them without Wudu . The same applies to the edges of the pages.

It says in Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (38/7):

“The majority of Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi`i jurists are of the view that it is not allowed for the one who is not in a state of purity to touch the cover of the Mus-haf that is attached to it, or the margins in which there is no writing on the pages of the Mus-haf, or the spaces between the lines, or the empty pages on which there is no writing at all. That is because they are part of the page on which the Quran is written; therefore they come under the same ruling as it. Some of the Hanafis and Shafi`is (may Allah have mercy on them) are of the view that that is permissible.”

With regard to covers that are separate from the Mus-haf, that is, a bag in which the Mus-haf is

placed and taken out of, there is nothing wrong with touching it without being in a state of purity, even if the Mus-haf is inside it.

It is permissible to touch the Mus-haf with a barrier that is separate from it, such as the bag in which it is placed or gloves and the like.

It says in Kashshaf Al-Qina` (1/135): “The one who is in a state of impurity may carry the Mus-haf in its bag or wrapper, without touching it, because the prohibition has to do with touching it. Carrying it is not the same as touching it, and he may look at it and turn the pages with the edge of his sleeve or a stick and the like, such as a piece of cloth or wood, because then he is not touching it. And he may touch the Mus-haf with a barrier because of what was stated above.”

Is it permissible to touch books of Tafsir without Wudu?

It is permissible for the one who is in a state of impurity – minor or major – to touch books of Tafsir according to the majority of jurists. However there are some who restrict that to books in which the Tafsir or commentary is greater than what they contain of Quran, whilst others do not stipulate this condition.

It says in Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (13/97): “It is permissible according to the majority of jurists for one who is in a state of impurity to touch books of Tafsir even if they contain verses of the Quran, and to carry them and read in them, even if he is Junub (the state of major impurity due to semen discharge). They said: That is because what is meant by Tafsir is to learn the meanings of the Quran, not to recite it, so the rulings on the Quran do not apply in this case.

The Shafi`is stated clearly that this permissibility is subject to the condition that the Tafsir be more than the Quran, because there is no disrespect towards the Quran in this case, and it is not like the Mus-haf (which contains the text of the Quran only). The Hanafis differed concerning that and said that it is obligatory to do Wudu before touching books of Tafsir.”

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “With regard to books of Tafsir, it is permissible to touch them, because they are regarded as Tafsir and the verses in them are fewer

than the commentary.

They quoted as evidence for this the fact that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent letters to the disbelievers in which there were verses of the Quran. This indicates that the ruling is connected to what constitutes the majority of a text.

However, if the amounts of Tafsir and Quran are equal, in this case it is a combination of something permitted and something not allowed, and neither of them outweighs the other. In this case we should err on the side of caution and follow the rulings that apply to the Quran.

Nonetheless, if the Tafsir is larger, even by a small amount, then it comes under the rulings on Tafsir." (Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`, 1/267)

It says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah (4/136): "It is permissible to translate the meanings of the Quran into a language other than Arabic, just as it is permissible to comment on its meaning in Arabic. That is regarded as explaining the meaning that the translator understands from the Quran, but it cannot be called Quran.

Based on that, it is permissible for a person to touch a translation of the meanings of the Quran in a language other than Arabic and a Tafsir that is written in Arabic when he does not have Wudu."

For more details, please see the following answers: 106961 , 108477 , and 2564 .

And Allah knows best.