

247769 - Ruling on counting hasanaat and telling others that whoever reads the entire Quran will have such and such of hasanaat, as many as the number of huroof [letters or words] in the Quran

the question

What is the ruling on counting hasanaat (rewards for good deeds), such as saying that the number of huroof [sing. harf] in the Quran, for example, is such and such, and there are ten hasanaat for each harf, and if a person reads the entire Quran, he will attain such and such – meaning 10 hasanaat x the number of verses in the Quran; or, for example, a shaykh recites a soorah of the Quran, and he has with him a hasanaat counter for the number of hasanaat for each harf that he recites?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

At-Tirmidhi (2910) narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites a harf of the Book of Allah will have one hasanah for it, and each hasanah brings a tenfold reward. I do not say that Alif-Laam-Meem is a harf; rather alif is a harf, laam is a harf and meem is a harf.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) in Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhi.

The scholars differed as to what is meant by the word harf in this hadith: does it mean a letter or an entire word? There are two views.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Kareem al-Khudayr (may Allah preserve him), a member of the Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi, said:

The difference of opinion among the scholars concerning the meaning of harf has to do with whether it means a letter or an entire word. There may be a great difference between the implications of different opinions, because if we say that what is meant by harf is a letter, then

one complete reading of the Quran... will result in more than three million hasanaat, whereas if we say that what is meant by harf is an entire word, then the resulting number of hasanaat will not be even one quarter of what we mentioned above, i.e., it will be seven hundred thousand, which is approximately one quarter (of three million). Most scholars think it most likely that harf refers to a letter, and this is what everyone who reads or recites Quran would wish for, so as to increase the number of his hasanaat. Some of the scholars say that what is meant by harf is an entire word, and the comments of Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] indicate that; it is as if he favours the view that what is meant by harf is the entire word. ...

So with regard to the words “Alam tara kayfa fa’ala Rabbuka bi ashaab al-feel (Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?)” [al-Feel 105:1], the word alam [أَلَمْ] is composed of three letters, but these letters form two words اَلْ [which indicates that this is a question as opposed to a statement] and لَمْ [the negative particle, “not”], therefore it is two words [harfan].

The word kayfa [كَيْفَ] is one harf if we assume that harf means a single word, and it is three huroof if we assume that harf means a letter. To suggest what is most likely in such cases is difficult, because just as the term harf may refer to a letter, it may refer equally to a word.

End quote from Sharh al-Manzoomah al-Meemiyyah fi'l-Adaab ash-Shar‘iyyah.

Secondly:

Counting and adding up the huroof of the Quran is permissible and there is nothing wrong with it. It is proven that some of the salaf (early generations) did that.

It says in Tafseer Ibn Katheer (1/99):

It was narrated from Mujaahid: This is what we counted of the Quran; it is three hundred and twenty-one thousand, one hundred and eighty (321,180) harf (letters).

Al-Fadl said, narrating from ‘Ataa’ ibn Yasaar: It is three hundred and twenty-three thousand and fifteen (323,015) harf (letters).... End quote.

Based on that, if someone were to say: The number of huroof in the Quran is such and such, so on that basis if someone reads the entire Quran, there is the hope that he will attain reward commensurate with the number of these huroof, and each harf brings a tenfold reward (hasanaat) – there is nothing wrong with that, because the hadith indicates this meaning, and it remains to determine the number of huroof in the Quran based on the different scholarly views mentioned above.

Thirdly:

Counting hasanaat or setting up a hasanaat counter in order to work out the number of what one has read of Quran, is regarded as makrooh by some of the salaf.

Moreover, there is the fear that the one who does that may be filled with conceit and self-admiration because of this action, every time he sees the number of huroof he has recited.

It says in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (2/162):

‘Abdullah – i.e., Ibn Mas‘ood – regarded counting as makrooh and used to say: Is he reminding Allah of his good deeds? End quote.

It says in Sunan ad-Daarimi (286), regarding the lengthy hadith of Ibn Mas‘ood (may Allah be pleased with him) - in which it says: They said: O Abu ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan, what do you think of pebbles that we use to count takbeer [saying “Allahu akbar (Allah is most great)”], tahleel [saying “Laa ilaaha ill-Allah [there is no god but Allah] and tasbeeh [saying “Subhaan-Allah (Glory be to Allah)”? He said: Rather count your bad deeds, for I guarantee that none of your good deeds will go to waste. Woe to you, O ummah of Muhammad, how soon you have taken the path of doom! ... –:

He (may Allah be pleased with them) denounced them for counting hasanaat.

The matter becomes clearer if we note that attaining this specific reward, or a specific number of hasanaat is by way of a promise that these hasanaat will be attained, but we cannot be certain that any particular person has attained that unless we are certain that his deeds have been accepted, and acceptance of deeds is a matter of the unseen, therefore no one can know what he

will have of hasanaat and reward with Allah for reading Quran. So the individual should beware of neglecting that, and should put great hope and trust in his Lord that He will accept his deeds, for the grace of Allah is immense. The individual should bear in mind two things: he should put great hope in his Lord and think positively of Him, then he should fear lest his deeds be rejected, so he should not be boastful.

It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), said: I asked the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about this verse – “And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord” [al-Mu’minoos 23:60]. ‘Aa’ishah said: Are they the ones who drink alcohol and steal? He said: “No, O daughter of as-Siddeeq; rather they are the ones who fast, and pray and give charity, but they fear that [those deeds] will not be accepted from them. They are the ones who hasten to do good deeds and and they outstrip [others] therein.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (3175); classed as saheeh by al-Albani.

And Allah knows best.