

The adab of reading the Qur'an

Before the rules of the tongue come the rules of the manner: seek refuge, go slowly, fall silent when another reads, and do not treat forgetting it as a small thing.



Begin by seeking refuge

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the expelled.” The one instruction given about starting.

Qur'an 16:98

Measured, not fast

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

“And recite the Qur'an with measured recitation.” Pace is not ornament here; it is the command.

Qur'an 73:4

When someone else reads

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا

“And when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and be silent, that you may receive mercy.”

Qur'an 7:204

Learn it, then teach it

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ

“The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it.” ‘Uthman narrated it; the narrator added that this is what kept him in his teaching seat.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5027

If it comes hard

The one who recites it and has mastered it is with the noble scribes; the one who recites it with great difficulty, exerting himself, has a double reward.

Sahih al-Bukhari 4937

Hold it or lose it

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ صَاحِبِ الْقُرْآنِ كَمَثَلِ صَاحِبِ الْإِبِلِ الْمُعَقَّلَةِ إِنْ عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهَا أُمْسَكَهَا وَإِنْ أَطْلَقَهَا ذَهَبَتْ

“The one who knows the Qur'an by heart is like the owner of tied camels: if he keeps them tied he controls them, and if he lets them loose they go.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 5031

Never say “I forgot that verse”

“It is a bad thing that one of you says: I have forgotten such-and-such a verse — he has been made to forget it. So keep reciting, for it escapes men's hearts faster than camels do.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 5032

Recite it well

He عليه السلام said to Abu Musa: “You have been given one of the sweet voices of the family of Dawud.” A good voice is a gift put to use, not a performance.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5048

Touching a copy

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

“None touch it except the purified.” The commentators divide — some read it of the angels and the Preserved Tablet, others of ritual purity — and the schools' rules on handling a mushaf rest on the second reading.

Qur'an 56:79 • tafsir and fiqh: the readings differ