622919 - What is the ruling on disposing of pages of the Mus-haf using a shredder?

the question

Is it permissible to destroy pages containing verses of the Quran or pages cut out of a Mus-haf by using a shredder?

Summary of answer

It is permissible to dispose of pages of the Mus-haf using a shredder, on condition that the machine cuts the pages very finely (lengthwise and widthwise), and removes the shape of the letters and words completely.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The jurists (may Allah have mercy on them) said that it is permissible to destroy pages of the Mus-haf if they become worn out or damaged, and they explained how to dispose of pages of the Mus-haf. They mentioned four ways of doing that:

1.Burning it until it turns to ashes. This is the method that is mentioned by the Malikis, Shafa`is and Hanbalis, but the Hanafis disallowed it.

Those who say that it is permissible quoted as evidence the report that was soundly narrated from `Uthman, which says that when he collected al-Mus-haf al-Imam [the “master copy” of the Mus-haf] and sent copies of it to the regions, he issued orders that the other Mus-hafs be burned, and the majority of the Sahabah approved of that.

The Hanafis quoted as evidence [for disallowing that] the report narrated from Abu Musa al-Ash`ari which says that a book was brought to him and he said: Were it not that I am afraid it may contain the name of Allah, I would have burned it.

But that was refuted on the grounds that this was the personal view of Abu Musa in which he differed from the majority of the Sahabah.

2.Burying it in a clean, pure place far away from where people walk or throw their garbage. This was mentioned by the Hanafis, Malikis and Hanbalis, but some of the Shafa`is were hesitant about this, for fear that feet may tread on it.

Those who said that it is permissible to bury the Mus-haf quoted as evidence the report narrated from `Uthman which says that he buried the Mus-hafs [other than al-Mus-haf al-Imam] between the Prophet's grave and his minbar.

3.Washing the pages with water to remove the ink until the writing disappears. The jurists of all four madhhabs regard this as permissible.

This is indicated by what is mentioned in one of the reports about `Uthman disposing of the Mus-hafs after compiling al-Mus-haf al-Imam, in which it says that he "washed them thoroughly." According to another report, when `Uthman finished compiling the Mus-haf, he wrote to the governors of the regions saying: I have done such and such and I have erased what I had, so erase what you have.

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Erasing is more general than washing or burning, and most of the reports clearly mentioned burning, so this is what happened. And it is possible that both things happened, as anyone who had a Mus-haf that he was supposed to burn could have disposed of it in either way.

'Iyad was certain that they washed the pages with water then burned them.

End quote from *Fat-h al-Bari*, 209.

See: *Ash-Sharh al-Kabir* by ad-Dardir; *Hashiyat ad-Dasuqi*, 4/301; *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj fi Sharh al-Minhaj*, 1/155; *al-Furu`*, 1/248; *Hashiyat Ibn 'Abidin*, 6/422.

4.Tearing it up. This was the view of some of the Shafa`is. See: *Nihayat al-Muhtaj*, 1/128, and *Al-Fatawa al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kubra*, 1/35-36.

Those who said it is permissible to dispose of a Mus-haf by tearing it up quoted the following as evidence:

1.The report narrated by Anas, when he told the story of `Uthman collecting the Mus-haf, in which he said that `Uthman sent to every region a Mus-haf that had been copied from al- Mus-haf al-Imam, and he issued instructions that any other texts of Quran on pages or in a complete Mus-haf were to be burned.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar said:

He said: and he issued instructions that any other texts of Quran on pages or in a complete Mus-haf were to be burned [*yuharraq* – letter ha' (ح) with no dot]. In the report narrated by the majority, it says: to be torn up [*yukharraq* – letter kha' (خ) with a dot]; in the report narrated by al-Mirwazi, it says yuharraq (to be burned) with no dot, and al-Usayli narrated both versions, but yakharraq (to be torn into pieces) with a dot is more soundly narrated. The word yukharraq refers to tearing something into pieces, and the sound (sahih) report affirms that the Sahabah did that.

It was narrated that Mus`ab ibn Sa`d said: I was there when `Uthman tore up the Mus-hafs, and they approved of that – or he said: and no one objected to that.

Salim ibn `Abdillah narrated that Marwan, the governor of Madinah, sent word to Hafsah asking her for the pages [on which Quran was written] so that he could tear them up, as he was afraid that there could be copies that contradicted one another, but she refused to give them to him… When Hafsah died, Marwan sent word to `Abdullah ibn `Umar as soon as they returned from Hafsah's funeral, insisting that he send the pages to him, so `Abdullah ibn `Umar sent them to Marwan, who tore them up for fear that there might be something in them that differed from the

copies produced by `Uthman [from al-Mus-haf al-Imam].

See: *Fat-h al-Bari*, 9/20.

II.

As for the ruling on tearing up pages from the Mus-haf with a shredder, such machines are of two types:

i.Those which cut the paper into long strips. It is not permissible to use this type to cut the pages of the Mus-haf, because some words of the Quran may remain, such as the name of Allah and other divine names, which would lead to mishandling and desecration thereof, because usually these shredded papers end up in the garbage, unless shredding is followed by burning what remains of the shredded papers, in which case there is nothing wrong with using them to cut up pages of the Mus-haf.

ii. Those which cut the pages both lengthwise and widthwise, in such a way that the pieces are very small, and nothing of the Quranic text remains, either words or letters. It is permissible to dispose of a Mus-haf by shredding the pages with this type of shredder.

To sum up the discussion about whether it is permissible or not [to dispose of pages of the Mus-haf using a shredder], there is no evidence in the Quran or Sunnah or scholarly consensus to identify a specific method for disposing of pages of the Mus-haf. This indicates that the method to be used depends on scholarly views, so whatever will dispose of it without mishandling or desecrating the Mus-haf is permissible, and this is not regarded as desecrating it, because the ruling is connected to the reason and the intention. So long as the intention behind shredding the pages of the Mus-haf with this machine is to preserve its status and protect its pages from desecration and mishandling, then it is permissible.

This is the view of Shaykh Ibn Baz and Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on them both), and of some contemporary researchers.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on tearing up pages

on which Quranic verses are written?

He replied: As for tearing up pages on which verses are written, if they are torn up in such a way that leaves no mention of Allah, meaning that they are torn into very small pieces, there is nothing wrong with it. Otherwise, you may bury it in clean earth or burn it. As for tearing up that leaves some verses not torn or cut up, that is not sufficient.

End quote from *Majmu` Fatawa wa Maqalat Mutanawwi`ah* by Ibn Baz, 24/393.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on collecting separate pages from Mus-hafs if we tear them up?

He replied: If they are torn up, then this is a third, alternative method – after burning and burying – but it is difficult, because the tearing up should affect all words and letters, and this is difficult, unless there is a machine which shreds the pages very finely, so that no shape of any letter is left. But this is a third way and it is permissible.

Fatawa Nur 'ala ad-Darb by al-`Uthaymin, 5/2.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: There is a machine that shreds paper so finely that the words cannot be read. Is it permissible to put pages on which there are verses from the Quran in it, because it shreds the paper?

He replied: If, when you put a page of Quran or a page of hadith into this machine, or a page containing a verse or a hadith, this machine shreds it so finely that the name of Allah, for example, cannot be seen, there is nothing wrong with it.

Questioner: But sometimes some letters are visible.

Shaykh: These machines are of two types, one of which cuts the paper into long strips, on which the name of Allah, for example, may appear, or a word of a verse. This is not appropriate.

And some of them shred the paper finely until it becomes like grains of rice, meaning that they cut the paper lengthwise and widthwise. In this case, no letter remains. So if you want to buy such a

machine, buy one of this type. As for the first type, as I told you, if we check these strips and find the name of Allah on them, or a word from the verse, then we must burn the papers on which we find the name of Allah.

End quote from *Liqa' al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 96/29.

Shaykh Ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on putting papers on which there are names or attributes of Allah in waste paper baskets or trash cans in the street? Please note that most people who do that are those who are working in offices and government departments.

He replied: It is obligatory to respect the names and attributes of Allah, may He be Exalted, and part of respecting them is protecting them from being mishandled if they are found in newspapers, ordinary papers and official documents. So it is not permissible to throw them on the ground under people's feet, or to throw them into waste paper baskets or trash cans, because they will be thrown into dumpsters and mishandled. Rather it is essential to dispose of them and burn them. Writers should have their own shredders that cut the paper into small pieces, as is usually done. And Allah knows best.

End quote from *Fatawa Ibn Jibrin*, 64/10.

See also*: An-Nawazil al-Fiqhiyyah al-Muta`alliqah bil-Quran il-Karim*, by Dr. Khalil al-Mubarak, p. 182, where he has discussed such issues well.

For more information, please see the answers to the following questions: 21511, 105326.

And Allah knows best.