



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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LISTEN

[64:16] Therefore, you shall reverence GOD as much as you can, and listen, and obey, and give (to charity) for your own good. Anyone who is protected from his own stinginess, these are the successful ones.

This is a commandment: "Therefore, you shall reverence God as much as you can, and listen..."

By the grace of God, I just attended an essential career skills training course that included the topic of effective listening. Ironically, one person fell asleep and was actually snoring, several others admitted they were having a hard time trying to stay awake, and as I looked around the room only a few appeared to be attentive and actually listening!

It inspired me to look at some types of listening described to us in the Quran.

[17:47] We are fully aware of what they hear, when they listen to you, and when they conspire secretly—the disbelievers say, "You are following a crazy man."

God is showing us there are different ways to listen. A statement could be

made, yet there are many ways the same statement can be heard. In this particular verse the type of listening these people are doing is listening to conspire and be judgmental.

[6:113] This is to let the minds of those who do not believe in the Hereafter listen to such fabrications, and accept them, and thus expose their real convictions.

God is showing us that people who do not believe in the Hereafter, when they are listening, their goal is to listen to find fabrications and lies, then to accept that as the truth.

[21:2] When a proof comes to them from their Lord, that is new, they listen to it heedlessly.

[2:93] We made a covenant with you, as we raised Mount Sinai above you, saying, "You shall uphold the commandments we have given you, strongly, and listen." They said, "We hear, but we disobey." Their hearts became filled with adoration for the calf, due to their disbelief. Say, "Miserable indeed is what your faith dictates upon you, if you do have any faith."

In 2:93 people are listening to God's words, but doing so with a reckless lack of care or attention. This is listening heedlessly, supported by their admittance of, "We hear, but we disobey."

[26:223] They pretend to listen, but most of them are liars. This is an example of what the course I took describes as "false" listening. This reminds me of the blank stare of a deer in your headlights. This type of listening is where people are facing you, their eyes are open, they are smiling and nodding their head, but they are not listening to a word you are saying.

[41:26] Those who disbelieved said, "Do not listen to this Quran and distort it, that you may win."

This is closed-mind, distortion listening.

The next verse is an example of biased listening. This is where no matter what the message is, the listener's process is to filter the message only according to their own personal bias and opinions.

[47:16] Some of them listen to you, then as soon as they leave they ask those

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who were enlightened, "What did he just say?" GOD thus seals their hearts and, consequently, they follow only their opinions.

Another type of listening is casual listening. We are only listening because it is eloquent and entertaining.

[63:4] When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies; beware of them. GOD condemns them; they have deviated.

All of these examples of listening so far seem like very bad ways to listen. But going back to 64:16, remember, listening is a command from God.

Henceforth, when we do listen, may God help and protect us from listening in the negative ways we have gone over. One thing that I found helpful, is recognizing that there are different ways to listen, so I can focus in to listen the way I need to.

[6:36] The only ones to respond are those who listen. GOD resurrects the dead; they ultimately return to Him.

[7:204] When the Quran is recited, you shall listen to it and take heed, that you may attain mercy. [7:205] You shall remember your Lord within yourself, publicly, privately, and quietly, day and night; do not be unaware. [7:206] Those at your Lord are never too proud to worship Him; they glorify Him and fall prostrate before Him.

In these two verses God tells us to listen with an ear that enables us to be responsive and take heed. Also, God specifically says that it is the Quran that we should be listening to.

God shows us the example of jinns using retentive listening using what they hear to warn.

[46:29] Recall that we directed a number of jinns to you, in order to let them hear the Quran. When they got there,

they said, "Listen." As soon as it was over, they rushed to their people, warning.

Here is one of my favorite types of listening skills, listening to understand.

[69:12] We rendered it a lesson for you, that any listening ear may understand.

This next verse describes a method of listening that reaches beyond listening with ears.

[66:4] If the two of you repent to GOD, then your hearts have listened. But if you band together against him, then GOD is his ally, and so is Gabriel and the righteous believers. Also, the angels are his helpers.

Praise be to God, we are provided with all types of examples of how not to listen and how to listen. We can even use the examples of how not to listen by listening in the opposite way. For example, we don't want to listen with a personal bias of our own opinions. If I am aware of my bias, and God allows me to keep that bias under control, I will be better at listening.

May God help and guide us *not* to listen to: conspire, not to listen to be judgmental, not to listen to find fabrications and accept them as truth, and not to listen and be heedless. May He also help us not to pretend to be listening, not to be closed-minded and distort what we are listening to, not to listen with a biased intent, and not to listen just because of eloquence or entertainment.

May God guide our hearts to listen in the opposite of those ways. To listen with responsiveness, taking heed to what we are listening to, retentive listening, to remind and warn, listening to understand, and listening not only with our ears but also with our hearts. God please help us listen in all the positive ways that are pleasing to You especially when it comes to reverencing You and listening to the Quran!

Robert

Listen—Silent

There's a reason that listen and silent are anagrams of each other. In order to listen, truly listen, to another person or to God, we need to be silent. In any given conversation, if both people are talking, then no one is listening. And if no one is listening, what's the point of talking?

God tells us we need to listen to Him and His revelations. *[2:93] We made a covenant with you, as we raised Mount Sinai above you, saying, "You shall uphold the commandments we have given you, strongly, and listen."*

[5:108] You shall observe GOD and listen. GOD does not guide the wicked.

[7:204] When the Quran is recited, you shall listen to it and take heed, that you may attain mercy.

[64:16] Therefore, you shall reverence GOD as much as you can, and listen.... these are the successful ones.

[69:12] We rendered it a lesson for you, that any listening ear may understand.

[20:13] "I have chosen you, so listen to what is being revealed. [20:14] "I am GOD; there is no other god beside Me. You shall worship Me alone, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) to remember Me.

The last verses are directed to Moses, but apply to us all. God has chosen each one of us and guided us to His path. That is a great blessing. It's a small minority of people in the world who are truly guided. So, we have to be very appreciative of that blessing and continue to listen with our whole heart to the message He has brought.

How can we listen better? How can we listen with our whole heart? I think if we take heed to the anagram "silent" it will help us. We need to quiet all the nega-

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tive thoughts and feelings that block out God and encourage Satan. We need to be silent even in our mind.

When we have conversations among ourselves, it's easy to listen to the first part of what the other person says and then start formulating our response. If we're busy coming up with things to say, then we're not really listening. We should try to hear the whole message from the other person and then think of the best possible response, listening to what God inspires us to say. Our ego keeps getting in the way, telling us what to say and think and do, instead of waiting patiently to hear out the other person.

It's even more important when listening to the Quran. We need to silence our thoughts and really hear the words coming from God. These are words directed to each of us individually. I won't hear each verse exactly the same way you do, but I won't hear it at all if I'm not silent and listening.

God gives us clear examples of those who listen or pretend to listen but cannot hear. We certainly don't want to be among these people.

[6:25] Some of them listen to you, but we place veils on their hearts to prevent them from understanding, and deafness in their ears. Thus, no matter what kind of proof they see, they cannot believe. Thus, when they come to argue with you, the disbelievers say, "These are tales from the past."

[26:223] They pretend to listen, but most of them are liars.

[47:16] Some of them listen to you, then as soon as they leave they ask those who were enlightened, "What did he just say?" GOD thus seals their hearts and, consequently, they follow only their opinions.

There's also the danger of getting swept

up in rhetoric, following someone charismatic simply because they talk well and strongly. We need to truly listen to the words coming from them, so we can judge their appropriateness. Just because someone is forceful and eloquent doesn't make them righteous. But if we truly listen, God will make it clear for us.

[63:4] When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies; beware of them. GOD condemns them; they have deviated.

Even the jinns know the value of listening. *[46:29] Recall that we directed a number of jinns to you, in order to let them hear the Quran. When they got there, they said, "Listen." As soon as it was over, they rushed to their people, warning. [46:30] They said, "O our people, we have heard a book that was revealed after Moses, and confirms the previous scriptures. It guides to the truth; to the right path. [46:31] "O our people, respond to the call of GOD, and believe in Him. He will then forgive your sins, and spare you a painful retribution."*

If they hadn't been willing to listen, they wouldn't have been able to go back to their people and pass on the message. *[72:1] Say, "I was inspired that a group of jinns listened, then said, 'We have heard a wonderful Quran. [72:2] "It guides to righteousness, and we have believed in it; we will never set up any idols besides our Lord.'" By listening, even jinns who used to be the worst enemies of God can hear and understand.*

God is always there for us. He never abandons us; He never forgets us; He is always near. Again, this verse was God speaking to Moses, but it applies to us all: *[20:46] He said, "Do not be afraid, for I will be with you, listening and watching.*

We can count on God to be listening to us. It's critical that we find the best ways to listen to Him. His words are all we need in this world in order to worship Him alone and achieve salvation. Listen to them by practicing the art of silence. It will open up our hearts to receive His message and thus find the true path to God alone.

[39:23] GOD has revealed herein the best Hadith; a book that is consistent, and points out both ways (to Heaven and Hell). The skins of those who reverence their Lord cringe therefrom, then their skins and their hearts soften up for GOD's message. Such is GOD's guidance; He bestows it upon whomever He wills. As for those sent astray by GOD, nothing can guide them.

[57:16] Is it not time for those who believed to open up their hearts for GOD's message, and the truth that is revealed herein? They should not be like the followers of previous scriptures whose hearts became hardened with time and, consequently, many of them turned wicked.

Follow the Word of God

[39:18] They are the ones who examine all words, then follow the best. These are the ones whom GOD has guided; these are the ones who possess intelligence.

Lydia

[5:7] Remember GOD's blessing upon you, and His covenant that He covenanted with you: you said, "We hear and we obey." You shall observe GOD; GOD is fully aware of the innermost thoughts.

[8:21] Do not be like those who say, "We hear," when they do not hear.

[24:51] The only utterance of the believers, whenever invited to GOD and His messenger to judge in their affairs, is to say, "We hear and we obey." These are the winners.

[50:37] This should be a lesson for everyone who possesses a mind, or is able to hear and witness.

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A REVELATION AT MEALTIME

*Many things are opened by mistake,
but none so frequently as the mouth.
The results can be revealing.*

A man sat down to supper with his family. As usual, he said grace, thanking God for the food, for the hands that prepared it, and for the source of all life.

As the meal proceeded, the man began to complain. The bread was not fresh enough, he grumbled. The cheese was too sharp. And the coffee was hotter and more bitter than he preferred. After a while, his young daughter looked at him, perplexed. "Dad," she asked, "do you think God heard the grace today?" He answered confidently, "Of course."

Then she asked, "And do you think God heard what you said about the coffee, the cheese, and the bread?" Not so confidently, he answered, "Why, yes, I believe so." The little girl concluded, "Then which do you think God believed, Dad?"

The man usually had a quick response to any question his daughter asked. Now, he sat in stunned silence. The man realized that his mealtime prayer had become a well-practiced habit in which he said words that made him look and feel good. He also saw how his real attitude, as revealed by the

spontaneous words in his complaints, was not what he wanted, or even liked.

How does this apply to our lives?

The story illustrates an interesting thing about the tongue. It can be helpful, or destructive. The tongue can encourage, or discourage. It can spread love, or spew forth venom.

The difference is not in the tongue itself. The difference is in one's heart. Many hidden diseases of the body are detected when doctors look into the mouth. Hidden diseases of the spirit and mind are revealed by what comes out of the mouth (47:30).

You see, people get the picture of whom you really are by the way you use your tongue. Fortunately, you can frame the content of that picture. Also, as Proverbs 17:28 says: *Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.*

Evaluate the words you use and your tone of voice. What pictures are you painting of yourself with the things that come out of your mouth?

But don't stop with the question of your appearance. Consider what your words and tone of voice say about your spiritual and mental conditions. Do the things that come out of your mouth reflect God's values and standards? If they don't, why not?

For our own health and happiness, let's deal with the conditions these symptoms reveal.

Asiah

[Adapted from Submitters Perspective July 1998]

[2:263] Kind words and compassion are better than a charity that is followed by insult. GOD is Rich, Clement.

[14:24] Do you not see that GOD has cited the example of the good word as a good tree whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches are high in the sky?

[41:33] Who can utter better words than one who invites to GOD, works righteousness, and says, "I am one of the submitters"?

[9:108] ... GOD loves those who purify themselves.

[24:24] The day will come when their own tongues, hands, and feet will bear witness to everything they had done.

Contact Prayers (Salat) timings app

[4:103] ... the Contact Prayers (Salat) are decreed for the believers at specific times.

By God's grace, we have a Contact Prayers (Salat) time calculator app available. Please visit:
<https://masjiduntucson.org/salat/app/>