

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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107572 - Ruling on listening to foreign music whilst studying and revising

the question

I would like to ask: is music haraam? Please note that I listen to foreign songs, but always when I am doing something, such as whilst studying or revising, or when working on the computer, as background noise. I do not allocate time to sit and listen only. In other words, it does not distract me from any obligatory duty. I do not listen to songs that provoke desire or those that have bad meanings; there may be some words that speak of love, but not in an immoral or provocative way. Is this haraam?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the songs are accompanied by musical instruments, then it is haram to make such music or listen to it, whether it is performed by a man or a woman, and whether the songs are emotional or upbeat or religious. No exception is made to that except singing that is accompanied by the daff (hand-drum) at weddings, on Eid, or when an absent loved one returns. This has been explained in detail in the answers to questions no. [5000](#) , [20406](#) and [43736](#) .

But if it is free of musical accompaniment, and the song is sung by a woman to a man, then it is haram. If it is sung by a man, with permissible words, then it is permissible, such as Islamic nasheeds with no musical accompaniment. Nevertheless, it is not appropriate to listen to them a great deal.

More than one of the scholars has stated that there was consensus on the prohibition on listening to music. Some of them pointed out the wisdom behind this prohibition, which is that music may

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have an impact on stirring up emotions and tempting people to do that which is haraam. Hence throughout the ages, music has been a symbol of evildoers, drinkers alcohol and immoral people. Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: As for flutes, stringed instruments and drums, there is no difference of opinion regarding the prohibition on listening to them. I have not heard it narrated from any of those whose opinions carry weight among the earlier generations and the leading scholars of the later generations that they permitted that. How can it not be haram, when it is the symbol of those who are given to drinking alcohol and evildoing, and it provokes desires, immorality and promiscuity? Whatever is like that, there can be no doubt about its prohibition or that the one who does it is an evildoer and a sinner. End quote from *az-Zawaajir 'an Iqtiraaf al-Kabaa'ir* (2/337).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: You may see a man who appears dignified and wise, with his face reflecting faith, the dignity of Islam and the sweetness of the Qur'an, but once he listens to music, it starts to have an impact on him, and he begins to behave irrationally, like one who lacks rational thought and modesty; he loses his integrity, wisdom and dignity, his shaytaan gloats at what he has become, his faith complains to Allah, may He be exalted, and reciting Qur'an becomes a burden to him... Thus he begins to approve of what he regarded as ugly before he began to listen to music, he will disclose what he used to conceal, and he will move from a state of dignity and tranquillity to a state of talking too much, telling lies, shifting right and left, cracking his knuckles, tilting his head, shaking his shoulders, tapping his feet on the ground, patting his head with his hand, jumping like bears, going around like a donkey around the waterwheel, clapping his hands like women, making ecstatic noises worse than the sound of bulls, sometimes sighing like one who is grieving and sometimes screaming like insane people... End quote from *Ighaathat al-Lahfaan* (1/353).

Everyone who hears music and likes it, you will find that he does not enjoy listening to the Qur'an, for the flutes of the Shaytaan and the Qur'an of the Most Merciful cannot coexist in the heart.

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Conclusion: listening to music is not permissible, whether that is whilst studying and revising, or going to sleep, and whether it distracts one from obligatory duties or not. But if it does distract from obligatory duties, then the sin is greater.

These details that you mentioned in your question are fine, if you are talking about singing with no musical accompaniment, if the singer or munshid is a man. Hence it may be said: it is permissible to listen to this nasheed if the words are clean and chaste, and if listening to it does not distract you from any obligatory duty, and you do not listen to it a great deal, to the extent that you become attached to it and it distracts you from listening to the Qur'an.

We ask Allah to guide you and make you steadfast.

And Allah knows best.