

Fast 21

“...I am commanded to be of those who submit, **and to recite the Quran**. So whoever goes aright, goes aright only for the good of his own soul, and whoever goes astray — say: I am only a warner.” — Ch. 27, v. 91–92.

“And you are not (engaged) in any matter nor you **recite** concerning it any portion of the Quran, and you do no work, but We are witness of you when you are engaged in it.” — Ch. 10, v. 61.

Notes: The very name *Quran* itself means reciting, and it is the most widely recited book in the world. In the first passage the Holy Prophet is commanded to recite the Quran, and this command applies to every Muslim. The practice of reciting the Quran has played the most important part in preserving the text of the Quran with full accuracy. According to the second verse above, all good works bear fruit, which is the meaning of God being a witness to all that a person does.

“So when you **recite** the Quran, seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil. Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord. His authority is only over those who befriend him and those who set up partners with Him.” — Ch. 16, v. 98–100.

Notes: It is on the basis of this verse that one says *a ‘ūdhu bil-Allāhi min ash-shaiṭān ir-rajīm*, “I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil”, before beginning recitation of the Quran. The reason is to remind us that the purpose of reciting the Quran is to bring such pure thoughts into our minds, and thereby improve our actions, that we are safe in our lives from following our evil inclinations.

“And when the Quran is **recited**, listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.” — Ch. 7, v. 204.

Notes: Remaining silent is not only because respect must be shown to the recitation but one should concentrate on listening to it. The listeners should also be given the opportunity to understand its meaning, by translation and explanation.

“And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran but make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.” — Ch. 41, v. 26.

“And when you **recite** the Quran (O Prophet), We place between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a hidden barrier; and We put coverings on their hearts and a deafness in their ears that they may not understand it; and when you mention your Lord alone in the Quran, they turn their backs in aversion.” — Ch. 17, v. 45–46.

Notes: The first verse shows that the opponents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad tried to prevent people from listening to the Quran and they would disrupt its reading by making noise to drown it out. It is such people who are mentioned in the second passage. The second passage does not mean that whenever anyone recites the Quran, Allah prevents the non-believers from understanding it by placing the barrier, the coverings and the deafness mentioned here (or that this happened when the Holy Prophet used to recite the Quran). Those non-believers are meant who themselves felt an aversion to listening to the Quran because it taught that God was One (“your Lord alone”), and *they* turned their backs. The barrier, the coverings and the deafness came about as a result of their own action.

This mention of some non-believers being prevented from “understanding” the Quran when it was recited before them shows clearly that the purpose of recitation was to make people understand the Quran, and therefore those who believe in the Quran must try to understand it when it is recited before them.

Inspiring sayings

Maulana Muhammad Ali, quoting verses from a poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, said in a Friday *khutba*:

“My soul is burning in grief because of this Holy Book, so consumed by fire am I that there is left no hope for my survival.

O head of all created beings! ask for help, this is the time help is required; for there is no gardener left to take care of your orchard.

Here he (i.e. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in this poem) addresses the Holy Prophet, asking him also to seek help as there was no gardener left in his orchard.”

— *A Mighty Striving*, page 303.