

The Status of Music in Islām

Written by Saleem Bhimji

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Since time immemorial, the issue of music has been debated by various sectors of the Muslim world. Both sides in the debate have brought their proofs and arguments with the hope of making the other side see “the light” and thus bring an end to this time consuming dilemma. It is not the purpose of this short article to bring all the evidence in regards to the ruling of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ in regards to music; rather, we will suffice with the minimum, with the hopes that Inshā-Allāh, it will help and guide the Muslims – especially the youth – to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.

Before discussing the ruling of music, a few of the Islāmic (‘Arabic) terms must be defined that are constantly referred to in this article, in the different aḥādīth and in the various books of Aḥkām. These include the following:

Muṭrib: The definition of Muṭrib is:

خَفَّةٌ يَعْتَرِي الْإِنْسَانَ لَشِدَّةِ حُزْنٍ أَوْ سُرُورٍ

They (the scholars of Islām and the ‘Arabic language) have said that: *Muṭrib sounds are those which cause a person to become carefree, happy or sad (bring about a change in one’s emotions).*

Ghinā: The ‘Ulamā have defined Ghinā as such:

مُدُّ الصَّوْتِ الْمُشْتَمِلُ عَلَى التَّرْجِيحِ الْمَطْرِبِ

Ghinā is the prolonging of the voice, along with a change of pitch in the throat, such that it would be suitable for gatherings of vain and futile pleasure (muṭrib).

In itself, a pleasing sound or reciting something in a pleasing way does not constitute Ghinā. Rather Ghinā is explained as the prolonging of the sound along with a change in the pitch in such a way that is suitable for vain and futile gatherings and assemblies of sinning (such as nightclubs, discos, dance-halls, etc...).

Lahw: This is an ‘Arabic term which is used extensively in Islāmic jurisprudence and it means anything that is vain or futile. Sometimes, it will be used to refer to a place such as

when the scholars refer to music that is played or used in places where vain or futile acts are taking place such as the nightclub, disco, etc; and sometimes it refers to a particular act or certain acts that are done with no use or purpose behind them except to ‘waste time’.

Music: When we talk about Music, we are actually referring to the complete piece of work that one is listening to which includes the sounds (instruments) and the lyrics.



When we refer to the dictionary, we see the following definition of music¹:

music (myzk)

n. Abbr. mus.

1. The art of arranging sounds in time so as to produce a continuous, unified, and evocative composition, as through melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre.
2. Vocal or instrumental sounds possessing a degree of melody, harmony, or rhythm.
 - a. A musical composition.
 - b. The written or printed score for such a composition.
 - c. Such scores considered as a group: *We keep our music in a stack near the piano.*
3. A musical accompaniment.
4. A particular category or kind of music.
5. An aesthetically pleasing or harmonious sound or combination of sounds: *the music of the wind in the pines.*

In the religion of Islām and the Fiqh of the Ahl al-Baīt ﷺ, listening to *forbidden music* has been counted as one of the *major sins*.

In the famous book, *The Major Sins* written by the martyred scholar Āyatullāh Sayyid Dastghaib ash-Shirāzī, he wrote the following concerning the sin of listening to and indulging in music (this has been listed as sin number 15 in his monumental work):

¹ This definition has been taken from the electronic version of Webster’s Dictionary found on www.dictionary.com.

MUSIC

Playing instruments of music is a great Sin. It is *ḥarām* to play instruments such as the guitar, piano, tambourine, drums etc. Listening to music is also a great sin. Music as a great sin is reported by Faḍl ibn Sha‘ḍān from Imām ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā عليه السلام:

“And to be engrossed in musical instruments is also one of the great sins.”

All the Mujtahids are unanimous in their opinion that the manufacturing, selling and purchasing of musical instruments is *ḥarām* (forbidden) and any income derived from musical activity is also *ḥarām*. The transactions involving these (instruments) are invalid (*bāṭil*). It is *ḥarām* to keep instruments of music in one’s possession - it is obligatory to destroy them. This is revealed in a lengthy tradition from Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام as recorded in the book *“Tuhaf al-‘Uqūl”*. Similarly, Shaykh Ḥurr al-Āmulī (the compiler of the famous collection of ḥadīth entitled *Wasā’il ash-Shī‘a*) records the following tradition from Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام:

“The Almighty Allah has prohibited the manufacturing of all such things that are exclusively used in ḥarām ways; and things that only create evil such as the pipe, flute, chess and all types of instruments of gambling, images and statues. The manufacturing of all such articles is ḥarām.”

The Imām عليه السلام concluded, *“Thus even learning to sing or play music, teaching it, to be paid for these things, or to be in any way engrossed in these vices is ḥarām.”*

Music - According to the Aḥādīth (Traditions)

Some more traditions prohibiting music are given below.

Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام reports from the Holy Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم that he said: *“I prohibit for you dancing and playing flute and drums.”* (*Al-Kāfi*)

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also said: *“The Almighty Allāh has sent me as a mercy to the worlds and to guide the people. He ordered me to eradicate the playing of flute, other instruments of music, all games of vice, idol (worship) and all practices of the days of ignorance.”* (*Mustadrakul Wasā’il*, Chapter 79)

Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: *“A person who has received blessings from Allāh and while having*

these blessings, he plays the flute, it is as if he has been thankless of the blessings.” (*Wasā’il ash-Shī‘a*)

Let us remember that every moment of our lives, we are enjoying Allāh’s ﷻ unlimited benevolence.

Music Causes Shamelessness and Hypocrisy

The Sixth Imām, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad عليه السلام has also stated: *“The playing of the violin promotes the growth of hypocrisy in the heart like water assists the growth of vegetation (algae).”* (*Wasā’il ash-Shī‘a*)

The Imām عليه السلام also says: *“If drums and cymbals are played at one’s house, then for forty days, Allāh will impose a Satan by the name of ‘Qafandar’. The satans will infiltrate into every cell of the person’s body. With the spread of this evil, the person loses all sense of dignity and self-esteem. One will then not care as to what he says or what is said about him. Then, this Satan will blow into this person and as a result, one will become utterly shameless. So much so that he will not be concerned or affected even if his women are dishonoured.”* (*Wasā’il ash-Shī‘a*)

It is usually observed that people in whose homes music is played on a regular basis, either using musical instruments, by radio or cassettes, are absolutely shameless and wanton.

Musicians and Songs

Muaddal Ibn Ziyād says: *“I was in the company of Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام when a person said, ‘When I go to the toilet, I can hear the singing girls of my neighbour. Sometimes, I remain (in the toilet) a bit longer so that I may listen to more of it.’ Imām عليه السلام replied: ‘Desist from listening to music and songs attentively.’ Then this man further said, ‘Master, I do not go to music gatherings! I only hear the sounds!’ The Sixth Imām عليه السلام said, ‘Have you not read the Quranic verse: **“Surely, the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that?”** (Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl 17:36)*

The man replied: *“I was not aware of this verse and thus, I regret my actions. I shall not listen (to music) in the future. I repent for my past sins and I seek forgiveness from my Lord.”*

Seeing his condition, Imām عليه السلام said: *“Get up! Go perform ghusl, offer Ṣalāt and pray for your forgiveness. You have certainly been involved in a deadly sin and a terrible situation. You have repented for it and I thank Allāh for that; and I seek forgiveness of Allāh for all those things that He dislikes. Certainly, Allāh only dislikes the evil things.*

Leave the evil things for the evil people, because there are different people suitable for different things.” (Al-Kāfi - Chapter on Music)

Divine Bounties (Barakah) are Removed

Amīr al-Mo'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام says: “*Angels do not even enter a house in which there is wine, drums, tambourines or a flute. Even the prayers of the inhabitants of this house are not accepted. They are deprived of any barakah.*” (*Wasāil ash-Shi'a*)

Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā عليه السلام has said: “*To listen to a musical instrument is one of the major sins.*” (*Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*)

Blackened Face of the Musician

The Holy Prophet of Islām صلى الله عليه وآله has stated: “*A person who possesses a sitār will be raised on the Day of Judgement with a black face. His hands will be holding a sitār of fire. Seventy thousand angels with maces of fire will hit him on the face and the head. The singer will arise from his grave - blind, deaf and dumb. The adulterer will be similarly raised. The player of flute will also be made to rise in this way, as will be the drum player.*” (*Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*)

It means that all such people will appear on the field of “Mahshar” (on the day of reckoning) as blind, deaf and dumb.

Houses Where Music is Played for Forty Days

Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā عليه السلام has said: “*A person invites Divine wrath when instruments like flute, drum and chess are played for forty days in his house. If this man dies within these forty days, his death would be of a sinner and a transgressor. His place shall be in Hell and what a dreadful place this is!*” (*Mustanad al-Taraqi*)

Music in the Last Period of Time

The traditions concerning the signs of the last stage before the return of our twelfth Holy Imām عجل الله تعالي فرجه الشريف mentions the following about music:

“*You shall see that music will be so prevalent that no one will dissuade others, nor will one find in one self the need to do so. You shall see that music will be openly played even in the two sanctuaries (the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah).*” (*Mustanade Narāqi*)

This is what we see in the present age where obscene music is openly played: in the markets, on the streets, in shops, in houses and even cars, and no one bothers to prevent it!

So far we have mentioned the punishment in the hereafter for the playing or listening to music. Now, we shall discuss the evils of music that affect one's life on earth.

These evils too are numerous; and scholars have compiled complete books on this subject. For example there are the following books in Persian: “*Munazrah Doctor-o-Peer - A Discussion between a Doctor and Patient*”, “*Balahae Ijtemai - Societal Problems*”, “*Mauseeqi-o-Islām - Music and Islam*”, etc.

Effects of Music on the Nervous System

Expert Doctors, Scientists and Biologists have defined two types of nerves - the principal nerves and the arterial nerves. The principal nerves stretch from the neck to all vital organs; while the arterial nerves spread from the main nerves to all parts of the body. The secondary nerves are connected to outward parts of the body and convey the messages to the brain. When the veins enlarge, the blood pressure decreases. Due to the shriveling of blood vessels, the blood pressure increases. When the blood pressure varies at different parts of the body, thus as a result, it affects the health.

The secondary nerves work to produce heat, whereas the function of the central nerves is to produce the opposite effect. It is due to these nerves that feelings of sloth, sleep, thoughtlessness, forgetfulness, grief, sorrow, fainting, unconsciousness and even death occur.

Since music affects various nerves, it can give rise to various maladies. Mental diseases, as well as physical ailments can also occur, and these mental effects can destroy man's reasoning capacity. It is for this reason that one who listens to music is unable to perform work that can be accomplished by a sane person.

Music creates vibrations in the body which are conveyed to all parts of the body through the nervous system. As a result of this, indigestion occurs. Music affects the heart in such a way that the heart beats become irregular. The blood pressure goes awry. All such ailments make a person permanently ill.

Consequently, even modern medical science, in spite of its astonishing progress, fails in such a situation. Sometimes, the music is so intense that the listeners lose their sanity; and they become dumb and various kinds of mental

diseases occur. In places where music is more prevalent, we find that there are more neurotic illnesses. It is for this reason that more mental hospitals are found in Europe and America.

Dr. Adlen writes against music, “Even though it seems pleasant, the effects of music is profound upon the nervous system. Especially, when the temperature is high, the ill effect of music is more. This is the reason that ill effects of music are more in the hot areas of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The American people are so disgusted with the bane of music that they have united to demand from the senate a permanent ban on music. It is a pity that the whole world clearly perceives the evils of music but yet still adopt it as entertainment.”

(Refer to the booklet; “*Tasir Mausiqa bar Asaab – The Effects of Music on Parts of the Body*” Pg. 3, 6,10)



Initially, it may seem unrealistic that any pleasing or harmonious sound could be forbidden and one will be given such a painful punishment for indulging in such a thing, but there is no need to be amazed. Inshā-Allāh, by the end of this article, that which is forbidden will be made clear, and that which is allowed will also be made clear.

In Islām, the term Ghinā is used in reference to “singing” and as explained in the beginning of this article, not every pleasing sound or voice in which the pitch is changed up and down can be classified as singing – thus making it forbidden to listen to.

From this, it is clear that not all sounds that are pleasing are forbidden. However, if one recites something in a manner in which those listening would think he/she is reciting it in a way of singing, then it crosses the boundaries of permissibility making it Ghina and a sin. It makes no difference if what is being recited is Qur’ān, a Duā, Nawhās (poetry in praise of the Prophet, or the Ahl al-Baīt recited during the months of Muḥarram, Ṣafar, and other times), or anything else.

Who was the founder of Music?

لَمَّا مَاتَ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَشَمَتَ بِهِ إِبْلِيسُ وَقَايِلُ فَاجْتَمَعَا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَجَعَلَ إِبْلِيسُ وَقَايِلُ الْمَعَارِفَ وَالْمَلَاهِي شَمَائَةً

بَادَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَكُلُّ مَا كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ هَذَا الضَّرْبِ الَّذِي يَتَلَذَّذُ بِهِ النَّاسُ فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.

“When Ādam (peace be upon him) passed away, Iblis and Qābil (the son of Ādam) were delighted. They both gathered on the Earth and Iblis and Qābil used a Ma‘āzif (stringed instrument – violin, guitar, piano, etc...) and the Malāhiyah (any type of musical instrument) to rejoice on the death of Ādam (peace be upon him). Thus, whatever types of instruments are on the Earth that people derive pleasure from are from these instruments (that they had first used).

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِبْلِيسَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ تَغَنَّى.

The Prophet of Allāh (blessings of Allāh be upon him and his family) said: “Iblis was the first person to play music/sing.”

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ ﷺ مَنْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِنِعْمَةٍ فَجَاءَ عِنْدَ تِلْكَ النِّعْمَةِ بِمَزْمَارٍ فَقَدْ كَفَرَهَا أُصِيبَ بِمُصِيبَةٍ فَجَاءَ عِنْدَ تِلْكَ الْمُصِيبَةِ بِنَائِحَةٍ فَقَدْ كَفَرَهَا.

Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) had said: “When a person is graced with a blessing from Allāh and with this blessing, the person goes towards music, then verily he has been ungrateful to Him. As well, if a person is afflicted with trials and tribulations and he responds to them by sighs or lamenting, then too, verily he has been ungrateful to Him.”

As for the punishment of one who listens to Music, we read the following narrations from the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahl al-Baīt:

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ ﷺ إِنَّ شَيْطَانًا يُقَالُ لَهُ الْقَفَنْدَرُ إِذَا ضُرِبَ فِي مَنْزِلِ رَجُلٍ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا بِالرِّبْطِ وَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ الرَّجُلُ وَضَعَ ذَلِكَ الشَّيْطَانُ كُلَّ عِضْوٍ مِنْهُ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ مِنْ صَاحِبِ الْبَيْتِ ثُمَّ نَفَخَ فِيهِ نَفْخَةً فَلَا يَغَارُ بَعْدَهَا حَتَّى تُؤْتَى نِسَاؤُهُ فَلَا يَغَارُ.

Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said: “Verily Shaiṭān is referred to as al-Qafandar (one with a bad face) because he spends forty days in the house of a person who plays drums and cymbals. The Shaiṭān strokes all the parts of the person’s body (so that the eyes, ears, tongue and all other parts of the body are placed under the control of Shaiṭān so that they can all fall into

sin). After this, in order to completely drown the person in evil and darkness, Shaitān blows a wind into this person, making him become utterly shameless so much so, that even if his own wife was to have unlawful relations with another person, he would not be concerned or affected.” (Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 432)

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: بَيْتُ الْغِنَاءِ لَا تُؤْمِنُ فِيهِ الْفَجِيعَةُ وَلَا تُجَابُ فِيهِ الدَّعْوَةُ وَلَا يَدْخُلُهُ الْمَلَكُ.

Imām Ja'far ibn Muḥammad as-Sādiq (peace be upon him) further said: “Those who live in a house in which music is played are not protected from painful death and troubles, their supplications are not answered, and the Angels do not enter (their house).” (Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 433)

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا، اللَّهُ مُعْرِضٌ عَنْ أَهْلِهَا.

Imām Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (peace be upon him) said: “Do not enter into the houses which due to committing sins (listening to music) have been prevented from enjoying the mercy of Allāh.” (Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 432)

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ضَرْبُ الْعِيدَانِ يُنْبِتُ النَّفَاقَ فِي الْقَلْبِ كَمَا يُنْبِتُ الْمَاءُ الْخَضِرَةَ.

Imām Ja'far ibn Muḥammad as-Sādiq (peace be upon him) said: “Playing music (for example hitting the drum, etc...) makes hypocrisy grow in the heart, just like water makes vegetation grow.” (Usūl al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 434)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِنَّمَا نُهَيْتُ عَنْ صَوْتَيْنِ أَحْمَقَيْنِ فَاجِرَيْنِ: صَوْتُ عِنْدَ نَعْمَةٍ لَهُ وَمَزَامِيرَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَصَوْتُ عِنْدَ مُصِيبَةٍ خَمَشَ وَجْهُهُ وَشَقَّ جُيُوبَ وَرَنَةِ شَيْطَانٍ.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “Verily I prohibit you from two types of sounds which are useless and vain - one is the sound of the vain song or chant and the sound of Shaitān that misguides people; and the other is the crying that one does when he hears of a problem which is accompanied by the scratching of the face, ripping of the clothes and the satanic sound of crying accompanied with this.” (Al-Ghadīr, Volume 8, Page 235 | Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Volume 13, Page 218)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: قَالَ لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ خَمْرٌ أَوْ دَفٌّ أَوْ طُبُورٌ أَوْ نَرْدٌ وَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ دَعَاؤُهُمْ وَتَرْتَفَعُ عَنْهُمْ الْبَرَكَةُ.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “The Angels do not enter into that house in which there is alcohol, a drum, a tanbour or cards (gambling instruments); their supplications are not answered and the blessings are removed from them.” (Wasā'il ash-Shi'a, Volume 12, Page 235 | Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Volume 13, Page 218)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: الْغِنَاءُ رُقِيَّةُ الزِّنَا.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “Singing (music) is close to adultery.” (Ad-Dur al-Manthūr, Volume 5, Page 308 | Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Volume 13, Page 215 (new print))

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغِنَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْقُصُ الْحَيَاءَ وَيزِيدُ فِي الشَّهْوَةِ وَ يَهْدِمُ الْمُرُوءَةَ وَ إِنَّهُ لَيُنُوبُ عَنْ الْخَمْرِ وَيَفْعَلُ لِسَكْرِ فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا بَدْ فَاعْلَيْنَ فَجَنَّبُوهُ النَّسَاءَ فَإِنَّ الْغِنَاءَ دَاعِيَةُ الزِّنَا.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “Stay away from ghinā (singing and music) because it destroys the shame (modesty) and increases the sexual excitement. It kills ones manliness and verily leads one to alcohol and he will then become drunk. Thus, if you are lead into music, then stay away from women since music and singing will lead a person to commit adultery.” (Ad-Dur al-Manthūr, Volume 5, Page 308)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى بَعَثَنِي هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ وَ أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَمْحُو الْمَزَامِيرَ وَ الْمَعَارِفَ وَ الْأَوْتَارَ وَ الْأَوْثَانَ وَ أُمُورَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ إِلَى أَنْ قَالَ إِنَّ آلَاتِ الْمَزَامِيرِ شِرَاؤُهَا وَ بَيْعُهَا وَ ثَمْنُهَا وَ التَّجَارَةُ بِهَا حَرَامُ الْخَبَرِ.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “Verily Allāh, the Highest appointed me to guide (mankind) and as a mercy for the entire universe, and commanded me to remove the Mazāmir (a type of drum), the Mā'azif (a stringed instrument such as a piano, violin, guitar, etc...), the autār and the awthān as well as the acts of the period of Ignorance.” He then said, “Verily the instruments of music, its construction, selling, profit and trading (of them) are all forbidden.” (Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Volume 13, Page 219)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: يُخْشَرُ صَاحِبُ الطَّنْبُورِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ هُوَ أَسْوَدُ الْوَجْهِ وَ بِيَدِهِ طُنْبُورٌ مِنْ نَارٍ وَ فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ

مَلَكٌ يَبْدُ كُلِّ مَلَكٍ مَقْمَعَةٌ يَضْرِبُونَ رَأْسَهُ وَ وَجْهَهُ وَ يُحْشَرُ
صَاحِبُ الْغِنَاءِ مِنْ قَبْرِهِ أَعْمَى وَ أَخْرَسَ وَ أَبْكَمَ وَ يُحْشَرُ
الرَّانِي مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ وَ صَاحِبُ الْمِزْمَارِ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ وَ صَاحِبُ
الدَّفِّ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “The person who plays the drum will be raised on the Day of Judgement while his face will be black and in his hands will be a drum made of fire. Above his head will be 70,000 angels and in the hand of each of them will be a chain, which they will hit against that person’s head and face. The person who sang will be brought forth from his grave blind, deaf and mute. The one who performed adultery will be gathered and raised in the same manner. The one who played the wood instrument will be the same, and so will the player of the drum.” (Mustadarak al-Wasā’il, Volume 13, Page 219)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَنْ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى اللَّهْوِ يُذَابُ فِي أُذُنِهِ الْإِنِّكَ.

The Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him and his family) said: “One who listens to lahw (music or any vain talk) will have hot molten lead poured into his ears on the Day of Judgement.” (Mustadarak al-Wasā’il, Volume 13, Page 222)

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقِ ﷺ الْمَغْنَبَةُ مَلْعُونَةٌ وَمَنْ آذَاهَا مَلْعُونٌ
وَأَكَلَ كَسْبَهَا مَلْعُونٌ.

Imām Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said: “The female slave girl or woman who sings is cursed, and so is the one who gives her money, as well one who spends that money is also cursed.” (Safīnatul Biḥār, Volume 2, Page 32)

The Reward of One Who Keeps Away From Music

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُوسَى الرِّضَا ﷺ قَالَ مَنْ نَزَّهَ نَفْسَهُ عَنِ
الْغِنَاءِ فَإِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ شَجَرَةً يَأْمُرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ الرِّيحَ أَنْ
تُحَرِّكَهَا فَيَسْمَعُ لَهَا صَوْتًا لَمْ يَسْمَعْ بِمِثْلِهِ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَتَنَزَّ عَنْهُ
لَمْ يَسْمَعْهُ.

Imām ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (peace be upon him) said: “One who stays away from Ghinā will be given a tree in Paradise in its place which Allāh (SWT) will order the wind

to move. A beautiful sound will come from that tree filling up paradise – a sound which no person till today has ever heard. However, a person who did not keep away from Ghinā will never hear that sound.”

The Holy Qur’ān and Music

In addition to the aḥādīth, there are numerous verses of the Qur’ān dealing with “music” as we know it today, and in actuality, anything which is vain or futile. Allāh ﷻ has mentioned:

... فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

“So abstain from the pollution of the idols and abstain from false, vain words.” (al-Qur’ān 22:30)

The Arabic word Zūr (false, vain words) has several meanings some of which include falsehood and the musical expressions. According to Imām Ja‘far as-Ṣādiq ﷺ “pollution of the idols” means chess; and “vain words” means music. In this verse we see how Allāh ﷻ compares refraining from “idols”, with staying away from “vain words” or music!

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

“And amongst people there is he who buys ‘vain talk’ so that he may lead others astray from the path of Allah without (real) knowledge and takes it (the revelation of Allah) for a mockery; for these shall be a disgracing chastisement (punishment).” (al-Qur’ān 31:6)

‘Lahw’ means anything that diverts the mind from serious thinking. “Vain talk” has been interpreted by the Imām as any talk, sound or thing which diverts the attention of man from the ultimate aim of his creation, in other words, it makes him forget Allāh ﷻ and His commands: example, fictions, romantic stories, novels, and such literature and as well as all useless talk. It includes music, intoxicants and all such diversions. (Tafsīr As-Ṣāfi)

Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir ﷺ said: “Music is among the things for which Allāh has promised the Fire (of Hell). Then he recited the above verse.” (al-Kāfi; Wasāil ash-Shīa; Tafsīr As-Ṣāfi)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾

“Successful indeed are the believers those who in their prayers are humble and those who keep themselves aloof from vain (words and deeds).” (Holy Qur’ān 23:1-3)

What does the word ‘Lahw’ (vain words and actions) mean in this verse? The first Imām, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام said that “all that is void of the remembrance of Allah is ‘lahw’”.

According to other authentic traditions of the A’immah, ‘lahw’ means all useless entertainment, wasteful of times among which music has been specifically mentioned. Also included in this term are vain games which are played just to waste time.

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

“(And the servants of the Merciful Allāh are those...) who bear not witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain they pass with dignity.” (Holy Qur’ān 25:72)

The words ‘Zūr’ and ‘Lahw’ have been explained earlier. According to the traditions from the A’immah عليهم السلام, the first part may also be translated in this way: “who do not witness what is vain;” and accordingly, it has been interpreted in the exegesis of the Qur’ān as “do not listen to music.”

The following two traditions explain the second part of the verse:

1) Imām Ja’far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام asked some of his companions: “Where are you staying?” They replied: “With so and so, who has singing and dancing girls.” Imam said: “You should have dignity.” They thought that the Imām عليه السلام had advised them to treat the host generously. But they were not sure so they returned to the Imām عليه السلام and requested him to explain the meaning of it to them. The Imām عليه السلام said: “Have you not heard Allāh saying ‘when they pass by what is vain they pass with dignity’?” The Imām عليه السلام meant that you should not stay with a man who has singing and dancing girls.

2) Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Ibād was known to indulge in music and liquor. He once asked Imām ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā عليه السلام about listening to music. The Imām عليه السلام said: “Some people in Hijaz have their own view about it; but that view is absolutely wrong. Have you not heard the word of Allāh ‘when they pass by what is vain they pass in dignity’?” Meaning that his opinion regarding music was that those who ‘heard’ it, would pass by it and pay it no heed.

عَنْ أَبِي بَصِيرٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: ((فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ)) قَالَ: الْغِنَاءُ.

It has been narrated from Abī Baṣīr that he said, “I asked Abā ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام regarding the words of Allāh, The Glorious and Great, ‘...and stay away from the filth of the idols and stay away from the vain talk.’ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, Verse 30 The Imām said, ‘This is Ghinā’” (Al-Kāfī, Volume 6, Page 431)

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: ((فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ)) قَالَ: الرِّجْسُ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ الشَّطْرَنْجُ وَقَوْلُ الزُّورِ الْغِنَاءُ.

It has been narrated from Abī ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام that he said regarding the words of Allāh, the Glorious and Great, ‘...and stay away from the filth of the idols and stay away from the vain talk.’ That he said, “The filth of the idols is **chess** and the vain talk is **ghinā**.” (Tafsīr Nūr ath-Thaqalāin, Volume 3, Page 496)

((وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ) أَيْ مَجَالِسِ الْفَسَاقِ وَلَا يَخْصُرُونَ الْبَاطِلَ...)

“...and those people who do not witness false speech.” Means the gatherings of the immoral (people) and those who are not surrounded by false (speech).

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: الْغِنَاءُ مِمَّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّارَ وَ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: ((وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ يَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ))

It has been narrated that Abī Ja’far عليه السلام said: “Ghinā is that (sin) which Allāh, the Glorious and the High, has promised the hell-fire.” The Imām then read the following verse of the Qur’ān: “And among the people is he who purchases vain talk so as to mislead people from the path of Allāh without knowledge and he takes that (vain talk) as treat it as a matter of fun. Verily for them is a punishment.” (Al-Kāfī, Volume 6, Page 431)

الْغِنَاءِ مَجْلِسٌ لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَهُوَ مِمَّا قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ:
 ((وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ))

Imām Ja'far ؑ said: "A gathering in which there is Ghinā is one in which Allāh does not even look upon the people in attendance (meaning His blessings and mercy are taken away from the people in such a gathering) and it is this kind of a gathering that Allāh, the Glorious, the High has said, "And amongst the people is he who purchases vain talk to mislead people from the path of Allāh." (Al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 433)

A man said, "I was in the presence of Imām Ja'far as-Ṣādiq ؑ when someone said to him, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! My neighbor has a slave girl who sings while using the Oud (a type of musical instrument). When I need to go to the washroom, I delay my stay there so as to be able to listen to her longer!'"

The Imām ؑ replied: "Do not do this! On the Day of Judgement, you will have no excuse or justification to present. Have you not heard the words of Allāh in the Qur'ān where He said, 'Verily the ears, the eyes and the heart all of them will be questioned!'" (Sūrah al-Isrā, Verse 38) The man replied, "I swear by Allāh! It is as if I have never heard this verse be it from an 'Arab or a non-'Arab. I promise to Allāh that from this day on, I will never do this again and I ask forgiveness from Him." The Imām ؑ then said, "Get up and perform a ghusl and however much you are able to, perform Ṣalāt since up until now you have been submerged in performing a major sin. What kind of a bad state you would be in were you to die like this!" (Al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Page 432, Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Volume 13, Page 221)

((وَالَّذِينَ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ)) يَعْزِي عَنِ الْغِنَاءِ وَالْمَلَاهِي.

"And those who stay away from vain talk meaning from al-Ghinā and Music." (Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalain, Volume 3, Page 539, Biḥār al-Anwār, Volume 76, Page 24)

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of aḥādīth in relation to the prohibition of music and singing, which we can not mention here. The above mentioned aḥādīth and verses of the Qur'ān should suffice for the true Shī'a and follower of the Prophet of Allāh to convince him/her that listening to various (if not all) types of music are forbidden in Islām.

Classifications of Music

In regards to the various categories of Music and how to differentiate which are permitted and which are not, these can be broken up into four groups:

1. "Music" which contains both instruments that are forbidden and lyrics that are forbidden. For example, a specific type of "music" has instruments which the Islamic Shariah does not allow such as string instruments (guitar, violin, etc...); thus any "music" which contains these instruments is forbidden.

This same "music" may also have lyrics, which are vulgar or obscene, and due to this factor too, that "music" is forbidden for a Muslim. This would include most if not all forms of *Rock & Roll*, *Country*, *Heavy Metal* music and almost all other types of Popular Music because they ALL use forbidden instruments and their lyrics talk about sex, drugs, worshipping the devil, use of vulgar language, and other obscene things.

2. "Music" which contains instruments that are forbidden, (as were mentioned above), but their lyrics are permitted – meaning that the lyrics do not enjoin or lead one to perform or think about forbidden acts.

Some examples of this type of "music" may be the traditional "Qawwali" stemming from India, Pakistan and other parts which may contain a beautiful message about Allāh, His Prophets, the Ahl al-Bait, etc..., but since they may contain unlawful musical instruments, the entire thing is forbidden. Some examples that come to mind are the late *Nusrat Fateh 'Alī Khan* and others like him.

3. "Music" which contains instruments that are permitted such as the drum and other types, but their lyrics are not permissible.

The instruments may be allowed in Islam, but unfortunately their message is negative - cursing may be involved, or for any other reason, the lyrics may not be appropriate.

Many of the *hip-hop* and *rap* music groups may fall into this category. The earlier ones may have only used a drum machine for a simple beat, but the fact that they curse, put down and outright insult women, talk about drugs, alcohol, etc... their work is useless for a true Muslim and Believer.

4. "Music" which contains instruments that are permitted (such as those mentioned above) and the lyrics are also permitted.

This type of “music” is permitted in Islām, however, it is very rare to find.

You may have certain Muslim “performers” (for lack of a better word), who recite beautiful songs in praise of Allāh, the Prophet, or on moral issues. They have only used “halal” instruments, and there is nothing in their vocals that one could raise objection to. We have some examples such as *Yusuf Islam*, *Dawud Wharmsby ‘Ali* (from Canada), and others.

To find “music” that fits into this group is very difficult but it does exist. This music, although it contains a positive message should never be substituted for the **real thing**. What we mean here is that one can listen to it for a type of ‘pleasure’ or to teach and train the younger children, but one must turn back to reading books, listening to and reading the Qur’ān and supplications, etc... to truly learn about the all-comprehensive religion al-Islām. In no circumstances should we treat this last form as ‘simple’ entertainment that we put on to pass time or to relax with.

Notes and Summary from the Verses of the Holy Qur’ān and the Āḥādīth

1. It is worthy to mention that some of the instruments used in Ghinā such as the *tanbūr*, ‘*Oud*, *Nī*, *Dāīrah*, etc... that have been mentioned in the āḥādīth have just been used as examples of instruments which were used during that time period. Therefore, in today’s day and age, any kind of Instrument for music is ḥarām.

2. The āḥādīth and the verses of the Qur’ān mentioned do not differentiate between the various categories of music. Thus, there is no difference between national and foreign music, original and non-original music, traditional and non-traditional music, etc... That which must be used as the measuring stick is if the music is one which would fall into the category of being considered as *lahw* (as was defined earlier) in which case it would be ḥarām even if it was original or traditional music of a particular country. This point is emphasized since Muslim youth usually note that since a particular Islamic country plays music or permits their traditional or cultural music, then this is allowed! We must learn to differentiate between what is Islām and the actions of a “Muslim” country – these two are not synonymous with one other!

3. From various verses of the Qur’ān, we can deduce that a person who goes after music and these types of sounds, slowly but surely, will get to a point where he will begin to mock his religion, the verses of Allāh, the Prophets and the

righteous believers of Allāh. The Qur’ān states, “Those people who chase after false words have become so drowned in sins that they begin to misguide people, and take the signs of Allāh as a joke.” (See *Sūrah Luqman*, Verse 6, *Sūrah Hījr*, Verse 11, *Sūrah Mo’minūn*, Verse 110, and *Sūrah Muṭaffīn*, Verse 29)

4. We must pay attention to the fact that Shaiṭān will approach people in various ways to misguide them. It is possible that by slipping or forgetfulness, the name of ‘Azadārī or weeping for the martyrdom of the Leader of the Shuhadā Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and the other A’immah (peace be upon all of them) one may fall into the sin of listening to or creating *ghinā*.

All the Marā’ja Taqlīd are unanimous on the fact that even the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān or Marthiya (poems) to commemorate the death of the A’immah and Imām Ḥusayn (عليه السلام) recited in the form of Ghinā is ḥarām. This is a point we all need to ponder upon when he listen to or recite Nawhā or other things similar to this in our various gatherings.

5. In reality, the complete set of rules of Allāh (ﷻ) have been communicated to us through the Prophets and Imāms (عليهم السلام) to guide us to prosperity and success, and a true Muslim is one who accepts ALL of these rules and likewise, acts upon all of them. (See *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, Verse 2 – 5, *Sūrah an-Nisā*, Verse 149 – 152, *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, Verse 2 to 4)

It is not possible for one to act according to some of them and disregard the others. A person who sins or goes out of his way to listen to music which is ḥarām or changes his state, then even though apparently the blood of faith (*īmān*) flows through his veins, however due to his actions, he shows that deep down he does not truly believe in Allāh (ﷻ).

This is the negative attribute of ‘Nifāq’ or hypocrisy that gradually, by listening to music, grows in one’s heart! It is because of this that Imām Ja’far ibn Muḥammad as-Ṣādiq (عليه السلام) said that music and ghinā leads one to hypocrisy.

6. In the narrations we read that (الغناء رقية الزنا) meaning that slowly - step by step - *ghinā* leads one to commit adultery.

It is not possible for Shaiṭān just to leave the person alone who is listening to music, singing or even associating with the people who indulge in music. Rather, he tries, day by day, to drown such a person in deeper and greater sins!

Shaiṭān begins to misguide one by introducing gatherings of sins whereby there is music, clapping and dancing (with

others). After this, comes the mixing and mingling of men and women, which leads to exciting the sexual instincts of them – especially the youth! When such a gathering takes place, it is the breeding ground for loss of shame and humility and thus adultery even takes its root.

The people who simply start out by listening to music in gatherings with their families, gradually get to a stage where they do the same in their universities, clubs and organizations; and then from there, go to merry-making, dancing, the free mixing of men and women, drinking alcohol and eventually even adultery. May Allāh protect us from all these evils.

7. From the aḥādīth it is clear that committing sins and listening to music leads to the removal of Allāh's ﷻ blessings from a society and sending down of the punishment upon them.

The final Prophet of Allāh ﷺ, Muḥammad ﷺ has said: 'A person who has fallen prey to the instruments of *lahw* and other sins should be in waiting for red wind and disgrace to fall upon the land.' (*Wasā'il ash-Shi'a, Verse 12, Page 231, Khīṣāl Shaikh Ṣaduq, 15th Section*)

One of the indisputable facts from the Qur'ān is that having *taqwa* and performing righteous acts leads to the sending down of good tidings and blessings from Allāh ﷻ whereas oppression and corruption in the society leads to being afflicted by punishments. Looking through the history of those who came before us, this fact of the Qur'ān is very clear. (See *Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 61 & 62, Sūrah Āle-Imrān, Verse 123 and after, Sūrah al-Mā'idah, Verse 66, Sūrah al-A'rāf, Verse 99, Sūrah al-Anfāl, Verse 29 and 53, Sūrah Hūd, verse 52, 57, and 117, Sūrah al-Ra'd, Verse 11, Sūrah Yūnus, Verse 98, Sūrah al-Ḥijr, Verse 66 and after, Sūrah Marium, Verse 59 and 60, Sūrah al-'Akkabūt, Verse 40, Sūrah al-Mo'min, Verse 51, Sūrah at-Ṭalāq, verse 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9*)

8. From a ḥadīth mentioned, we can conclude that using the drum during the wedding commemoration is not a problem, as long as the men and women are not present in the same gathering and the using of the drum does not lead the program to the point of being considered as *ghinā*.

However, the late Shaikh Murtaḍā Anṣārī has said that, 'it is better that even this amount is refrained from.'



From the collection of verses of the Qur'ān and the aḥādīth that have been presented in relation to music, we can

conclude that Shaiṭān was the first one on earth to indulge in music, and thus, the one on Earth today who takes charge of all parties and forbidden gatherings is none other than this sworn enemy of Mankind!

According to his own opinion, it is he who adds life to gatherings and parties through the use of various instruments and certain tactics, and keeping the people away from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and pulling them towards sin.

Therefore, if a person indulges in music, dancing and these types of gatherings, or makes music - which has many social and psychological dangers - as a part of his daily schedule of life, then slowly he will be drawn in indulging into vain and futile acts such as forbidden relations with the opposite sex (or in some cases, with the same sex!). These people, in addition to forgetting Allāh ﷻ and His bounties will also become negligent of their Islāmic responsibilities and will fall into forgetfulness of the life after death.

It is evident that once a person reaches this stage, then the punishment of any sin or evil act will not mean anything to him, and he will freely indulge in fornication, adultery, homosexuality, murder, rape, theft, and all other vices that are evident in today's society. In addition to hurting others around him, his own physical body and soul will also face many problems.

In addition, when looking at history, we see that dancing and music were two particular acts which were related to the gatherings of the Khulafā (those governors and rulers who unjustly reigned over the Muslim masses through tyranny and violence) and the oppressive kings and leaders, and those who mainly attended were the rich people of their communities.

During the tyrannical reign of the Banī Ummayah and Banī 'Abbās, the kings of Irān and other empires (may the curse of Allāh be upon all of them) these things were prevalent.

Apart from hosting such forbidden parties and gatherings, these so-called leaders were also busy in killing hundreds and thousands of innocent people – and the killing of the Prophet Yaḥyā عليه السلام and that of Imām Ḥusayn عليه السلام can be attributed to such corrupt gatherings and the people that frequented such places.

It is because of this that from the very beginning of the appearance of al-Islām by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and during the days of leadership of the A'imma عليهم السلام that music, dancing and gatherings associated with these were forbidden.

Even today, we see that the promotion of music and dancing is one of the ways that the Western powers, (especially that of the colonialists) have used to suppress the developing countries and thus they are always looking for help and handouts. In addition to corrupting their own societies, they have now moved onto the purer pastures and are trying to promote and propagate their own immoral ideas!



In closing, we present some of the rulings of the great Marā'ja Taqlid in regards to music, and singing. The letters after the question or rule in circles refer to various Marā'ja Taqlid, namely; (A) – Āyatullāh Araki; (B) – Āyatullāh Behjat; (G) – Āyatullāh Gulpāygānī; (K) – Āyatullāh Khomeini; (L) – Āyatullāh Lankarānī; (M) – Āyatullāh Makārim Shīrāzī; (S) – Āyatullāh Seestānī; (T) – Āyatullāh Tabrizī.

Music

Question: Please inform us what is meant by *entertaining music*?

Answer: That music which is used in vain gatherings and gatherings of amusement. BGKST

Question: Please inform us how to differentiate between *entertaining music* and music that is not such, especially since the common people differ concerning one particular type of music. Those who used to listen to music in the past for example, would say that it is *entertaining music*, and others that have not heard that type of music will say that it is not *entertaining music*; in either scenario, what is one's responsibility in this difference? Is it permitted to listen to such types of music?

Answer: The basis of determining *entertaining music* is either one's own certainty that that kind of music is *entertaining music*, or else one can refer to the common people. In the event that one is in doubt, it is not a problem to listen to it. ABKLMS

Answer: The basis of determining *entertaining music* is either one's own certainty or those who have knowledge (of music) inform him. Notwithstanding, in the event that someone else does not tell him something that contradicts the speech of those who have knowledge (regarding music). However, if the common people have a difference in regards to a type of music such that the person doubts whether it is *entertaining music* or not, then in this case

listening to it, according to Iḥtiyāṭ Wājib, is not permitted. T

Question: What is the meaning of *entertaining music*?

Answer: *Entertaining music* is that which changes a person's mental state into one that is not normal, and brings about pleasure and joy. L

Rule: It is not a problem to listen to or compose 'War Songs', or music that is used at the time of war or 'Azadāri' – in summary, whatever type of music that is not considered as *entertaining music* that would change one's mental state (is allowed). ABKMST

Question: If a person does not get stimulated or aroused by listening to music, then what is the ruling for him listening to such types (of music)?

Answer: The basis for music being ḥarām is that which the general public consider as *entertaining music* or otherwise, and it does not matter whether a particular individual becomes stimulated or not (by listening to it). ABKLMST

General Rule

Therefore, listening to or producing any type of *entertaining music* is ḥarām, whether because of that (*entertaining music*), one would become stimulated by it or not, and whether one would gain pleasure from it or not. It makes no difference if the music brings one happiness or sadness; whether it is traditional music or otherwise; Iranian or non-Iranian; whether it be in a wedding ceremony or anywhere else.

In the event that the music is not *entertaining music*, then it is not a problem to listen to or compose it. If a certain type of music is doubtful (one does not know whether it is *entertaining music* or not), then it is not a problem for one to listen to or compose it (according to most of the Marā'ja Taqlid).

Question: Is it permissible to listen to certain types of music if we are listening to it without the intention of it being a vain and futile act? For example, music that is said to be good to calm and soothe the body, or music that some doctors recommend (their patients to listen to) for healing, or music that has been composed for the war in which there is no intention of vain and futile acts?

Answer: In all instances, as long as the music is not *entertaining music*, then it is not a problem to listen to it. ABKLMST

Rule: It is ḥarām to listen to *entertaining music* and singing, however hearing these (without paying attention to them) is not a problem. T

☪ Summary: Sometimes a person listens to music and is actually paying attention to it – this is ḥarām; however if a person simply hears the music but is not paying attention to it – then in this instance, it is not a problem. An example of this is if music can be heard from the house of one's neighbours; or someone else who is listening to *entertaining music* drives by, but the person pays no attention to it – in these instance, even if the person hears the music, it is not a problem (because he did not intend to want to listen to it).

Reciting

Rule: It is not a problem for men to recite, as long as it is not in the form of *Ghinā* and there is no corruption involved with it. BKLMST

Question: Please clarify to us what Ghinā means. Does reciting something in a pleasing way constitute Ghinā?

Answer: A pleasing sound, or reciting something in a pleasing way in itself does not constitute Ghinā, rather Ghinā can be explained as: prolonging the sound, along with a change in the pitch in such a way that is suited to vain and futile gatherings and assemblies of music and sinning. K

Answer: Ghina can be explained as something that takes place in the gatherings of the people of corruption. B

Answer: Ghinā is a sound in which the tone comes from the throat which the common people refer to as singing, it causes excitement in the person, and is suitable for gatherings of vain and futile entertainment. L

Answer: If a text, poem or prose is read in such a way that it would be appropriate for gatherings of vain and futile entertainment, then it would be considered as Ghinā. ST

Question: In auspicious occasions, is it permissible to recite songs, poetry, various supplications or poems in praise of the Sinless Imāms (peace be upon all of them) which contain a virtuous message with a good voice?

Answer: To recite anything - whether it be poetry, prose, Qur'ān, or poem in praise of the Pure Imāms - in any form that would be considered as *Ghinā* is ḥarām; and to recite the Qur'ān, supplications or things such as this in the form

of Ghinā would actually incur more of a punishment. BKLMST

In closing, one point should be mentioned regarding what some may see as an apparent 'conflict' between what has been written by the late Dastghaib Shirāzī in his book, *The Major Sins* as well as other teachers of Akhlāq and Irfān and what some of the Marā'ja Taqlid have expressed in regards to learning, teaching or listening to music and addition to the listening of certain instruments which may indeed be permitted according to the Marā'ja.

The 'Ulama of Fiqh teach us the 'minimum' requirements for a Muslim and what he or she must refrain from to be protected from the punishment of Allāh ﷻ. By following them, we can be 'guaranteed' our spot in Paradise since we have performed that which Allāh ﷻ has commanded us to do and refrained from that which He has prohibited us from.

On the other hand, the teachers of Akhlāq or Etiquette teach us the spiritual path of Islām, which will not only keep us away from the hell-fire, but will raise our rank and station in the Hereafter.

As it has been said, following the rulings of our Marja' makes us fall into the fold of being called a Muslim, whereas following what the teachers of Akhlāq have conveyed to us makes us enter into the level of being called a Mo'min or true believer.

Thus, although some forms of music may be permitted according to the Fiqh of Islām, but if one wants to reach to that station of proximity to Allāh ﷻ in this world, and one of closeness to the Prophet and his Ahl al-Baīt ﷺ in the hereafter, it is necessary to refrain from even those things which may be permitted – music being one of them.

Inshā-Allāh, it is hoped that with this short article, issues and confusions regarding Music is made clear and that those types of Music which are indubitably forbidden are shunned. May Allāh (SWT) guide us all to His pleasure.