

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: O YOU who have attained to faith! Do not say [to the Prophet], "Listen to us," but rather say, "Have patience with us," and hearken [unto him], since grievous suffering awaits those who deny the truth. ⁸⁵

Malik: O Believers, do not say to our Rasool: "Ra'ina" (an ambiguous word for: "Listen, may you become deaf" or "Our shepherd" or in Judeo-Arabic language conveys the sense, "our evil one.") But say "Unzurna" ("look upon" us "or pay attention" to us) and listen to him carefully; and remember that there is a painful punishment for the unbelievers.

Mustafa Khattab:

O believers! Do not say, "Râ'ina." But say, "Un?urna," and listen ?attentively?.¹ And the disbelievers will suffer a painful punishment.

Pickthall: O ye who believe, say not (unto the Prophet): "Listen to us" but say "Look upon us," and be ye listeners. For disbelievers is a painful doom.

Yusuf Ali: O ye of Faith! say not (to the Apostle) words of ambiguous import but words of respect; and hearken (to him); to those without faith is a grievous punishment. ¹⁰⁵

Transliteration: Ya ayyuha allatheena amanoo la taqooloo raAAaina waqooloo onthurna waismaAAoo waliikafireena AAathabun aleemun

Author Comments

85 - This admonition, addressed in the first instance to the contemporaries of the Prophet, has - as so often in the Qur'an - a connotation that goes far beyond the historical circumstances that gave rise to it. The Companions were called upon to approach the Prophet with respect and to subordinate their personal desires and expectations to the commandments of the Faith revealed through him: and this injunction remains valid for every believer and for all times.

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Some of the disbelievers used to play with words when they addressed the Prophet (?) in order to ridicule him. So instead of saying, râ'ina "listen to us," they would say, râ'îna "our shepherd" or "the foolish among us." They would say loudly, "We listen," then whisper, "but we disobey!" and say, "Hear us," then, "may you never hear!" They used to say to each other, "If he had truly been a prophet of Allah, he would have known that we are mocking him." Therefore, this verse (along with

4:46) was revealed commanding the believers to avoid such words altogether. Better words are recommended.

105 - What the evil ones learnt from Harut and Marut (see last note) they turned to evil. When mixed with fraud and deception, it appeared as charms and spells of love potions. They did nothing but cause discord between the sexes. But of course their power was limited to the extent to which God permitted the evil to work, for His grace protected all who sought His guidance and repented and returned to Him. But apart from the harm that these false pretenders might do to others, the chief harm which they did was to their own souls. They sold themselves into slavery to the Evil One, as is shown in the allegory of Goethe's Faust. That allegory dealt with the individual soul. Here the tragedy is shown to occur not only to individuals but to whole groups of people, for example, the People of the Book. Indeed the story might be extended indefinitely.

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