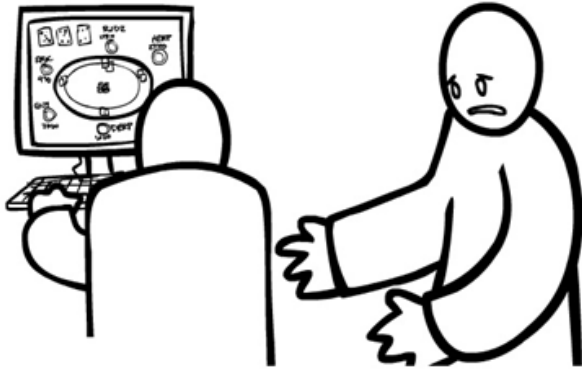
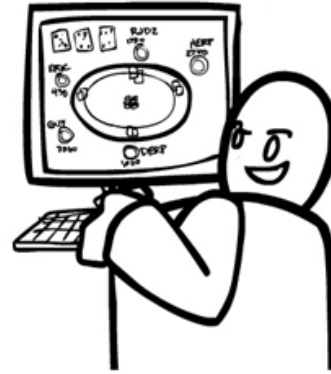


# Dangerous Life Styles: Gambling and Lottery

ERIC I THINK YOU HAVE A SERIOUS GAMBLING PROBLEM...



YOU WANNA BET?



## Chapter Objectives

- Gambling in Islam!
- Gambling Today!
- Are free draws haram?
- What is gambling?
- What are the types of gambling?
- Gambling: haram or halal?
- What are the harms of gambling?

Before Islam, gambling was a social evil. When Islam came, Allah strictly forbade all forms of gambling including betting, lottery, and other games of chance. Any money gained through gambling is also considered haram. Gambling unfortunately has become an acceptable practice in the Muslim society due to its wide scale promotion by the media. Many governments legalize and even organize gambling and lottery activities.

Taking someone else's money by winning a game of chance is distasteful in Islam. It is a basic principle of Islam that a person should not take money which he has not earned or worked for or exchanged it with halal product. This is for reasons of justice and fairness. The Arabic word for gambling in the Qur'an is Maysir. It is derived from a root word that literally means "easy" and "something attained easily with almost no effort". Qimar is another word for gambling.

## Traditional Gambling

Traditional gambling involves games of chance, like rolling dice or playing cards. If the player happens to roll or pick the right numbers on the dice or cards, he would simply win. But if he misses, he will lose his money in a matter of minutes or even seconds.

## Betting

Betting or rihan in Arabic was another ancient form of gambling. In old times, people used to bet on horse races, fights, and other games and sports. In this case, a person would bet his money on a horse to win the race or a knight to win the fight. If he bet on the winner, he will double or triple his money, but if he loses, his money is totally gone.

Betting on the outcome of horse and dog races, boxing, wrestling matches, and other prize fights have become popular forms of gambling. Other common forms of gambling include card and dice games, and bingo. When participating in such activities, one party gains while the other loses merely due to chance.

## Lottery

Lottery is one of the most popular forms of gambling today. Usually, lottery is conducted through a big corporation. This corporation makes business selling lottery tickets to its customers. With a lottery, you buy numbers that are usually on a ticket, and different prizes are given to the winning numbers. A person buys a lottery ticket on the basis of he/she being a possible winner. That is why this is not merely a trade or business venture but an act of sin to buy or even sell these tickets. When few people win millions of euros in lottery, million others lose their money. This is a waste of wealth that Islam strongly prohibits.



## Prohibition of Gambling

In the Jahiliyyah era, the time before Islam, a person would gamble away his possessions, wealth, and even his wife. When losing them, he would get so disappointed at his quick and unexpected loss that his anger would be inflamed.

The gambler would get so angry to see his belongings suddenly in the hand of the winner. This situation in its entirety would create much hatred between people that fights and quarrels would erupt between different individuals, often involving entire tribes.

In the early days of Islam, the Prophet was questioned regarding the permissibility of alcohol and gambling. God describes maysir or gambling as an "abomination devised by Satan" which ALL Muslims should avoid at ALL costs. The first verse that was revealed regarding this, is in Surah Baqarah, which is as follows:

*"They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and some benefit for people; but the sin in them is greater than their benefit.'" [2.219]*

In the above Ayah, the permission to deal with wine and gambling is not clarified. Soon, the companions of the Prophet abstained from such acts after understanding this verse. The general public, however, was still involved in them and the Prophet had not said anything that indicated their prohibition, until Allah revealed the following verse: *"Oh believers! Intoxicants and gambling, worshipping stones and divination by arrows are impure, of Shaytan's handiwork; refrain from such abomination that you may prosper."* [5.90]

As you can see, alcohol and gambling have always been associated together. This is true in almost every society that offers gambling as a form of entertainment. Gambling and drinking both are created for the temporary pleasure that at the time allows us to lose focus on more important things, such as the remembrance of Allah and worshipping Him.

## Evil Effects of Gambling

Some people claim that they gamble just for fun and don't spend a lot of money. Such people are committing a sin because they are not avoiding gambling but instead they are using it for entertainment. This may eventually drag them to become addicted to gambling and over the years they may lose so much money on this insanity. Gambling is a very addictive entertainment.



Gambling entails religious, social, moral and economic harms. Some of them are enumerated below:

1. Gambling distracts those who partake the game from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. A gambler when participating in such an activity is so absorbed in it that he forgets everything around him; he becomes unconscious of his own self, his family, and his household.
2. Gambling sows the seeds of disputes and quarrels among the gamblers which ultimately assume hatred among them. This point is made clear in the following verse:  
*"Only would Satan sow hatred and strife among you, by wine, and games of chance and turn you aside from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you not, therefore, abstain from them?"*
3. The sin of gambling is greater than its benefit.
4. It corrupts morals, making people sluggish in waiting to wealthy by luck and chance. It turns their heads away from hard work and production.
5. Gambling enslaves the gambler who becomes a slave in the hands of gambling and seldom succeeds in abandoning it. When he earns some benefit, his greed for gambling increases and when he loses the game, even then his interest in the game increases to make good the loss. He ultimately remains engaged in the game.
6. It brings about a sudden chaos in the countries due to sheer waste of wealth by losing the game.
7. Gambling is usually associated with increase of crime, suicide, divorce, and other major epidemics in the society.

## Stretch Your Mind

What are the similarities of drinking khamr and gambling in terms of harming people?

## Study Questions

- 1) Define:                      a. Gambling                      b. Lottery                      c. Betting

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- 2) What are the Arabic words for gambling and betting?

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- 3) What is the Islamic ruling on gambling? Support your answer with evidence from the Qur'an.

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- 4) List four harms of gambling.

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- 5) Suppose you made a mistake and won some money in gambling or from a lottery ticket. What should you do in this case?

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يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَمُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾