

Gambling and Games of Chance in the Digital World

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ
وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴾
سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ ، 91: 5

عَنْ أَبِي بَرْزَةَ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
« لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عُمْرِهِ فِيمَا أَفْنَاهُ، وَعَنْ
عِلْمِهِ فِيمَا فَعَلَ، وَعَنْ مَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ اكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَا أَنْفَقَهُ، وَعَنْ جِسْمِهِ فِيمَا
أَبْلَاهُ »

الترمذي ، كتاب لقيامة ، 1

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Allah (swt) has gifted humans with reason, free will and a sense of responsibility, creating them with a nature that can distinguish right from wrong. Islam commands us to avoid all habits that may harm both ourselves and society. At the forefront of these harms are gambling and games of chance. Gambling is a form of unjust gain, based on one party's loss and another's profit, detached from effort and production. Modern versions such as lotteries, betting, sports betting and virtual gambling sites which are no different from traditional table games in their essence, are subject to the same ruling. All of them rely on chance rather than hard work; they lead people to laziness, greed and unjust gain. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said regarding this:

"If someone says to his friend, 'Come, let's gamble' let him immediately give charity."¹ This hadith prohibits not only the act of gambling but also the intention and speech related to it, as gambling is a temptation that overshadows a person's pursuit of lawful sustenance.

Dear Jama'ah!

Gambling, which in the past took place in secret locations, has taken on a different form with digitalisation. Where, gambling tables now fit in pockets. Digital gambling, easily accessible to people of all ages through smartphones, computers and mobile apps, has affected millions. Online betting sites, virtual casinos and virtual lotteries particularly target young people. These platforms deceive users with colourful visuals and promises of quick gains, eventually turning them into addicts. Over time, wealth disappears, peace is lost and families break apart. This process, which begins with Shaytan's promise of "easy profit," causes one to lose both this world and the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Gambling is not only a financial loss, but also a loss of time, peace and dignity. A person engaged in gambling distances themselves from worship and loses the awareness of being beneficial to their family and society. Allah (swt) explains this aspect of gambling in the Qur'an: **"Shaytan only wants to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling and to divert you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. Will you not then desist?"**² This verse indicates that gambling is not merely an economic loss but a spiritual disease that harms faith and consciousness of worship. Gambling leads to addiction, psychological breakdown, domestic violence, debt, social unrest and in some cases, even suicide.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Even today, the most effective cure to gambling is Iman [faith], Ilm [knowledge] and awareness. We must start with the family: Parents should monitor their children's internet use and instil in them a sense of digital ethics and awareness of what is halal and haram. Digital literacy lessons and anti-addiction talks should be organised in our mosques, youth centres and educational institutions. Parents, imams and teachers must work hand in hand, making a collective effort to bring the light of spirituality into our children's minds. Social cooperation is essential: government institutions, civil society, media and technology companies should block advertisements for digital gambling sites. Health organisations and spiritual guides should establish psychological and social support networks for gambling victims.

Dear Jama'ah!

Let us remember that lawful (halal) earnings bring blessings, while unlawful (haram) earnings darken the heart. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: *"On the Day of Judgment, no servant will be able to move from his place until he is questioned about how he earned his wealth and how he spent it."*³ This hadith teaches us that being patient in pursuit of halal earnings is an act of worship and avoiding what is haram is a sign of piety. Gambling is the exact opposite of this awareness. Therefore, to ensure that our wealth is lawful, our hearts peaceful and our earnings blessed, we must steer clear of the haram traps of the digital world.

O Allah! Protect us from gambling and all forms of unlawful gain. Shield our generations from these digital traps. Make us among those who are content with halal sustenance, gifted with patience and gratitude. Fill our hearts with Your remembrance, worship and peace.

O Allah! Make us a community that turns to what is halal, not to what is haram. Ameen.

¹ Buhârî, Buhârî, Tefsîru sûre (53), 2, Edeb 74, İsti'zân 52, Eymân 53; Müslim, Eymân 5.

² Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:91

³ Tirmizî, Kiyâme, 1