

MODULE 4

Class Title: Principles of Halal & Haram in Islam – parts 1 & 2 (2 lesson series)

Aim of the lesson: To understand the concept of *halal* and *haram* & understand the rationale behind it

Category: Aqeedah

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

Greeting to students) *AssalamalaikumwaRahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanirRajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *BismillahirRahmanirRaheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbishrahlisadriwayassirliamriwahluluqdatumillisaniyafqahuqawli*(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

You all must have heard these two words a million times - *Halal* & *Haram*. Is there anyone here who hasn't heard of or knows these two words? The concept of *halal* and *haram* is very important for us, however, unfortunately we as Muslims don't really know what it is all about.

All we know and hear mostly is that so and so declared such and such as *haram*. All “good” stuff in life is *haram* in Islam. Islam is equal to everything *haram*!

That is a gross misconception. *Inshaallah*, today we will look at the meaning of these two words in detail and also understand how and why this concept was given by Allah (swt). And hopefully we will be able to understand our *deen* a little bit better.

Slide 2:

Often, when someone talks about "*halal*" they are usually talking about food, specifically about meat prepared using Islamic methods, but there is more to halal than just food.

“Halal” means something that is permissible, lawful or allowed.

The term is used to describe anything permissible under Islamic law, in contrast to haram, that which is forbidden. This includes behaviour, speech, dress, conduct, manner and dietary laws.

The word *Halal* is derived from the verb *Halla* “to be or become lawful, legal, licit, legitimate, permissible, permitted, allowable, allowed, admissible, un-prohibited, unforbidden.”

It may also mean “to untie, unfasten, unbind, undo, unravel, loosen, unloose, unfix, unwind, unscrew, untangle, disentangle, disengage, free.” In addition, the verb *Halla* may be used to mean “solve” or “resolve” (e.g., *Halla* the problem or the riddle). In chemistry, it means “to dissolve, melt, liquefy, break down.”

Allah (swt) has used this word for many things in the Qur'an. For e.g.

It is unfortunate that a lot of Muslims culturally care more about their food being halal than their actions. You find a lot of Muslims will not eat haram food but they will commit many sins and this makes no sense.

A Muslim is not only meant to follow dietary laws but must also follow the other laws, be a good person and be kind to their neighbors. If Muslims paid as much attention to the other laws as they did the dietary laws the world would be a better place.

Slide 3:

The word *Haram* is the opposite of *Halal*. It means unlawful, not allowed, not permissible. It also means “taboo, inviolable, sacred, holy, ill-gotten, sin, wrongdoing, offense.”

It is derived from the verb *Harrama* “to forbid, prohibit, interdict, proscribe, ban, bar, outlaw, declare unlawful, to taboo, make illegal.” It also means “to declare sacred, holy, and inviolable.”

Some related forms are the word *Haram* “sanctuary, sacred place, wife, spouse”. We say *al-Haramayn* - the two sacred places meaning Makkah and Medina.

In contrast to *Halal*, *Haram* refers to any forbidden pattern of behavior, speech, dress, conduct, and manner under Islamic law. Of course, it also includes what is unlawful to consume of food or beverage.

Slide 4:

To sum up, *Halal* and *Haram* represent the Islamic laws that govern every aspect of a person’s life (speech, behavior, dress, dietary, etc.), rendering it as either lawful and permissible or taboo and forbidden, and everything *Halal* is rewarded by God while the *Haram* is punishable.

Put simply, it is the Islamic dichotomy of rights and wrongs and dos and don’ts, forming the regulating collective consciousness of the Islamic community.

Slide 5:

A brief historical background will make you understand the concept well, *inshaallah*.

Before Islam, the question of what ought to be *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (prohibited) was one of the matters which people were utterly confused about, permitting many impure and harmful things and prohibiting many things that were good and pure.

Slides 6 & 7:

On the extreme right were the Brahmanism of India and the monasticism of Christianity. There were other religions also that said – stay away from good food, and avoid all enjoyments of life which Allah (swt) has provided for human beings.

You must have seen monks and nuns. Even now – they never get married, do not wear nice clothes, live in the bare minimum way.

During the Middle Ages among the monks, a point came when washing feet was considered a sin and entering a bath was something to regret and repent! Imagine.

Slides 8 & 9:

On the other hand, the Mazdak philosophy emerged in Persia, advocating absolute freedom and allowing people to take whatever they wanted and do whatever they pleased. The kind of life style we see today also – do whatever you please, just do it!

Slides 10 - 12:

When Islam came, these confusions, and deviations were very common. You see people did not have an absolute standard to follow or a guide to lead them. So they were morally messed up.

Allah (swt) mentions in the Qur'an the error of those who made *halal* what should have been prohibited and made *haram* what should have been permitted:

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

Lost are those who kill their children in folly, without knowledge and prohibited what Allah has provided them, forging (lies) against Allah. They have indeed gone astray and are without guidance. (Surah Al An'am 6: Verse 140)

You see in Arabia, people would kill their children – i.e. they made murder which is a terrible crime – *halal*! And they made certain foods which are provided by Allah (swt) for us to eat – *haram* on themselves ¹. See the confusion.

We can understand this by a simple example. All countries or cities that we admire and are impressed with have civic laws that are strictly enforced – like traffic rules & regulations. People stop at red lights, there are speed limits etc. Also other rules – like these days in most western cities, smoking is not allowed in most public places and offices etc. Why? Because these rules are beneficial for people, they make day to day life smooth and easy.

¹ And they say, 'These cattle and crops are sacred; none shall eat of them except those whom we wish', —so they assert—'and cattle whose backs are prohibited (to burden), as well as cattle on which (at slaughter) the name of Allah is not mentioned' a forgery against Him. He will assuredly recompense them for what they have forged. (6:138)

Places where rules & regulations are either not there or are not enforced – people do as they please, we see there is chaos on the roads, high accident rate etc. Generally, life is difficult and stressful for the common man. We see that in our city (Karachi) don't we – lots of issues due to lack of enforcing simple civic laws like traffic rules.

Slides 13 - 15:

One of Islam's initial accomplishments was, therefore, to establish certain legal principles and measures for sorting out this important matter; these principles were then made the determining criteria on which the questions of what is *halal* and what is *haram* were to be based.

Thus, this vital aspect was determined according to the correct perspective, and rules related to matters of *halal* and *haram* were established on the basis of principles of justice.

The *ummah* (nation, community) of Islam thus became an *ummah* occupying a position between the extremist deviations to the right and left, which Allah (swt) describes as:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا...

In the same way We made you a middle (moderate) *ummah*, so that you should be witness over the people, and the Messenger a witness to you....

(Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 143)

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

"You are the best *ummah* that has ever been brought forth for mankind...."

(Surah Al e Imran 3: Verse 110)

Slides 16 - 18:

Now before moving on, let us clarify another thing.

The sources of Islamic law or *Shari'ah* are two – The Qur'an and also authentic sunnah of Rasool Allah (phuh).

Unfortunately, the most misunderstood, misconstrued and misinterpreted word on the planet today is – yes - *Shari'ah*.

You say the word and all kinds of violent, strange and scary images come to most people's mind – including most Muslims. Isn't that right? People's hands being cut off, public floggings, and a lot of focus on women/girls - women locked in their homes, girls' schools being destroyed,

women forced to cover themselves head to toe, testimony of two women equal to one man
all this under the heading of SCARY SHARI'AH – save Muslim women from it!

Slides 19 & 20:

Why is that?

There are two main reasons for this:

1. Ignorance of Muslims about their own *deen*
2. Deliberate and unrelenting propaganda by enemies of Islam

Qur'an is the last testament of Allah (swt) sent down for guidance of mankind to the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet's way, the Prophet (pbuh)'s path that he told us to follow is "sunnah" – and laws derived from these two sources is Shari'ah. These laws include all aspects of our lives – not just punishment for certain crimes!

Slides 21 & 22:

These laws are made by the same Creator who made physical laws because of which our physical environment – i.e. the planet earth as well as everything in the universe works!

Newton simply "discovered" the law of gravity. Who made it? Where did the Archimedes principle of water displacement come from? or Einstein's theory of relativity?

The Creator – Allah (swt) did not just create everything and left it to work on auto! No. He then gave Shari'ah laws for human beings to make their lives balanced, so that they can get maximum benefit out of everything He created for them and work towards the purpose for which we were created in the first place.

Now let's look at the principles on which halal and haram are based.

Slides 23 - 26:

The first principle, established by Islam is: that the things which Allah (swt) has created, and the benefits derived from them are essentially for man's use, and hence are permissible.

Everything is *halal* (permissible) except that which is forbidden by Allah (swt). In other words, nothing is *haram* except what is prohibited by Allah (swt).

And how do we know what that is? It is clearly found in either the Qur'an or in clear, authentic sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) - The two main sources of Islamic law, i.e., its *Shari'ah*.

[Reference for teacher: The scholars of Islam have derived this principle of the natural usability and permissibility of things from the clear verses of the Qur'an.

For example, Allah (swt) says:

It is He who created all that is in the earth for you.... (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 29)

He has subjected to you, from Himself, all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth....
(45:13)

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and what is on earth, and has showered upon you His favors, both apparent and unseen? (31:20)]

It cannot be that Allah (swt) would create all these things, give man control over them, count them as His favors upon him, and subsequently inform us that their use is prohibited! That would make no sense, would it? He (swt) has prohibited only a **few** things for specific reasons, the wisdom of which we understand as we understand our *deen*.

The sphere of prohibited things is very small, while that of permissible things is extremely vast.

Salman al-Farsi (ra) reported that when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was asked about animal fat, cheese, and fur, he replied, "The *halal* is that which Allah has made lawful in His Book and the *haram* is that which He has forbidden, and that concerning which He is silent He has permitted as a favor to you." [Reported by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah].

Slide 27:

Take the simple example of beverages – there are thousands of options available – fruit juices, milk, tea, coffee – all sorts of cocktails made from juices, milk shakes, smoothies, so much variety of flavoured tea and coffee, yes. That is all *halal*, Alhamdulillah! And we are free to experiment with all kinds of flavours, tastes mixed together. What is the **one thing** not allowed? Alcohol, that's it.

Take an apple – eat it raw, make apple pie, apple juice, apple strudel, apple sauce, apple jam, apple jelly, apple chutney just don't ferment it and make alcoholic apple cider!

Which sphere is much larger – the allowed stuff or the prohibited one?

Slide 28:

But, when it comes to matters of worship, this principle is opposite – everything is *haram* except that which Allah (swt) has made permissible. Again, found in the Qur'an or clear sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh).

Acts of worship cannot be invented. We must prove an act of worship by quoting the Qur'an or Sunnah.

Let us understand this with a few examples.

You are sitting chatting with friends, cup a tea in hand – talking about say Humaira’s new hairdo ... in not very flattering terms. Rana stops you and says: Hey this is not right, you are backbiting, doing *gheebah*. You ask her: and why is that not right. Rana tells you that in Surah Al Hujrat in the Qur’an, Allah (swt) has compared backbiting to eating flesh of your dead brother. She has evidence of non-permissibility of backbiting.

Take another scenario. You are listening to an Islamic lecture on TV or youtube. Your Uncle comes and tells you, TV and computer are haram. *Astaghfirullah!* You very respectfully ask: why is that so? And he says because of all the garbage that is on them, it is corrupting our minds etc etc etc. Is that evidence of non-permissibility of watching “anything” on TV or youtube? No. It isn’t.

Slide 29:

Here, lets stop for a second and understand an extremely important point.

Regular people like you and me cannot extract these issues of what is *halal* and what is *haram* from the Qur’an or *sunnah* – it is the scholars of our *deen*, who are very learned people, who do that. Please always remember that.

Slides 30 - 32:

Are you all still with me? No confusion? *Alhamdulillah!*

The second principle is that to make something permissible (*halal*) and make something impermissible (*haram*) is the exclusive right of Allah (swt) alone.

Allah (swt) has not given this authority to any human being – regardless of their religious or worldly position. The *halal* and *haram* that we get from the *sunnah* of Rasool Allah (swt) i.e. the *ahadith* are all from Allah (swt). Rasool Allah (swt) did not make those legislations himself – he had the authority from Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) is not just the Creator of everything but He is also the Owner, the Sovereign, the absolute King of His creation. He (swt) makes this clear in the first surah of the Qur’an – Surah Al Fatihah when He says: *Rabb Al ‘Aalameen* and *Malik e Yaum Ad Deen* – He is the sustainer as well as the Owner. That is why legislation regarding us is in His hands.

[Reference for teacher:

Do they have partners (with Allah) who have prescribed for them in religion that concerning which Allah has given no permission? (42:21)

They have taken their rabbis and priests as lords besides Allah, and the Messiah, son of Mary, although they were commanded to worship no one except the One Allah. There is no Deity but He, glory be to Him above what they associate with Him! (9:31)

Adi bin Hatim, who had been a Christian before accepting Islam, once came to the Prophet (pbuh). When he heard him reciting the above *ayah* he said, "O Messenger of Allah, but they do not worship them." The Prophet (pbuh) replied, Yes, but they prohibit to the people what is *halal* and permit them what is *haram*, and the people obey them. This is indeed their worship of them. (Tirmidhi)]

Who makes the rules in your home? Your parents, or the people who work for them? Does your mother decide how things are going to be around the house, the décor, what will be cooked, who will do what etc. or the maid that works for her? Your mum does! Why? Because she is the boss of her home.

Slides 33 - 35:

The third principle is that prohibiting the *Halal* and permitting the *Haram* is similar to committing *Shirk* – associating partners with Allah (swt).

Stopping people from the *halal* by calling it *haram* or vice versa i.e. telling people to do *haram* by calling it *halal* is a very serious thing. Why? Because you are taking Allah (swt)'s law in your hands.

If Allah (swt) has not prohibited something and someone thinks they are over enthusiastic or overzealous and make that unlawful, then they make the *deen* difficult and hard on people. For example: if someone says that since wine is made from grapes, grapes are also *haram* – then that is taking a serious matter in your own hands.

The Prophet (pbuh) characterized his Message by saying, "I have been sent with what is straight and easy". [Ahmad]

We really must be very careful never to say this is halal and that is haram without having definite knowledge of it.

[Reference for teacher:

You who believe! Do not make *haram* the good things which Allah has made *halal* for you, and do not transgress; indeed, Allah does not like the transgressors. And eat of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allah, in Whom you are believers. (5:87-88)]

Slides 36 - 40:

The fourth principle is that the prohibition of things is due to their impurity and harmfulness.

This principle is true for any prohibition – whether it is what we eat or what we wear or how we behave.

Allah (swt) doesn't make things *halal* or *haram* randomly or just for no reason at all. No, His mercy on His servants is such that He wants benefit for us. Accordingly, He has neither permitted anything except what is pure nor has He prohibited anything except what is impure.

If something is entirely harmful it is *haram*, and if it is entirely beneficial it is *halal*; if the harm of it outweighs its benefit it is *haram*, while if its benefit outweighs its harm it is *halal*.

This principle is explained in the Qur'an in relation to wine and gambling:

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say (O Prophet): In them is great sin and some benefit for human beings, but the sin is greater than the benefit.... (2:219)

By the same logic, if it is asked, what is *halal* in Islam, the answer is, the good things.

Good things are those which moderate people acknowledge to be wholesome and which are approved by human beings in general without relation to the habits of a particular group.

Allah Ta'ala says: They ask you what is lawful to them (as food). Say: Whatever is good is lawful to you.... (5:4)

He also says: Today whatever is good is made lawful to you....(5:5)

We are not required to know the reason behind everything that is prohibited, it may be hidden from us but be apparent to someone else, or its harm may not have been discovered during our lifetime but may be understood at a later period.

What is required of a Muslim is simply to say, "We have heard and we shall obey."

Allah (swt) prohibited the eating of pork. Early Muslims did not know the reason for its prohibition apart from the fact that the pig is a filthy animal? Centuries passed, and then scientific research discovered the presence of parasites and deadly bacteria in its flesh. Yet even if scientific research had discovered nothing in pork, or if it had discovered much more than this, the Muslim would still continue to believe it to be unclean.

Do you understand this?

Sometimes we may not fully understand the reason or wisdom behind something that Allah (swt) has made *haram* – yet if our faith in Him is strong, if we understand how He (swt) wants the best for us – then we would still stay away from that thing.

Slides 41 - 43:

The next principle is that what is *halal* is sufficient, while what is *haram* is superfluous.

One of the beauties of Islam is that it has prohibited only such things as are unnecessary, while providing alternatives which are better and which give greater ease and comfort to human beings.

This point has been explained beautifully by a scholar Ibn al-Qayyim:

Allah has prohibited seeking omens by drawing lots but has provided the alternative of *istikhara*²

He (swt) has prohibited usury (*riba*) but has encouraged profitable trade.

He (swt) has prohibited (to men) the wearing of silk but has given them the choice of other materials such as wool, linen, and cotton.

He (swt) has prohibited adultery, fornication, and homosexuality but has encouraged lawful marriage.

He (swt) has prohibited intoxicating drinks in order that they may enjoy other delicious drinks which are wholesome for the body and mind.

And He (swt) has prohibited unclean food but provides alternative wholesome food³.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: Allah desires to make clear to you and to guide you to the ways of the (righteous) people before you and to turn to you in mercy; and Allah is Knowing, Wise. And Allah desires to lighten your burden, for man was created weak. (Surah An Nisa 4: Verses 26-28)

Slides 44 – 47:

The sixth principle is – that whatever is conducive to *haram*, is *haram* in itself.

This is a totally common sense principle. If something is prohibited, anything which leads to it is likewise prohibited.

By this means Islam intends to block all avenues leading to what is *haram*.

For example, as Islam has prohibited sex outside marriage, it has also prohibited anything which leads to it or makes it attractive, such as seductive clothing, private meetings and casual mixing between men and women, the depiction of nudity, pornographic literature, obscene songs, and so on.

A controversial new study reveals that pregnancy rates are much higher among teenagers who watch a lot of television with sexual dialogue and behavior than among those who don't.

² Islam teaches that if a Muslim faces a problem he should consult with others and seek guidance from Allah (swt). The meaning of *istikhara* is to ask guidance from Allah in making a choice between two conflicting decisions. For this there is a *du'a* (supplication).

³ Rawdah al-Muhibbeen, p. 10, and A'alam al-Muwaqq'in, vol. 2, p.111.

The study, published in "Pediatrics", is based on interviews with teens over a three year period. According to the study, teens who watched the most sexual content (90th percentile) on television were twice as likely to experience a pregnancy in the three year period as those who watched the least sexual content (10th percentile).

The researchers said this about their findings: "Given the high rates of teen pregnancy in the United States, our findings argue for continued evaluation of television's role in teen pregnancy and for prevention strategies that factor in the role of portrayals of sexuality on television and in other media."⁴

A new study says explicit music lyrics can lead to teen sex.

According to the study, teens who listened most to "degrading" songs were more than twice as likely to have had intercourse.

"But the findings don't prove that the music caused kids to have sex", acknowledged Dr. Brian A. Primack, a pediatrician and lead author of the study. "The opposite could be true -- that people who have more sex then go out and seek music with degrading sexual messages," he said.

What's a parent to do if her kid is listening to sexually explicit rap music? Dr. Lisa Boesky, psychologist and author of "When to Worry: How to Tell if Your Teen Needs Help & What to Do About It", says parents first need to be more aware of their teens' music choices.

"Parents are comfortable saying 'You can't drink alcohol or get a piercing,' but are much more lax about what their kids listen to," says Dr. Boesky. "They need to take a much more active role."

Dr. Boesky says the warning labels on CDs meant to "protect" kids only make the music more attractive to teens. If it's forbidden, they only want it more.

But Dr. Boesky says listening to explicit rap music isn't an automatic red flag that your teen is indulging in high-risk behavior. "It's all a question of degree," she explains. "But if your kid is constantly listening to explicit rap and pop music throughout the day on their iPod, there might be a problem that's certainly worth addressing."⁵

⁴ Some of the shows that the study asked teenagers about include "Sex and the City", "That '70s Show" and "Friends". <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20081031/sexy-tv-a-link-to-teen-pregnancy>

⁵ http://www.momlogic.com/2009/02/rap_music_sex_teen.php#ixzz2AqoGfuAf

Slides 48 & 49:

A similar principle is that the sin of the *haram* is not limited only to the person who engages in it but extends to others who have supported him in this, materially or morally; each is held accountable according to his share.

This is something we all must consider seriously. We sometimes say we are not doing anything wrong or *haram* but we may be involved in a dodgy activity indirectly.

For example, I don't listen to music – I just downloaded it for a friend. Or there is a school play, again, with a dodgy subject matter, and you say Oh I am not acting in it, just helping out backstage. Or you decide to design clothes and are doing clothes that are revealing etc. and say but I don't wear them, I wear a Hijab! We can go on and on with the examples.

Look at this hadith: Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar The Prophet (pbuh) said: Allah has cursed wine, its drinker, its server, its seller, its buyer, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, the one who conveys it, and the one to whom it is conveyed. (Sunan of Abu-Dawood Hadith 3666)

Each and every person involved in the process of *one person* drinking alcohol is held accountable for their role in it. Relate this to your everyday life. See what all you are involved in and how.

Slides 50 – 53:

The seventh principle is that Falsely Representing the *Haram* as *Halal* Is Prohibited. Just as Islam has prohibited whatever leads toward the *haram*, it has also prohibited resorting to technical legalities in order to do what is *haram* by devious means and excuses inspired by Shaytan.

Allah (swt) had prohibited the Bani Israel to work on the Sabbath, so they found a loop hole and put out their fishing nets on Friday and said – we are not working on Saturday!

This principle is basically saying do not be devious to dodge Allah's prohibitions or stop from Allah's permissible things.

How do people do that? We live in an age of "spin doctors." Calling a haram thing by another name is common place. For example – pornography is called "art", complete disregard for *haya* (modesty), flaunting one's body is called "fashion", being totally rude & insolent is called "confidence" Again the list can go on.

You see the point?

The Messenger (pbuh) said: Some people from my *ummah* will drink alcohol, calling it something else. [Sunan Ibn Majah]

A time will come when people will devour usury, calling it "trade." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Our *deen* is simple and straight forward. Call a spade, a spade – not an earth displacement device! Be honest and upfront.

Slides 54 – 59:

The eighth principle is that good intentions do not make the *haram* acceptable. Try to understand this.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, **"Actions will be judged by intentions, and everyone will be recompensed according to what he intended."** [Bukhari]

Alhamdulillah, this is a familiar hadith.

Indeed, in Islam the routine matters of life and its mundane affairs are transformed into acts of worship and devotion to Allah (swt) by good intentions. So if you eat food with the intention of sustaining life and strengthening your body in order that you may be able to carry your obligations to your Creator and to other human beings, your eating and drinking are considered worship and devotion to Allah (swt). Cool, yes.

In this manner, whenever any permissible action of the believer is accompanied by a good intention, his action becomes an act of worship.

But the case of the *haram* is entirely different; it remains *haram* no matter how good the intention, how honorable the purpose, or how lofty the aim may be. Islam can never consent to employing a *haram* means to achieve a praiseworthy end. Indeed, it **insists** that not only the aim be honorable but also that the means chosen to attain it be pure. "The end justifies the means" is not the maxim of the *Shari'ah*, nor is "Secure your right even through wrong-doing." This can never be, for the *Shari'ah* demands that the right should be secured through just means only.

So, Mr. Robin Hood would be in big trouble for stealing. Look at other examples – having a fashion show to help flood victims. Intention: very noble, end: lots of money raised but means is dodgy, against Allah (swt)'s commandments and therefore not acceptable. The entire equation becomes questionable now. If someone wants to build a mosque and gets the money from say cheating or interest – not on. The means must be as pure and in compliance with the Shariah as the end.

There is no right way to do the wrong thing.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: If a person earns property through *haram* means and then gives charity, it will not be accepted (by Allah); if he spends it there will be no blessing on it; and if he leaves it behind (at his death) it will be his provision in the Fire. Indeed, Allah (swt) does not obliterate one bad deed by another bad deed, but He cancels out a bad deed by a good deed. An unclean thing does not wipe away another unclean thing. (Ahmad and others on the authority of Ibn Mas'ood.)

Slides 60 – 62:

The next principle says avoid the doubtful things.

It is Allah's mercy to human beings that He did not leave them in ignorance concerning what is lawful and what is prohibited. Indeed, He has made explicit what is *halal* and explained what is *haram*, as He (swt) says: **...He has explained to you what He has made *haram* for you....** (6:119)

However, there is a gray area between the clearly *halal* and the clearly *haram*. This is the area of what is doubtful. In relation to such matters, Islam considers it an act of piety for the Muslim to avoid doing what is doubtful in order to stay clear of doing something *haram*.

This is similar to what was discussed earlier concerning the blocking of the avenues which lead to what is *haram*.

The root of this principle is the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): The *halal* is clear and the *haram* is clear. Between the two there are doubtful matters concerning which people do not know whether they are *halal* or *haram*. One who avoids them in order to safeguard his religion and his honor is safe, while if someone engages in a part of them he may be doing something *haram*, like one who grazes his animals near the *hima* (the grounds reserved for animals belonging to the King which are out of bounds for others' animals); it is thus quite likely that some of his animals will stray into it. Truly, every king has a *hima*, and the *hima* of Allah is what He has prohibited. (Bukhari' Muslim, and others; the narration is taken from Tirmidhi.)

You must understand here that “doubtful matter” does not mean something you personally doubt or have little or no knowledge of. For e.g. you say I don’t think hijab is necessary in our times, it is a doubtful matter! Or someone says I have a doubt in the validity of ahadith, they were compiled much after the Prophet (pbuh)’s time.

Just because you do not know about something – which unfortunately is the case with a lot of Muslims today that there is very little knowledge of deen – does not mean it is a doubtful matter. Just because it doesn’t go down well with you or your lifestyle does not make it doubtful either.

Another thing, difference of opinion amongst scholars also does not make a matter doubtful.

Some of the scholars have said the doubtful matters can be divided into three types:

- 1) That affair which a person knows to be *haram*, but which he then doubts as to whether its forbiddance still continues or not. For example, a person cannot eat from an animal until he is sure that it has been slaughtered correctly, and so if he has doubts about this then the forbiddance to eat continues until certainty of the correct slaughtering is achieved.

2) The opposite of this, where the affair is originally *halal*, and the person has doubts regarding whether it has become *haram*. And whatever is of this type then it is considered permissible until its forbiddance is clearly established.⁶

3) The third type is where one has doubts about a matter and one does not know whether it is *halal* or *haram*, and the matter could be of either of the two, and there is no clear evidence to establish either ruling. Then in this situation the best course of action is restraint. For example, once the Prophet (pbuh) found a date in his house, but did not eat it for he feared that it may have been from that given as *sadaqah* (as the Prophet (pbuh) was forbidden from taking of *sadaqah*).

However, if a person chooses the opposite of what is clearly apparent due to an imaginary doubt which has no evidence, then restraint in such a situation is foolishness, and is from the whisperings of shaytan. For example, a person may restrain from praying in a place which has no visible traces of filth, simply out of a fear that maybe some urine had fallen there and since dried. Or a person may wash a dress simply out of a fear that some filth (*najaasah*) came upon it but which he did not actually see upon it. So in all such situations where there is no 'real' doubt then it is required that one does not leave the action.

And the statement of the Prophet (pbuh) "about which many people do not know" means that many people do not know the shar'iah ruling upon these matters. However, the People of Knowledge may be able to associate such matters with other principles that they must follow, and thus achieve a ruling upon them as to whether they are *halal* or *haram*, and thus they cease to be doubtful matters.

Slides 63 – 65:

The next principle is that the *haram* is prohibited to everyone alike.

In the *Shari'ah* of Islam the *haram* has universal applicability; here there is no such thing as that which is prohibited to a non-Arab but permitted to an Arab, nor anything which is restricted to a Black but allowed to a White. For in Islam there are no privileged classes or individuals who, in the name of religion, can do whatever they please according to their whims. Muslims do not have any privilege of making something *haram* for others while it is lawful for themselves; this cannot be, for truly Allah is the Lord of all, and the *Shari'ah* of Islam is the guide for all. Whatever Allah has legislated through His *Shari'ah* is lawful for all human beings and whatever He has prohibited is prohibited to all human beings until the Day of Resurrection.

The Prophet (pbuh) firmly enforced this rule, proclaiming, "By Allah, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would have her hand cut off." (Bukhari.)

⁶ And the origin of this is the hadith of Abdullaah bin Zayd, regarding the doubt in ones wudu' if one is sure that previously he had made wudu'. [i.e. one continues upon the assumption of being with wudu' until it becomes clear that the wudu' has broken]

There are no double standards. We must examine ourselves and see where we apply double standards in the name of *deen*. It is noted that many families have a different set of rules for boys and girls. Why? Girls are not allowed to go anywhere – and boys can “paint the town red” just because they are boys! This is alien to Islam. Gender limitations apply to both sexes equally, without discrimination.

Unfortunately, when Muslims adopt such double standards, it puts off people from our *deen* and the *shariah* of Allah (swt) and they start thinking that the *shariah* is gender biased.

Another thing Muslims tend to do is have double standards in dealing with fellow Muslims and with non-Muslims. Cheating, lying, fraud is prohibited period. You can't have honest dealing with your “brother” and cheat another and say Oh so what he is not a Muslim. You cannot live in a non-Muslim country and break their laws and just shrug it off by thinking oh so what they are infidels. No. That is wrong.

Similarly, having double standards with family and “outsiders” is also not on.

Slide 66:

And finally the eleventh principle says that necessity dictates exception.

After listing the prohibited foods in the form of dead animals, blood, and pork, Allah (swt) says: ...But if one is compelled by necessity, neither craving (it) nor transgressing, there is no sin on him; indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 173)

And this is repeated at four places in the Qur'an after each mention of the prohibited foods.

On the basis of these and similar verse of the Qur'an, Islamic jurists formulated an important principle, namely, that "necessity removes restrictions."

But, it is to be noted that the person experiencing the necessity is permitted to eat the *haram* food with the stipulation that he is "neither craving it nor transgressing." This means that he should not desire to relish it nor transgress by eating more than the bare amount needed to satisfy his hunger.

From this stipulation, jurists have derived another principle, that "The quantity permitted is determined by the (magnitude) of the necessity."

Here the underlying idea is that, even though compelled by necessity, a person need not surrender to it or embrace it with eagerness; rather he must live with what is essentially *halal* and seek a way to return to it so that he may not become accustomed to the *haram* or begin enjoying it under the pretext of necessity.

Slides 67 – 71:

This spirit, which we find in the laws of Allah (swt) is to make life easy and less oppressive for human beings, and to lift the burdens and yokes imposed by earlier systems and religions.

Allah (swt) says: ...Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you.... (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse185)

...It is not Allah's desire to place a burden upon you, but He desires to purify you and to perfect His favor on you in order that you may be thankful. (Surah 5: Verse 6)

According to a scholar: The *maqasid* (purposes) that the Shari'ah seeks to fulfill are ultimately next worldly.

We may or may not understand the purpose and wisdom behind the laws, however, if we trust our Creator and Sustainer we will understand this that whatever He has made permissible is for my own good and whatever He has prohibited is also for my own benefit. That benefit and good may be here in this duniya or it may not be clear here. But ultimately I will benefit in the life that will not end.

The good & benefit may be individual or it may have a larger sphere – is at a community or society level. You see our *deen* is not at all a personal matter. No. That is a huge misconception. Islam is a way of life and a way of life is never for one single person alone.

Allah (swt) knows the larger picture, we do not. His shar'iah has a vast vision of human good. What we need to do is trust in Him and comply.

May Allah (swt) grant us an understanding of His *deen*. *ameen*

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

References for teacher:

The Islamic principles pertaining to *halal* and *haram* by Shakykh Yusuf Al Qaradawi (document in folder)

<http://abdurrahman.org/sunnah/nawavi40explanation.html>