



The Young Muslims UK



# Halal & Haram

Dr Rizwan Syed

**Our life mission is to please God so that we can have a life of eternal happiness.**

*"Allah is good and does not accept anything but good".*

(Muslim and Tirmidhi)

*"Anyone who desires what is Halal from the world... will meet his Lord with a face shining like the moon"*

(Bukhari and Muslim)

## **How do we grade actions?**

- a) Fard - obligatory (very high rewards)
- b) Mustahab, Sunnah - preferable (high rewards)
- c) Mubaah - acceptable (no reward / punishment)
- d) Makrooh - detestable (possible punishment)
- e) Haram - forbidden (heavy punishment)

**1. The first principle is the permissibility of things**

**2. Halal and Haram are the right of Allah**

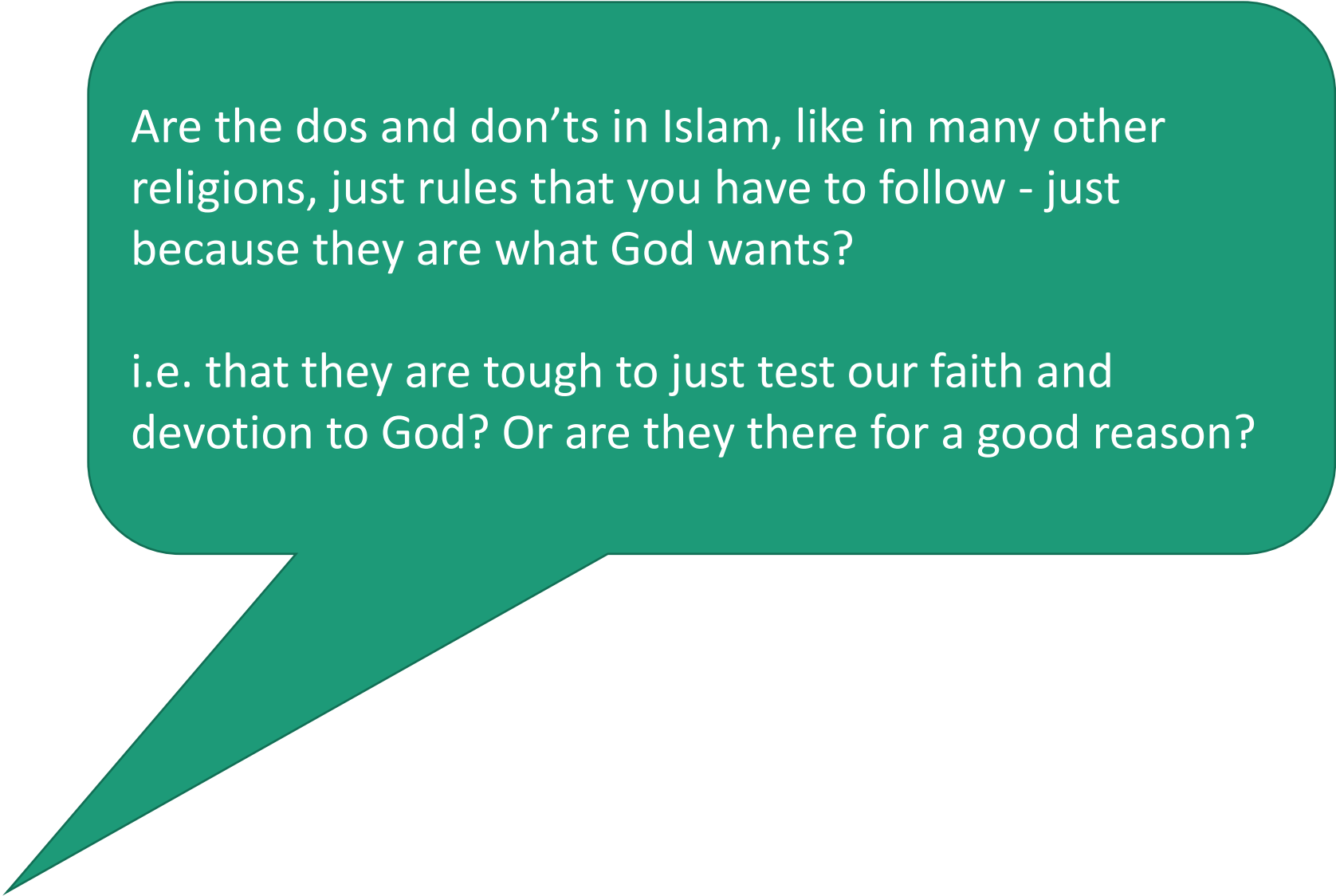
**3. Leave that which makes you doubt until the doubt is removed**

**4. Still consult your heart**

**5. Judge yourself; be easy on others**

## **1. The first principle is the permissibility of things**

- **Most things in life are allowed because the world is for us to make use of**
- **Allah wants our good**
- **What we are commanded is for our benefit, what is prohibited is because it's harmful**
- **What is haram has been made clear, the rest is allowed, as a favour**
- **You still have to abide by the law of the land!**



Are the dos and don'ts in Islam, like in many other religions, just rules that you have to follow - just because they are what God wants?

i.e. that they are tough to just test our faith and devotion to God? Or are they there for a good reason?

## Most things in life are allowed because the world is for us to make use of

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

*'Today are all things good and pure made lawful unto you.' (5:5 or 6)*

How can all this be made for us and then we be prohibited from it? Therefore, the prohibitions must be few.

***'O 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.'***  
(5:90-91 (87-88))

## Allah wants our good

Allah is Al-Barr – the Good, Source of All Good

*‘In thy hand is all good’ (3:26)*

*‘Allah desires ease for you, and He doesn't desire hardship for you.’ (2:185)*

Hadith: *‘I have been sent with what is straight and easy.’* (Ahmed)

*‘From our exploration of the Shari'ah we have concluded that it was only set up to serve the interests of man. This is a conclusion which no one can dispute...’*

(Imam Shatibi, Al Muwafaqat)



## What we are commanded is for our benefit

## What is prohibited is because it's harmful

**Gambling and drinking:**

*'But the sin (or harm) is greater than the benefit' (2:219)*

**Adultery:**

*'For it is... opening the road (to much worse harm)' (17:32)*

**Retribution for murder:**

*'In it(the law of retribution) there is life for you... that you may restrain yourselves' (2:179)*

**Theft - hand:**

*'A punishment by way of example...' (5:38)*

**Swine:**

*'For it is an abomination...' (6:145)*

**Fasting:**

*'That you may learn taqwa' (2:184)*

**Prayer:**

*'Surely prayer protects from shameful and bad deeds.'*

**Charity:**

*'Take some charity from their wealth to purify them and make them grow (spiritually).'* (9:103)

What we are commanded is for our benefit

What is prohibited is because it's harmful

***'Allah commands justice (Adl) and righteousness (Ihsaan).'***  
***(16:90)***

**Justice (Adl):** *'O you who believe stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses (only) to fair-dealing. And do not let the hatred of a people cause you to swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: for it is closer to piety, and fear Allah - for verily Allah is well aware of all you do.'* (5:8 or 9)

What we are commanded is for our benefit

What is prohibited is because it's harmful

**Goodness (Ihsan):** *'He commands them what is right and forbids them what is evil; he makes lawful to them what is good and makes unlawful to them what is foul; he releases them from the yokes which were upon them.'* (7:157)

**Imam Ibn al Qayyim al Jawziyyah said:**

*'When the signs of justice appear and its face is shown in any way, that is where the law of Allah and His religion are found.'*

## What is haram has been made clear, the rest is allowed

*‘... He (Allah) has explained to you what He has made haram for you...’ (6:119)*

The Prophet (S) taught:

*‘What Allah has made lawful in His Book is halal and what He has forbidden is haram, and **that concerning which he is silent is allowed as his favour. So accept from Allah His favour**, for Allah is not forgetful of anything. He then recited, "And thy Lord is not forgetful" (19:64).’ (Haakim, Sahih)*

The Prophet (S) explained, *‘That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain and between the two of them are doubtful matters **about which not many people know.***’ (Bukhari and Muslim)

Scholars therefore explain that any evidence must be clear in proof, i.e. reliably authentic (qat’i thuboot) but also unambiguous in its meaning (qat’i dalalah)

## What is haram has been made clear, the rest is allowed

You could argue that if something were really important and determined our success or failure in the Hereafter, it would be mentioned time and again in revelation (i.e. the Qur'an) and by the Prophet (S) in hadith, so we don't forget.

Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606/1210) makes a similar point when talking about how we establish our creed – what we must believe, because that is also crucial and should be clearly established. He wrote:

*“...if such points were part of faith, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) would not have judged anyone a believer until he was sure that the person knew the question. Had he done such a thing, **his position on the question would have been known to everyone in Islam and conveyed by many chains of transmission. Because it has not, it is clear that he did not make it a condition of faith, so knowing it is not a point of belief, nor denying it unbelief.**”*

## What is haram has been made clear, the rest is allowed as a favour

This is why Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal said:

**‘In relation to acts of worship, the principle is limitation (tawqeef); that is to say, nothing can be legislated in this regard except what Allah Himself has legislated.**

To do otherwise is to incur the risk of being included in the meaning of the ayah:

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

**But as far as living habits are concerned the principle is freedom because nothing can be restricted in this regard except what Allah Himself has prohibited.**

Here, to do otherwise is to be included in His saying,

***“Say: do you see what Allah has sent down for sustenance? Yet you have made some part of it halal and some part haram. (10:59)”***

## What is haram has been made clear, the rest is allowed as a favour

In summary:

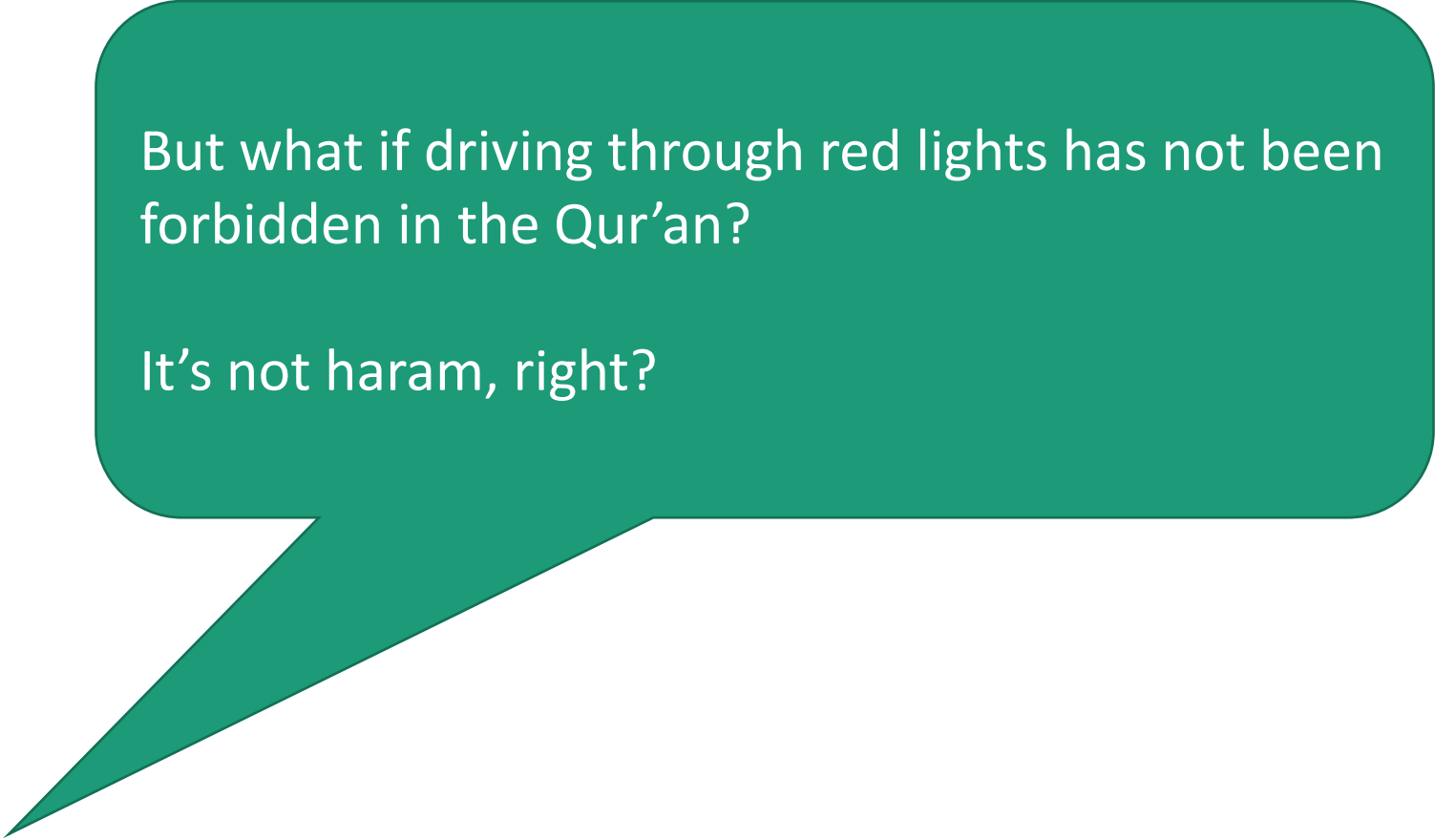
If something is clearly mentioned, either repeatedly or unambiguously in Qur'an or hadith as forbidden, then don't do it... If it hasn't been mentioned then it is halal.

In other words:

*Everything is allowed, unless there is a clear evidence that it has been prohibited.*

This means, we don't need to seek evidence for something being halal. If we know it's not haram, then it is automatically halal!

Note that in matters of ritual worship (e.g. salah or fasting) it is the other way around: *everything is haram unless there is a clear evidence allowing it.*



But what if driving through red lights has not been forbidden in the Qur'an?

It's not haram, right?



**You still have to abide by the law of the land!**

*‘O believers! **Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.** Should you disagree on anything, then refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is the best and fairest resolution.’ (4:59)*

(Unless it is going to ask you to do something categorically haram  
– but that is not likely since haram things are harmful anyway!)

**1. The first principle is the permissibility of things**

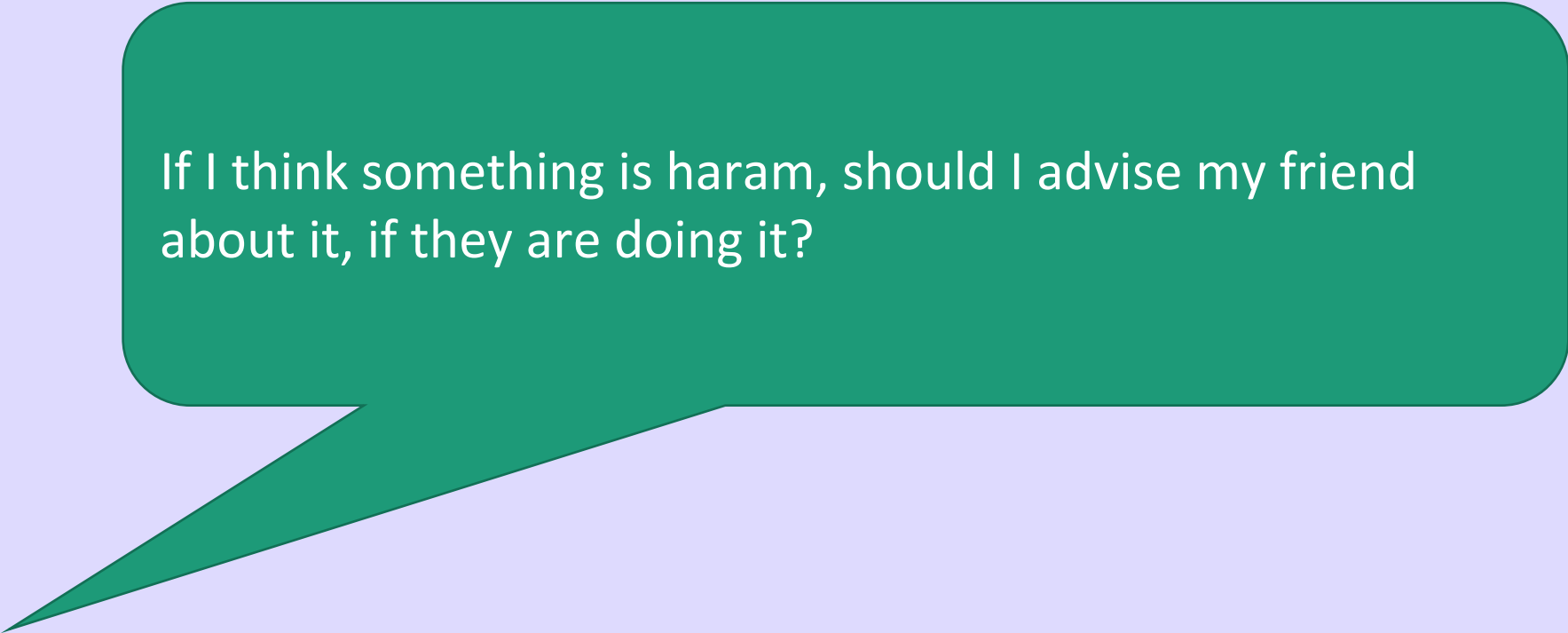
**2. Halal and Haram are the right of Allah**

**3. Leave that which makes you doubt until the doubt is removed**

**4. Still consult your heart**

**5. Judge yourself; be easy on others**

**2. Halal and Haram are the right of Allah alone**



If I think something is haram, should I advise my friend about it, if they are doing it?

## 2. Declaring Halal and Haram is the right of God!

*‘And do not say, concerning the falsehood which your tongues utter, "This is Halal and that is haram", in order to fabricate a lie against Allah; assuredly those who fabricate a lie against Allah will not prosper.’ (Qur’an 16:116)*

In his book Al-Umm, **Imam Shafi'i** narrated that Abu Yusuf, **a companion of Abu Hanifah and a chief judge (qaadi)** said:

*‘I know that our knowledgeable teachers avoided saying, “This is halal and that is haram”, apart from what they found clearly stated without requiring interpretation in the Book of Allah.’*

We have been told by Ibn al-Saib that **al-Rabi' bin Khaytham**, one of the greatest of the second generation Muslims said:

*‘Beware that none of you says, "Allah has made this lawful or approves of it" and Allah may then say that He did not make it lawful nor approve it, or that you say, "You lie! I did not prohibit it nor disapprove of it.”’*

## Allah is angry with us nit-picking and trying to make more things prohibited

*'O' you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things, which Allah has made lawful for you, and commit no excess; for Allah loves not those given to excess.'*

(Quran 5:87)

Salman al Farsi reported that when the Messenger of Allah 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 favour to you.'*

(al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

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### 3. Leave what makes you doubt until the doubt is removed

***‘Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.’***

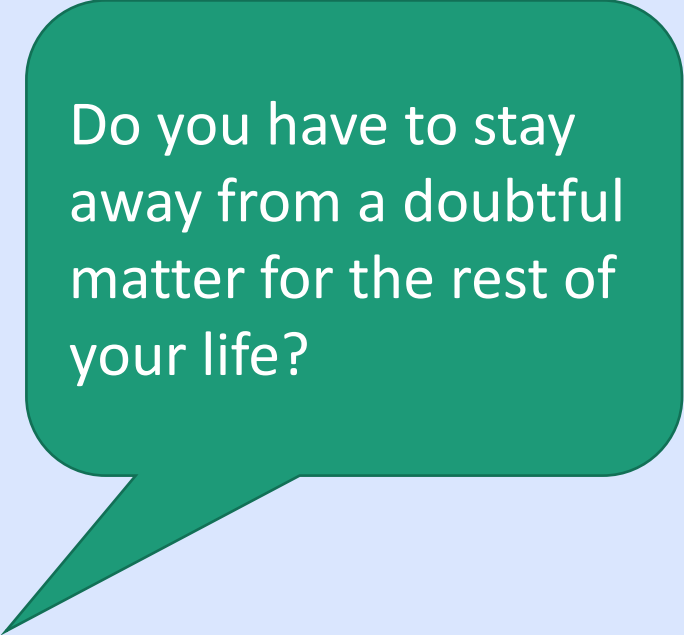
(Tirmidhi and Nasa’i)

*‘That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain and between the two of them are doubtful matters **about which not many people know.**’*

Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard of his religion and his honour, but he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a king’s sanctuary (reserved for the king’s own animals), all but grazing in it. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah’s is His prohibitions.

*‘Truly in the body is a morsel of flesh which, if it is whole, all the body is whole and if it is diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart.’*

(Bukhari and Muslim)



Do you have to stay away from a doubtful matter for the rest of your life?

**This hadith explains the difference between an ordinary Muslim and a scholar:**

*'...doubtful matters about which **not many people know.**'*

So if you come across something you're not sure about, avoid it **until** you can get clarification from people who do know (i.e. scholars),

- then **you can decide** to carry on with it or not, because the doubt is now removed!

*'Then ask people who know the scripture (ahl adh-dhikr) if you do not know.'*

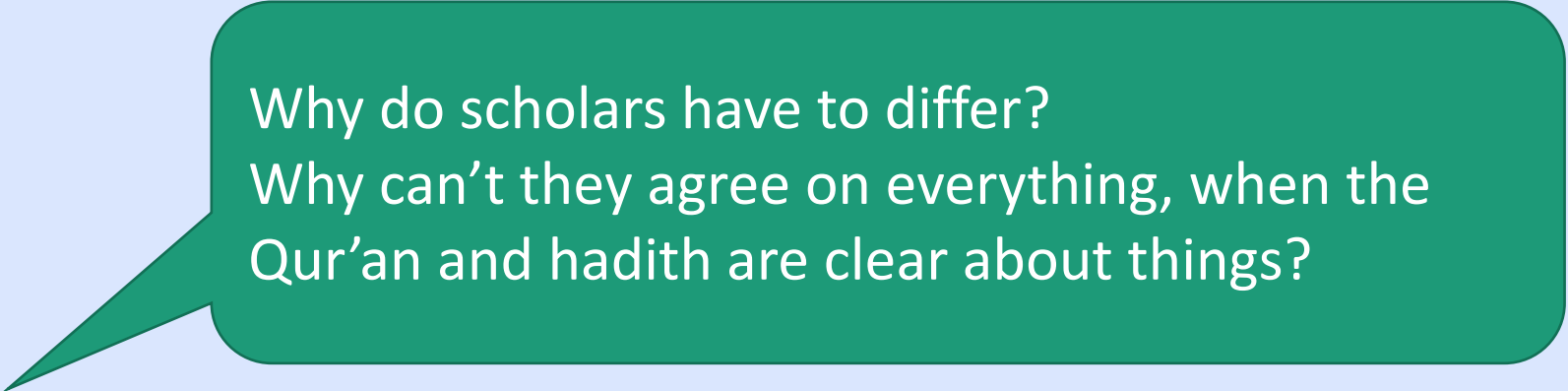
(Quran 21:7)

## Scholars differ – for *legitimate* reasons!

One scholar may not be sure about an issue, while another scholar may offer a clear answer.

And sometimes different scholars will give you different opinions on the same issue – which can be confusing!

Some answers may make sense to you, others might make you feel uncomfortable.



Why do scholars have to differ?  
Why can't they agree on everything, when the Qur'an and hadith are clear about things?

## Historic differences

Differences of opinion on the same issue emerged between madhabs for a number of well-recognised reasons, including:

- Differences in interpreting Qur'anic verses or hadith
- Different opinions on the authenticity of relevant hadith
- Apparent differences between established principles and individual hadith
- Apparent differences between general verses and specific hadith and which should take precedence

## Contemporary differences

Differences of opinion sometimes emerge because we don't live in the same circumstances as the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and so scholars of fiqh are expected to adjust their rulings to keep relevant to the changing circumstances:

Imam Ibn Al Qayyim (from *I'lam al Muwaqqi'een*):

***'Legal interpretation should change with the change in time, place, conditions, intention and customs...***

*ignorance of this fact has resulted in grievous injustice to the shari'ah, and has caused many difficulties, hardships and sheer impossibilities, although it is known that the noble shari'ah, which serves the highest interests of mankind, would not sanction such results.'*

‘Ādil Qūta, Al-‘Urf, 1:64-65 – see reference to Al Qarafi, later

## Differences in applying the maxims

Scholars are guided by many maxims that summarises rules for them to follow in new circumstances. **Scholars will interpret and apply these maxims in different ways, depending on their training and way of thinking.**

Other scholars will prefer to stick to rulings of the past, or rulings from another country, even if they might cause problems, because they feel this approach might be safer than taking a risk on working out new rulings for a new situation.

They recommend adhering to traditional rules and see any difficulties from the rulings as a test of faith.

Here are some of the maxims, agreed by all schools of fiqh, that jurist scholars are supposed to consider when offering specific rulings – all derived from Qur'an and hadith:

### ***Matters are judged by their purposes***

So at times, scholars may feel that the situation has changed so much that an old ruling which was set for a particular situation no longer applies

### ***Harm must be removed***

Some rulings may cause more harm if they are recommended in an inappropriate context. Scholars take responsibility for rulings but they also have to perform a risk analysis and consider the impact their rulings will have.

### ***Hardship necessitates facilitation***

It's the duty of scholars to find ease when people are in a state of extreme hardship. This links to the principle, *necessity dictates exceptions*

### ***Custom shall have the weight of law***

This maxim reminds scholars that Islamic law expects some rulings to change if needed, according to the norms and ways of different cultures.

## The dangers in not considering context

Some scholars prefer to stick to old rulings and sometimes those rulings feel safer to us too, because of our *perceptions* of what an Islamic ruling should be.

However, **this approach has been criticised by leading jurists because it might contradict the spirit of the law and lead to hardships and people being turned off the religion.**

Imam Al Qarafi, a leading 13th century Maliki scholar was scathing of such a practice:

*“Persons handing down legal judgments while adhering blindly to the texts in their books without regard for the cultural realities of their people are in gross error.*

*They act in contradiction to established legal consensus and are guilty of iniquity and disobedience before God, having no excuse despite their ignorance; for they have taken upon themselves the art of issuing legal rulings without being worthy of that practice.”*

‘Ādil Qūta, Al-‘Urf, 1:64-65 referenced in Islam and the Cultural Imperative, Dr Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, Nawawi Foundation Paper, <https://www.theoasisinitiative.org/islam-the-cultural-imperative>



## Categories of opinions

### *Majority opinions*

There is a tendency to speak of an opinion as being valid because it is a 'majority opinion'. However, does this mean a majority opinion among all the scholars or the prevalent opinion in an area?

If the latter, then whenever a madhab predominates in an area, those rulings will be a majority opinion in that area, even though it might be a minority opinion overall.

e.g. not combining prayers when travelling is a minority opinion, a Hanafi opinion. Combining is allowed in all the other madhabs. In Britain, most Muslims are Hanafi, so in Britain, combining prayer should be a *minority* opinion. However, many British Muslims do combine their prayers when travelling. In fact, in winter, it's easy to miss 'Asr if travelling and it's not combined with dhuhr!

### *Minority opinions*

A well-known opinion followed by a minority of scholars, e.g. just one madhab.

Most Muslims follow some minority opinions because most Muslims follow a madhab and each madhab will have some opinions that are unique to that madhab.

## Categories of opinions

### *Irregular opinions*

An irregular opinion could be defined as a little-known opinion that a jurist may have offered for a specific minority situation, based on the maxims, e.g. Yusuf al Qaradawi allowing first mortgages for Muslims in the West.

### *Irregular opinions that become majority opinions*

Whenever the world changes radically, a minority situation becomes the majority, or a minority culture becomes a widespread norm, and you see irregular opinions becoming majority opinions. Examples include:

Using print media – originally it was deemed haram

Banning slavery – was allowed everywhere until just a couple of centuries ago, now haram

Smoking – now being widely seen as makruh or haram

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#### **4. Still consult your heart**



Is one opinion right and the other one sinful?

What if I follow the wrong one?

***'If a judge passes a judgement having striven to reach a decision, and he gets it right, he will have two rewards. If he passes a judgement having striven to reach a decision and he gets it wrong, he will have one reward.'***

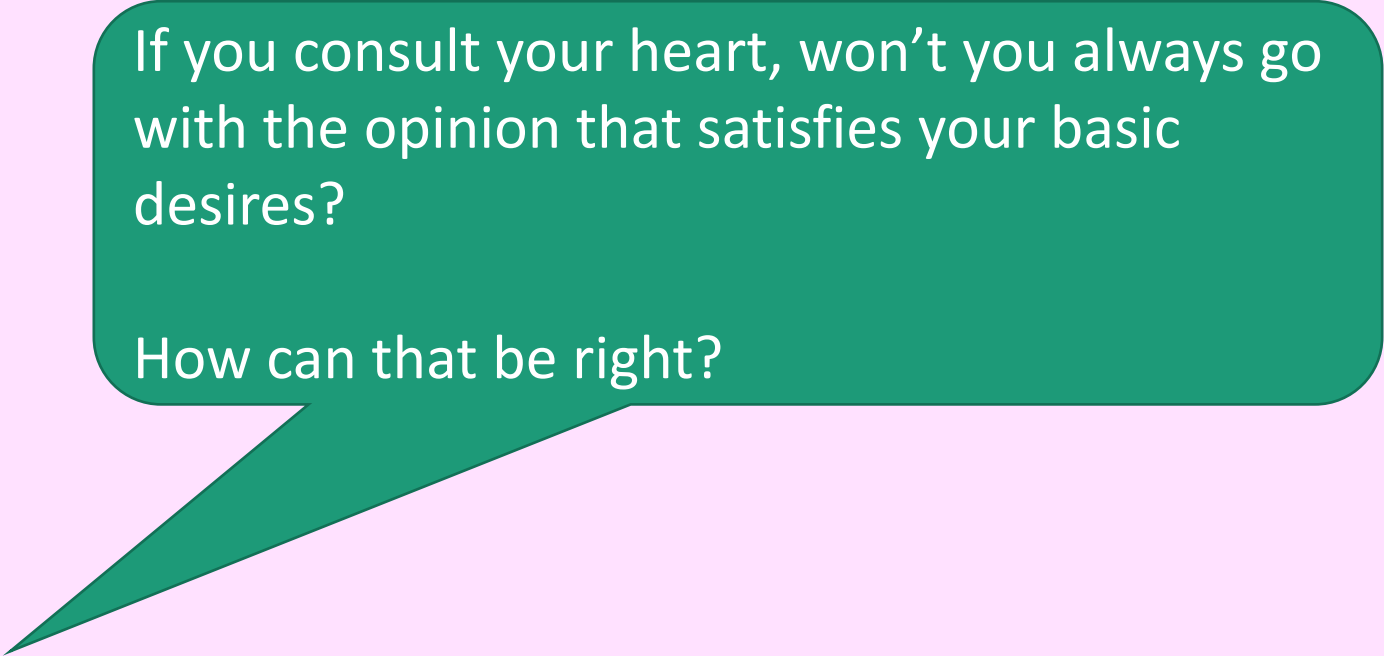
Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7352) and Muslim (1716)

The Prophet (S) said:

*'You have come to ask about righteousness? I said: Yes. He said:*

***Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves to and fro in the breast even though the people again and again have given you their legal opinion (in its favour).'***

(Ahmed and Daarimi, Hasan).



If you consult your heart, won't you always go  
with the opinion that satisfies your basic  
desires?

How can that be right?



The heart has different parts

To “follow your heart” can mean follow your whims and base desires

But here, the Prophet (S) is asking you to follow the opinion that  
*appeases your conscience, rather than your whims*

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## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

- Sometimes we lose sight of what the religion is really about
- Piety is not in making lots of rules
- When there is a difference of opinion, **Don't make life difficult for others by telling them things are haram**
- We can be strict on ourselves but should be easy on others
- True piety is in doing lots and lots of good. Getting close to Allah, helping people
- Judge ourselves, not others

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

Sometimes we lose sight of what the religion is really about

The Prophet (S) came to teach people:



Hmm...

What is Islam really about?

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

Sometimes we lose sight of what the religion is really about

The Prophet (S) came to teach people:

- Who their Creator is
- How to connect to Him and become His friend
- How to live a life that would bring us peace and happiness
- Care for others, so they can become happier too
- How to prevent people from gross evils and injustices

## Spiritual Code Verses in the Quran

<b>2:2-5</b> 'The <u>muttaqun</u> ' – Pious <b>Sura Baqarah</b>	<b>2:83-84</b> Covenant with Children of Israel <b>Sura Baqarah</b>	<b>2:177</b> <i>Ayat al Birr</i> (The Piety Verse) <b>Sura Baqarah</b>	<b>3:130-136</b> <i>Al 'Amileen</i> (Those who work and strive) <b>Sura Ale-'Imran</b>
<b>4:36-40</b> 'A great reward, multiplied over' <b>Sura Nisa</b>	<b>6:150-154</b> God's Path, leading straight <b>Sura An'am</b>	<b>16:90</b> 'God's instruction' to us <b>Sura Nahl</b>	<b>17:19-39</b> Wisdom and Commandments not to be violated <b>Sura Isra</b>
<b>23:1-11</b> Characteristics of <i>Al Mu'minin</i> (True believers) <b>Sura Mu'minin</b>	<b>25:63-76</b> Characteristics of <i>'Ibad Ul Rahman</i> (God's devotees) <b>Sura Furqan</b>	<b>31:12-22</b> The wisdom of <u>Luqman</u> <b>Sura Luqman</b>	<b>42:36-43</b> <i>The mutawakkilun</i> (Who trust in God) <b>Sura Shuraa</b>
<b>60:12</b> The Pledge with the Prophet <b>Sura Mumtahinah</b>	<b>70:22-35</b> The <u>Mukramun</u> (held in honour) <b>Sura Ma'arij</b>	<b>90:11-18</b> The steep path <b>Sura Balad</b>	<b>103:1-3</b> Those who will not lose out <b>Sura 'Asr</b>

### These selections....

- Each selection presents **"Islam in a Nutshell"**
- They all do it in different ways
- Either as part of a story e.g. when Luqman (AS) advises his son
- Or show that these are not new, e.g. that they were given to the Children of Israel (i.e. will be found in the Bible)
- Etc.

Islam's  
'Spiritual  
Code'

# Islam's 'Spiritual Code'

## BELIEF AND WORSHIP



Believe in One God  
Believe in the Messengers & their Books  
Believe in the Judgement and Heaven and Hell  
Believe in the Unseen, being wary of Shaytan  
Guard your Prayer & obligatory devotions  
Be humble and devoted in Prayer

## SPIRITUALITY



Nurture your relationship with God:  
- Love God (*hubb*)  
- Feel gratitude (*shukr*)  
- Regret your mistakes / race to forgiveness (*istighfar*)  
- Have awareness / mindfulness of God (*taqwa*)  
- Submit your self fully to your Creator (*Islam*)  
- Follow the Prophet (PBUH) (*sunnah*)

## SERVICE



Stand up for justice  
Make positive change:  
- Encourage the common good  
- Address the wrongs in society  
Encourage empathy & compassion (*marhama*)  
Care for family, neighbours, friends travellers and the poor  
Free the enslaved  
Be kind to those you have authority over

## COMMANDMENTS



Honour your parents  
Be generous to those in need  
Do not shed blood or take life  
Do not exploit with usury, doubled and multiplied  
Do not oppress people  
Do not turn people out of their homes  
Do not steal  
Be faithful to your promises and contracts; do not cheat  
Do not come close to adultery - be faithful  
Do not kill your own children, for fear of want

## CHARACTER



Be patient and perseverant  
Be honest, just and fair at all times  
Walk on the earth lightly and with humility  
Spend but avoid waste  
Be careful with your tongue  
Control your anger  
Forgive all people  
Consult in your affairs  
Avoid all shameful deeds, including secret ones  
Have humility in knowledge and enjoin the truth

- Nothing added
- Nothing taken away!
- Guide communities back to their primordial simplicity and goodness

Islam's  
'Spiritual  
Code'

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

Piety is not in making lots of rules

Some people believe piety is in suffering and making more and more things haram.

The Prophet (PBUH) reportedly said,

***‘Beware of excessiveness in religion (al-ghuluw). Those before you have perished as a result of such excessiveness in religion.’***

(Reported by Ahmad)

The Prophet (S) repeated three times:

***‘Ruined are those who indulge in hair-splitting.’*** (Muslim)



Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said,

*“What I have prohibited for you, avoid it. What I have commanded you, do it as much as you can.*

*Verily, those before you were ruined only due to their excessive questioning and contradicting their prophets.”*

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 7288, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1337

The Perception



The Qur'anic Reality



Piety, Jannah

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

Don't make life difficult for others by telling them that things are haram, if there's a difference of opinion

Sufyan al-Thawri said: ***'If you see a man doing something over which there is a debate among the scholars, and which you yourself believe to be forbidden, you should not forbid him from doing it.'***

Yahya ibn Sa'id, one of the great hadith narrators among the Followers (Tabi'un), said:

***'The people of knowledge are a people of broadness (ahl tawsi'a). They continue to give fatwas which are different from each other, and no scholar reproaches another scholar for his opinion.'***

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

We can be strict on ourselves but should be easy on others

If we feel uneasy about something then we should avoid it ourselves.

**But we must not make life difficult to others by making out that it is haram.**

The Prophet (S) was a mercy to the worlds. Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said,

***‘Make things easy and do not make things difficult;***

***Cheer up people with good news and do not put them off.’*** (Bukhari and Muslim)

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

True piety is in doing lots and lots of good, getting close to Allah, and helping people

*'If you avoid the most heinous of prohibited conduct We shall conceal all your sins and admit you to a great honour.'*

(Quran 4:31)

The Prophet (S) advised,

*'What I have forbidden to you, avoid; **what I have ordered you (to do), do as much as you can.** It was only their excessive questioning and their disagreeing with their prophets that destroyed those who were before you.'*

(Bukhari and Muslim)

## 5. Judge yourself; be easy on others

### Judge ourselves, not others

When we see people doing something we wouldn't like to do, remember our own shortcomings rather than judging them.

Do we want others to judge us?

Better we concentrate on judging our own shortcomings!

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