

Ruling on the game “Who wants to be a millionaire?”



I would like to participate in a program called [Who want to be a millionaire by The MBC channel]. Is that permissible to me to take that money throughout answering Questions? Secondly IF answer any Questions wrong than i will lose some money: is that concerned as gambling KOOMAR ?.

Praise be to Allaah.

The game that you are asking about is one of the tools of the new economy, the economy of chance and coincidence, the get-rich-quick economy towards which all people, old and young, men and women, have started to rush with no understanding, and which only leads to stress, wasting of time and accumulation of debts.

Many people have stated that they have had phone bills costing thousands of dollars for a single month, and it has become a kind of addiction which some researchers have dubbed an “addiction to telephone gambling”. This addiction also leads to other regrettable consequences, such as people who used to pray regularly missing their prayers; and men divorcing their wives who were addicted to the telephone, after they found out what was going on when the first phone bill arrived, which leads to separation and turning the children’s lives into hell. There have been cases of people working in foreign countries with a small income, and when they get addicted to the telephone there comes a bill which takes up all that they had saved over the months.

This game is a new form of gambling, which some contemporary researchers call “telephone gambling”. Gambling is forbidden, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and Al-Ansaab, and Al-Azlaam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaytaan’s (Satan’s)

handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.

Shaytaan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allaah and from As-Salaah (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?”

[al-Maa'idah 5:90-91]

al-Maawirdi al-Shaafa'i said: Gambling means that the one who gets involved in it will be either a winner if he takes or a loser if he gives.

The media have reported a number of fatwas issued by scholars and researchers concerning telephone competitions of the type mentioned, stating that they are a form of gambling and a modern kind of lottery. Those who have spoken of that include the following:

1 – Mufti Dr. Nasr Fareed, who said that it is a kind of gambling and is forbidden according to sharee'ah.

2 – The General Secretary of the Islamic Research Council in Egypt, Shaykh Wafa Abu 'Ajooz who said that it is a new kind of gambling.

3 – The former secretary of the al-Azhar Scholars' Front and Professor of Hadeeth in the Faculty of Usool al-Deen in al-Azhar University stated that it is a kind of gambling and deceit that is forbidden in Islam.

4 – The Dean of the College of Sharee'ah in Kuwait, Dr. Muhammad al-Tabatabaa'i.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz issued a fatwa stating that some kinds of competitions are

haram because they involve gambling and because they involve consuming people's wealth unlawfully and by means of deceit and ambiguity. Majmoo'at Fataawa wa Maqaalaat Mutanawwi'ah, 5/241.

One of the clearest indications that these competitions come under the heading of gambling is the fact that the caller pays per minute a rate that is many more times the ordinary cost per minute of making a phone call. However if he were paying the ordinary rate it would still come under the heading of gambling because he is only making the call and paying this rate in order to try to win something.

Islam, as a system that encompasses all aspects of life, forbids people to do things that harm them and burden them (with debts); it also forbids false and unrealistic hopes. The person who takes part in these competitions is living in a world of dreams. Most of them think that they will only call for a few minutes, then their lives will be turned into luxury and riches.

“Do not be a slave to wishful thinking, because wishful thinking is the preserve of losers.”

These competitions create a kind of frustration in those who do not win, and a kind of depression, regret and anxiety that gradually leads them into deviant ways of earning that are not prescribed.

The Muslims have another kind of competition, which is competing to obey Allaah and turn to Him, the Owner of never-ending stores. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord (Allaah), and Paradise the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allaah and His Messengers. That is the Grace of Allaah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allaah is the Owner of Great Bounty” [al-Hadeed 57:21]

If you are seeking to win, then follow one of these routes, with which you cannot lose: “One prayer in al-Masjid al-Haram [Makkah] is better than one hundred thousand prayers offered elsewhere.” Narrated by Ahmad, 3/343; al-Albaani said in al-Irwa' (4/341): it is saheeh.

And Allaah says concerning the virtue of Laylat al-Qadr (interpretation of the meaning):

“The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months” [al-Qadr 97:3]

And according to a hadeeth narrated by Abu Sa’eed: “Is any one of you incapable of reciting one-third of the Qur’aan in one night?” I said, “Who is able to do that?” He said, “Recite Qul Huwa Allaahu ahad.” Narrated by Muslim, 811. Reciting Qul Huwa Allaahu ahad [i.e., Soorat al-Ikhlaas 112] is equivalent to reciting one-third of the Qur’aan.

For more information see the book, Man sa yarbah al-milyon.

See Majmoo’ah Fataawa wa Maqaalaat Mutanawwi’ah by Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, 5/240.

Islam Q&A