

## Core Curriculum

### 6 Measuring Good and Bad in Islam

#### 6.14 **Trivializing the Harām**

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! When driving on roads, most people are conscious of red lights. Even to the detriment of their own breaks, most people will make abrupt stops when they realize that they are about to pass a red light. Why is this?

For some, it’s a moral choice. They know that passing the red light may result in some kind of tragic accident. Not only will it endanger their own lives, but it will also endanger the lives of others. Most people, however, will obey traffic light rules because they are afraid of fines which can be quite hefty.

When it comes to observing the halāl and harām, it is unfortunate that we don’t see the same rate of “consciousness” as we do with traffic light rules. Part of it is understandable even though it is not justifiable! Most people are deterred by immediate punishments. You pass the light, a police officer stops you right away and gives you a ticket. When we break God’s rules, things, at least at face value, don’t happen that fast. We don’t get those immediate fines with visible ink.

Yet the toll it takes on us is much heftier than a simple fine or a point reduction. In previous lessons, we’ve seen how sins darken our hearts. In this lesson we will continue this theme by looking at how belittling sins

and trivializing the harām also destroys our souls and our chances at salvation.

#### BODY OF TEXT

There shall be no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from [the way of] error: hence, he who rejects the powers of evil (tāghūt) and believes in Allah has indeed taken hold of a support most unailing, which shall never give way: for God is all-hearing, all-knowing. Allah is near [and a friend] to those who have true faith, taking them out of deep darkness into the light - whereas near unto those who are bent on denying the truth are the powers of evil that take them out of light into darkness deep: it is they who are destined for the fire, therein to abide. (Chapter 2, verses 256-257 of the Holy Qur'an)

We live in society. We are all brought up within particular cultures. These cultures teach us a variety of dos and don'ts, virtues and taboos. Some of what is culturally learnt is in sync with Islam, but others are not. An unfortunate reality is that the sins that we consider culturally unproblematic are often taken lightly.

Some of our cultures, for example, may not consider backbiting or having intimate relationships with the opposite gender as a moral problem. Unfortunately, this is not unheard of among some Muslim communities nowadays.

Although Islam condemns backbiting and fornication, sometimes these sins are trivialized as they are culturally accepted. A common approach is to play on God's mercy where it is argued that God is so infinitely merciful that He will forgive these sins in the Hereafter.

The first and most obvious problem with this view is that it assumes that God will forgive these sins. Although He is merciful, there is no guarantee that He will not take us up to task on the harām acts we've committed. This approach is as presumptuous about God as it is naïve. It assumes a false certitude that we know what God will do.

The second, and perhaps greater problem is that it discounts the effect of committing harām deeds has on our souls. The Qur’anic verse we read earlier taught us two things: the point of our lives is to establish a friendship with God.

This friendship is established by doing what God, in all His Infinite wisdom, has deemed healthy for our souls. Friendship with Him is to our benefit for it takes us from darkness into light. That is, it takes us from a state of inner darkness and corruption to inner light and purity.

Committing sins, that is, doing what is harām isn’t just about being taken to task by God for disobeying Him, what is really at stake is the poisoning of our inner souls.

For example, it is illegal to take drugs. If one is caught taking drugs, one will get punished by the law. However, if we don’t get caught, does this mean that no harm has come to us? Any rational person will know that the harm that a drug like heroin does to us is much worse than any kind of punishment (jail, fines, probation etc.) that the police and a court judge can throw at us.

Choosing the harām is choosing friendship with the powers of evil, the head of which is Satan, over friendship with God. In the former, we poison and corrupt our souls, whereas in the latter, we chose what will benefit them. It is the choice between the life of light and the life of darkness.

By committing the haram we are not harming God in anyway, who we are harming first and foremost is ourselves. If Allah gets “angry” with us (please indicate some quotation to note that this word is used figuratively) it is out of His infinite love where He wants what is best for us and does not want us to destroy ourselves by our own devices.

Allah says the following in the Qur’an:

[And said], "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do

evil, [you do it] to yourselves." (Chapter 17, verse 7 of the Holy Qur'an)

Even if God forgives us for our sins on the Day of Judgment, remember that the action, regardless, kept us from growing spiritually and rising to higher levels in Paradise. Our goal in this life is not simply to avoid sin, but it is to grow spiritually.

To trivialize the harām is to trivialize our own souls.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh