181642 - Is Ludo Prohibited in Islam?

the question

Is it prohibited to play Ludo? The game Ludo is similar to backgammon and on your website you indicated that it is prohibited to play backgammon. I sent a comment about the prohibition on playing backgammon, and you added that all games that are played with dice are prohibited. This made me wonder if Ludo is also prohibited, but I am not qualified to make Ijtihad about this matter because I am not a scholar.

I hope that you could provide me with the sources of the Hadith that you quoted in your response to question no. 95409 about the ruling on playing backgammon.

Summary of answer

Every game that involves using dice is prohibited because it comes under the heading of dice games, which are prohibited. Ludo is a game that relies on the use of the dice. Therefore, playing Ludo is prohibited in Islam.

Detailed answer

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Is playing backgammon allowed in Islam?

In the answer to question no. 95409 , we explained that it is prohibited to play backgammon, and that every game that involves using dice is prohibited because it comes under the heading of dice games, which are prohibited.

Is Ludo prohibited?

Ludo is not excluded from that, because it is a game that relies on use of the dice, as is the case with backgammon. It is composed of the game board, the dice and four pieces of different colours, one for each player. Each player puts his piece in the middle of the circle on the board, then the first player rolls the dice and answers the question in his circle according to the number of the dice that he rolls. If he answers correctly, he moves out of the circle to the start, but if he gives the wrong answer he stays where he is, then the dice passes to the next player, and so on.

Because the game is based on rolling the dice, as in the case of other dice games, it is a prohibited game.

Secondly:

It says in Al-Mu`jam Al-Wasit (2/912):

“Nard (dice) is a game of chance that is played using a box, playing pieces and two dice, in which the pieces are moved according to the numbers shown on the dice. It is known to the common folk as backgammon.”

It was narrated by Muslim (2260), Abu Dawud (4939), Ibn Majah (3763) and Ahmad, from Buraydah (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever plays with dice, it is as if he were dipping his hand in the flesh and blood of a pig.”

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The scholars said: This Hadith was quoted as evidence by Ash-Shafaʻi and others for the prohibition on playing with dice.”

It was narrated by Abu Dawud (4938), Ibn Majah (3762), Ahmad (19027), and Al-Bayhaqi (21478) from Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever plays with dice has disobeyed Allah and His Messenger.” (Classed as sound by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Jami`, no. 6529)

Al-Bukhari narrated in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad (1270) that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Beware of these two marked cubes that are thrown, for they come under the heading of gambling.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, no. 1270)

The two cubes in question are dice, which are marked with spots.

Because they were described as coming under the heading of gambling, some of the scholars quoted as evidence the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, Al-Ansab (stone altars for sacrifices to idols etc), and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of satan handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.

Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from As-Salat (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?” [Al-Ma’idah 5:90-91].

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This verse indicates that it is prohibited to play with dice and to play chess , whether that involves gambling or not.” (Al-Jami` li Ahkam Al-Quran, 6/291)

Al-Bukhari also narrated in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad (1274) from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she heard that the people of a household who were living in a property that she owned had some dice, so she sent word to them saying: If you do not throw them out, I will throw you out of my property. And she denounced them for that. (Classed as sound by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, no. 1274)

He also narrated (1275) that Kulthum ibn Jabr said: Ibn Az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed us and said: “O people of Makkah, I have heard of some men of Quraysh playing a game called dice. I swear by Allah, if anyone is brought to me who has played with them, I will punish him in his hair and his skin, and I will give his goods to the one who brings him to me.” (Classed as sound by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, no. 1275)

And he narrated (1277) that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The one who plays with dice for the purpose of gambling is like the one who eats the flesh of a pig, and the one who plays with them without gambling is like the one who dips his hand in the blood of a pig.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, no. 1277)

Why is dice prohibited in Islam?

Shams Ad-Deen Ar-Ramli Ash-Shafa‘i (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The game of dice is based on guessing and this is the utmost foolishness. Ar-Rafa‘i said: Everything that is based on guessing is prohibited.” (Nihayat Al-Muhtaj, 8/295)

Al-Qalyubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Hashiyah (4/320): “Dice” refers to that which is now known as backgammon.

It was narrated from Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami (may Allah have mercy on him) that playing with dice is a major sin, as it says in his book Az-Zawajir ‘an Iqtiraf Al-Kaba’ir (3/45). After quoting the reports that were narrated concerning that, he said:

Regarding this as a major sin is what appears to be the conclusion from the reports, and this is what the author of Al-Bayan stated, narrating from most of our companions. Most of our companions said: “It is prohibited to play with them. This is what is stated in Al-Umm. Anyone who plays with them is to be regarded as an evildoer and his testimony is not to be accepted.”

Before him that was stated by Al-Mawardi (may Allah have mercy on him), who clearly mentioned it in his book Al-Hawiy where he said: “The correct view, which is that of the majority of scholars, is that it is prohibited to play with dice, and that the one who does that is an evildoer and his testimony is not to be accepted.”

He was followed in that by Ar-Ruyani (may Allah have mercy on him) in Al-Bahr. After quoting the view of Ash-Shafi`i (may Allah have mercy on him) in Al-Mukhtasar, he said: "I also disapprove of playing with dice, because of the report. Most of our companions said: It is disapproved to play with dice, and because of it a person's testimony may be rejected, and it is disapproved in the sense of being prohibited."

Imam Al-Haramayn (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The correct view is that playing with dice is a major sin. That was the view of Al-Adhra`i, who said: Whoever plays with dice, knowing what was said about that, and fully aware of it, is to be regarded as an evildoer and his testimony is to be rejected, no matter what land he is in, not because he has done something contrary to dignity, but because he has committed that which is emphatically prohibited." (Az-Zawajir, 3/246-248)

From the Shar`i texts quoted above it is clear that playing dice is prohibited. There are many scholarly texts to this effect. The dice games that are known nowadays, such as backgammon, and all similar games in which dice are used, are similarly prohibited and must all be avoided. That includes the game of Ludo.

And Allah knows best.