

Chess in the Light of the Jurist	
Author	Hamza Yusuf - BA in religious studies (San Jose State University, California), PhD (Graduate Theological Union, California), studied in United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Morocco, Spain and Mauritania
Rulings	Every human action (including playing chess) falls under one of five categories: wājib, mandūb, mubāḥ, makrūh, and ḥarām
Origin of chess	<p>According to Western historical sources, the origins of chess date to around 500 CE in India</p> <p>According to Ibn Khallikān, historian and biographer, chess was invented by the Indian philosopher Sissah, for the Indian ruler Shihram</p>
Chess and Arabs	<p>The Arabs called chess shaṭranj, a word derived from Sanskrit</p> <p>“Checkmate” is derived from the Arabic “shāh māt,” meaning, “The king is dead”</p> <p>Arab chess came about with the Muslim invasion of Persia in 20 AH</p> <p>It was the Arab form of chess that entered into Europe through Andalusian Spain, Muslim Sicily, and Turkey</p>
European chess	The Europeans gave the queen much more power, enabling her to move like a rook and a bishop
Rulings on chess	All jurists agreed that if any gambling was involved then it is prohibited
Ibn Qudāmah	<p>Scholars reached three different rulings concerning chess that is played devoid of gambling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing chess is prohibited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Majority opinion of the Ḥanbalī scholars and the stronger opinion among the Ḥanafī scholars</li> <li>- “As for chess, its ruling is similar to the prohibition of games of dice; however, [the ruling against] games of dice is stronger given the explicit prophetic text prohibiting them”</li> <li>- Ḥanafī scholars termed the ruling of playing chess karāhiyyah taḥrīmiyyah: if the game was free of gambling, not habitual, and did not preoccupy its players from any obligation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Otherwise it was deemed prohibited</li> </ul> </li> <li>- “There is no disagreement among Mālik and his companions that habitual playing is a character flaw”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Al-Dasūqī al-Mālikī	<p>لا خِلافَ بَيْنِ مَالِكٍ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَنَّ الْإِدْمَانَ عَلَى اللَّعِبِ بِهَا جُرْحَةٌ وَقَدْ قِيلَ الْإِدْمَانُ أَنْ يُلْعَبَ بِهَا فِي</p>



<p>Stoic philosopher</p>	<p>إني لأستجم نفسي بشيء من اللهو لأتقوى بذلك فيما بعد على الحق</p> <p>We all need downtime to restore ourselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tragedy occurs when those activities become the purpose of our lives, and the true purpose of life is entirely missed</li> </ul> <p>“Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested”</p> <p>If playing chess more than once concerned the scholars of Islam, what would they say today about our habits of watching movies and playing video games, about our endless conversations on cell phones, or about the hours that we spend surfing the net</p>
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