

5.3 Entertainment

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the Islamic recommendation for use of our time in this world as encompassing three important facets of life: conversing with our Lord, seeking livelihood, and engaging in pleasures which are ḥalāl and which improve us
- Briefly outline some entertainment activities that are permissible in Islam, such as biking, playing sports, exploring nature, and travelling.
- Identify the distractive quality of entertainment media and the dangers these activities pose to our mental, physical, and spiritual health.
- Review ḥalāl and ḥarām forms of entertainment and the criteria which distinguishes them.
- Outline some additional scenarios which can help to clarify the forms of entertainment that are permissible from an Islamic perspective.

In our journey towards perfection and closeness to Allah (swt), one of the important parts of our life to reflect on is how we use our time. As we learned in previous years, Islam teaches us that we should make the most of our time. According to a ḥadīth, our time should be split into three components:

وقال عليه السلام: لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلَاثُ سَاعَاتٍ: فَسَاعَةٌ يُنَاجِي فِيهَا رَبَّهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَرْمُ - مَعَاشَهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يُخَلِّي بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَبَيْنَ لَذَّتِهَا فِيمَا يَحِلُّ وَيَجْمَلُ.

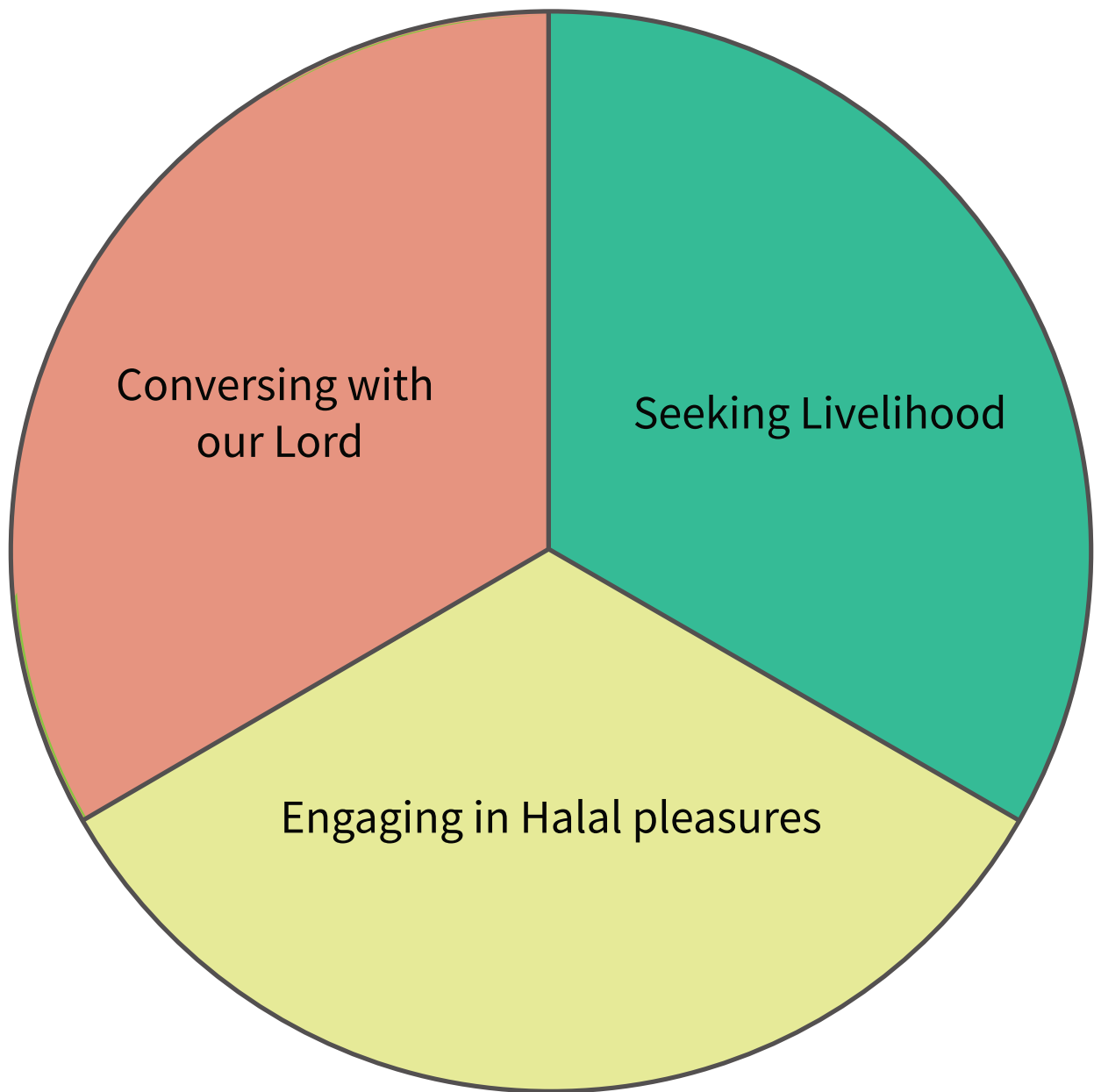
Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has said: “For a believer there are three portions of time: a portion in which they converse with their Lord, a portion in which they seek their livelihood, and a portion dedicated to their pleasures which are ḥalāl and which improve them.”¹



FOCUS ACTIVITY: A Slice of Your Time

1. As per the above narration, how much time (in hours) do you set aside for each of the three categories mentioned (conversing with our Lord, seeking livelihood [or becoming educated], and engaging in pleasures which are ḥalāl and which improve us)? Record the designated times in the pie chart on the right.
2. Clearly, the Imām is not telling us to give equal time to each of these areas. However, it’s possible that some people are imbalanced because they are not giving enough time, or are giving too much time, to one or more of the areas. Is there an imbalance in the way that your time is divided? How?
3. In each slice of the pie chart, list some activities you often take part in that fill each time portion.
4. If there are imbalances in your time distribution, what is one way in which you could achieve a better balance?

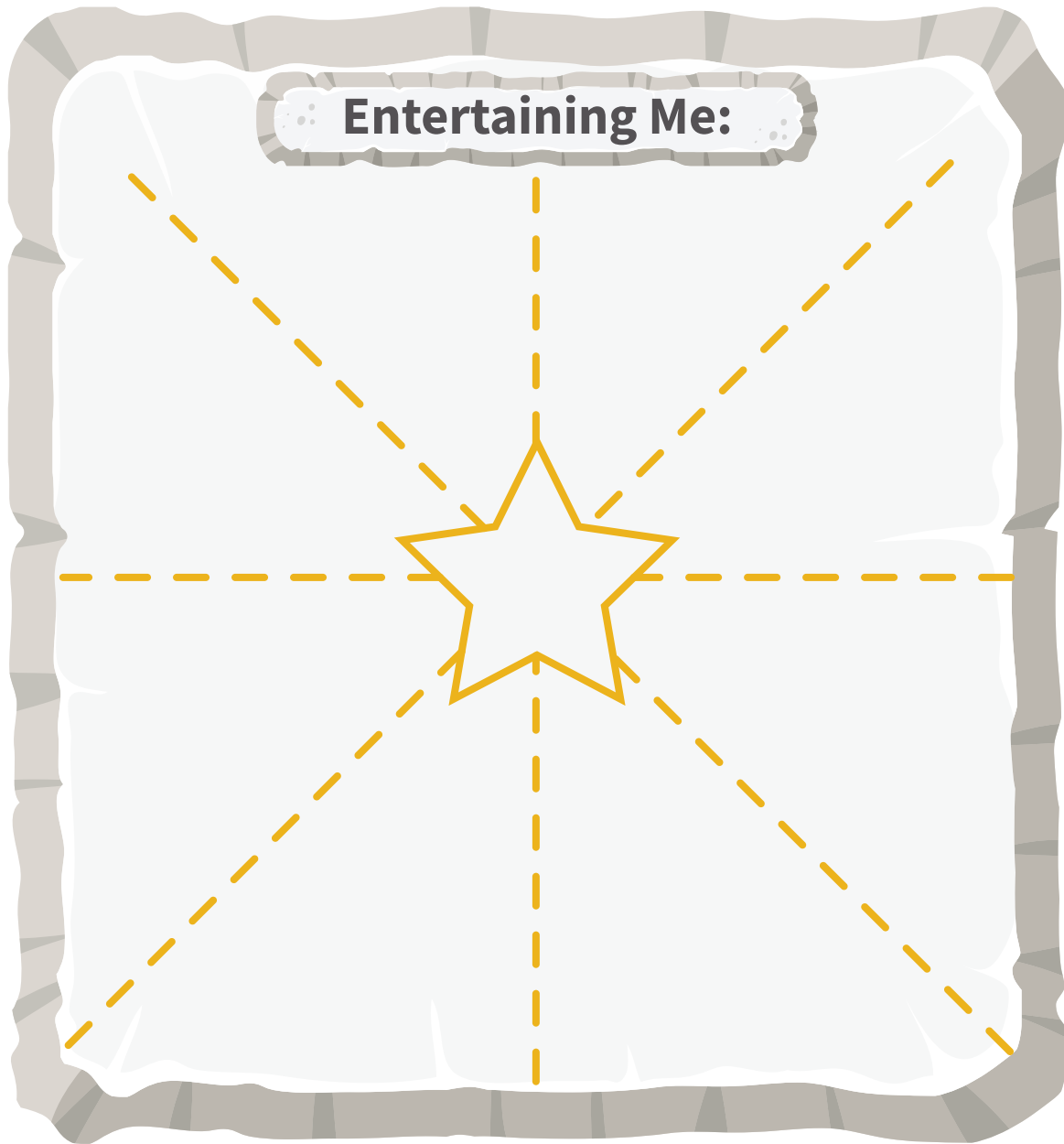
1 Nahjul Balāghah, Ḥadīth #378



As we can see from the ḥadīth on the left, entertainment is a natural part of life. We all need some time to rest and recuperate so that we can continue engaging in other important activities such as worship and earning a livelihood. Many types of entertainment are permissible in Islam. Activities such as sports, being in nature, socializing with family and friends, and travel are all permissible in and of themselves.

Activity 5.3a: All About Me – Entertainment Edition

What are your favorite activities or pastimes that you take part in for entertainment purposes? Using the graphic organizer below, create a poster that tells your classmates all about your hobbies and interests by illustrating yourself taking part in each activity.



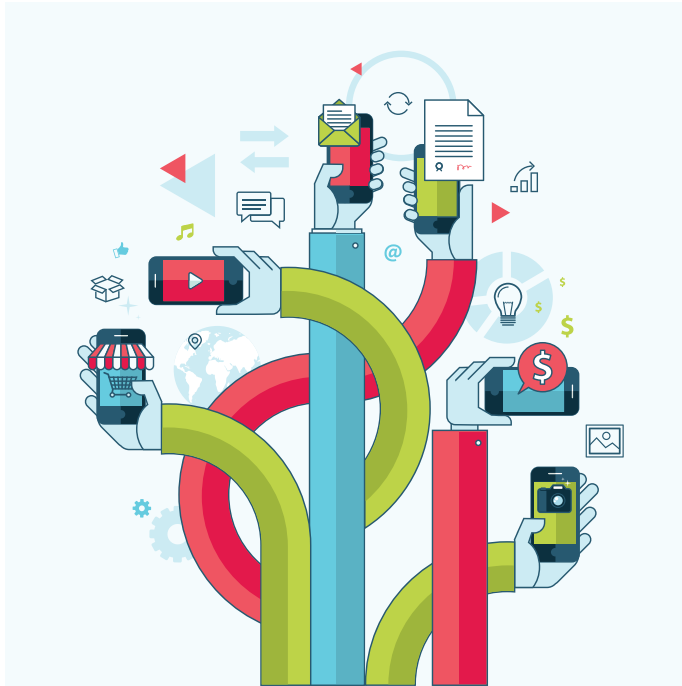
However, there are some forms of entertainment regarding which we need to take extra care. This is because, in today's world, these types of entertainment are being misused and can lead to many negative effects on us spiritually and psychologically. In this lesson, we will go through some presentations which will help us reflect on what themes and content are present in today's popular forms of media and the importance of protecting ourselves from these negative messages.

This lesson also includes a table which reviews the rules related to music and entertainment in brief. It also contains a review of some common scenarios we may come across in relation to these issues. You can refer to the grade 7 lesson for more detailed rules on these issues.

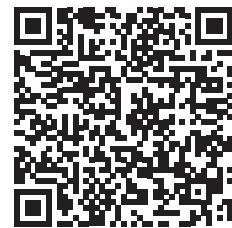


MEDIA PRESENTATION PRE-WATCHING FOCUS ACTIVITY:

Test your Model of Attention. Without turning around, can you describe what the person sitting behind you is wearing? If you don't have anyone sitting behind you, can you recall what a parent was wearing the last time you saw him/her this morning?



The Media (A Closer Look) Presentation



Worksheet 5.3b: Media Presentation After-Watching Activity

BETTER HABITS GOAL SETTING: REDUCING DISTRACTIONS

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. -Aristotle

As the demonstration by Apollo Robbins and the remainder of *The Media (A Closer Look)* Presentation makes clear, there are numerous distractions disguised as entertainment which not only take us away from a productive and healthy lifestyle, but actually pose a serious danger to our mental, physical, and spiritual health. Using the Goal Setting Tracker worksheet below, list some goals for reducing the distractions in your life. Then, turn your goals into healthy habits by tracking your progress with meeting your goals over the course of a month!

ḤALĀL AND ḤARĀM ENTERTAINMENT QUICK REFERENCE CHART

	Ḥalāl	Ḥarām
Music (instruments/ tune)	If not exclusively used for gatherings of sin	If exclusively used for gatherings of sin such as in nightclubs, bars, dances, et
Songs (lyrics and type of singing tune)	If not suitable for gatherings of sin	If the tune is suitable for gatherings of sin such as in nightclubs, bars, dances, etc. (even if the lyrics are decent) Contains lyrics promoting, encouraging or glorifying ḥarām acts such as drug use, criminal behaviour or inappropriate sexual or romantic relationships (even if the tune is not suitable for gatherings of sin)
Dancing	Dancing is generally discouraged in Islam, and most forms of it (such as the type of dancing that takes place in ḥarām gatherings of entertainment) are prohibited. Also, if it occurs in a mixed gathering of males and females then it is definitely forbidden.	
Video Games	Permissible in moderation and if it does not contain ḥarām scenes or themes	Not permissible if it contains ḥarām scenes or themes, or if it involves listening to ḥarām music
Movies and TV shows	Permissible in moderation and if it does not contain ḥarām scenes or themes	Not permissible if it contains ḥarām scenes or themes
Digital/ Social Media	Permissible in moderation and if it does not contain any ḥarām scenes or themes	Not permissible if it contains ḥarām scenes or themes It is not permissible to engage in private social communication with members of the opposite gender, or even public communication which leads to lust or fear of falling into ḥarām

Activity 5.3c: Further Scenarios

Distinguishing Ḥalāl and Ḥarām forms of Entertainment

1. My friends listen to songs that I know are definitely played in sinful gatherings such as nightclubs. They talk about these types of songs frequently and I am tempted to listen to these songs so I can be a part of the conversations. What should I do?

2. My teacher is playing relaxing soft music in the background in class. It is not the type of music that would be played in sinful gatherings. Do I need to leave the classroom?

3. My friend sends me a link to a new song that has just come out. The music is not usually the type to be played in sinful gatherings but the lyrics are about inappropriate relations. Can I listen to this song?

4. Asima is invited to a girls-only dance party. She knows there will be no males there. However, it is very likely ḥarām music and songs will be played and it will turn into a sinful gathering. Can she attend?

5. Zaid loves playing video games. The new version of the game he usually plays now includes animated female characters who wear indecent clothing. The game now also has a theme of flirting and inappropriate relations between male and female characters. He finds that playing the game causes him to have inappropriate thoughts. Can he continue to play this game?

6. Asim enjoys playing RPGs (Role-Playing Games). His friend invites him to play a new game. Asim notices that this game involves excessive violence and horror scenes. Should he play this game?

7. Sama has installed a social media app on her phone. Recently she has noticed that her feed includes a lot of inappropriate pictures which encourage indecent clothing and immoral actions. What should she do?

8. Sara has installed Instagram on her phone. A boy from school has started sending her private messages on this app and they are having private conversations now. What should she do?

Application Activity 5.3d

Can you come up with one additional scenario that you have encountered in your personal life that raised questions for you about whether an activity was a ḥalāl or ḥarām form of entertainment? Are you able to resolve the question using the chart or scenarios above?
