

Use of Tobacco in Islam

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1. Discovery & uses of Tobacco:

Tobacco was discovered by the Spanish sailors on the American shores at about 1500 CE (900 AH). Since its invention, the epidemic of smoking has continued to spread all over the world. In our times, one seldom finds a house not afflicted by it. As early as the 17th Century, the European countries realized the dangers of smoking and fought against it. Laws were designed in England, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, and other countries, prohibiting smoking and punishing violators. Nowadays, the Western countries continue their attempts to protect their peoples from the harms of smoking. They employ media means, ordain laws and regulations, and apply other methods to discourage people from smoking. Because of that, the rate of smokers has declined to a certain degree in those countries. Smoking was introduced to the Muslim countries by the Europeans around 1000 AH. Its spread among the Muslims was similar to that in the West. The unfortunate fact, however is, that in the Muslim countries, no similar measures were exerted to protect the people from it. To the contrary, the media continues its advertisement on smoking and encouraged people to do it. This has caused the epidemic of smoking to continue and spread in those countries to such an extent that it has become hard to control. Smoking have become the rule, and abstaining from it, an exception.

Often, people look with astonishment and disdain at a person who when a cigarette is offered to him, declines to smoke explaining that he does not smoke. Offering cigarettes to the guests has become the first rules of hospitality. Anyone who does not offers them to their guests or insists on them to smoke would be violating the ethics of hospitality and generosity! Furthermore, some of those who pretend to represent the religion are among the worst addicts to smoking. When they are reproached or reminded of their vice, they respond by providing weak excuses to justify it in the name of Islam. They slyly remark that there is no clear text prohibiting smoking. Therefore, they conclude saying that smoking is not prohibited, but is only Makruh (disliked). By this, they provide a lame excuse for the ignorant, and establish a very bad example for others. Many Muslims have been influenced by such statements, falling into the snares of addiction to smoking. This is observed all over the world. A striking example is that all American airlines now prohibit smoking, even on most international flights; on the other hand, for Muslim airlines, one travels in a near-suffocation state, even on short trips, because of the high number of smokers. Therefore, it forces us to write an article which provides clear evidence concerning the ruling of the use of Tobacco in Islam. We hope that this will benefit our Muslim brothers and sisters; and we ask Allah to accept it from us as a sincere deed for His pleasure. [1]

2. Injunctions of the Qur'an & the Sunnat:

A cursed thing like Tobacco is being used in blind following of western societies. Islam, the religion of peace confers the perpetual benefits to its followers. In order to save human form the poison of Lucifer, Allah bestowed the Shariah. The foundation of Shariah is upon the Fitrat. Shariah clarified what is Halal and what is Har'am. Anything harmful which in any way is injurious, either physically or spiritually, has been explicitly been declared as Har'am. How is it possible that there should be no clear injunction for a thing which is injurious to human health? Tobacco users for a justification of the use argue that there is no clear injunction of the Qur'an in this respect. This lame excuse is not only an admission of ignorance with the Qur'an, but also a declaration of revolt against this Comprehensive Code of Life. Qur'an says: [2]

"Each wet and dried thing is available in the Kit,ab".

How is it possible that while science explains the side effects and harms of Tobacco, Shariah do not guide in this regard. Ignorant with the Talim of Islam should know that the Creator has declared Har'am the use of everything which is injurious for the health of human being. It is mentioned in Qur'an as follows: [3]

"For them (people) pious things have been made Halal and impious things declared Har'am".

Therefore according to Islam no impious thing can be treated Halal till the Qiyamat. Tobacco involves the consumption of Khabisth, an evil substance. It has a foul smell, unpleasant taste, and is harmful to the body. This is sufficient to forbid it, because Rasulullah (S) says: [4]

"Who will enjoin upon them the doing of what is right, forbid them the doing of what is wrong, make lawful to them the good things of life, prohibit for them the evil things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were (previously) upon them".

This Hadith should draw the attention of those, who try to find a lame justification for the use of Tobacco. Rasulullah (S) bestowed following principle on which we can examine which is legal or illegal: [5]

"Even a small quantity of that thing is also Har'am which produces intense intoxication"

A Hadith says: [6]

"Every intoxicating thing is Har'am and if it's excess use causes intoxication, its use even in a small quantity is Har'am"

Another Hadith says: [7]

"All those things are forbidden which intoxicate".

According to the Hadith Literature, Rasulullah (S) has clarified Khamar as Har'am. Khamar means not only Hard Drinks but every intoxicating thing included in the definition of Khamar, which is Har'am. This clarification is enough evidence for the class that wish to understand. Mufti Abd al Rahman Muhaddis Mubarakpuri says: [8]

"If anybody doubts that whether Tobacco is harmful or not, he may see what happens by eating Tobacco even equal to one fourth quantity of a Dirham".

Those using Tobacco are habituated to it, and continue to make an increase in its doze day by day. Eventually the result is that without Tobacco their minds do not function properly, and they can not do anything without it. Air and water are the two most important sources of survival, which should be immune from every kind of impurity and filth. This Hadith clears the matter, Rasulallah (S) asks: [9]

“Out of two which companion is better? The one from whom you get anything good or the one who harm you any way”?

A virtuous companion is one who is a source of benefit, and he is like a trader of fragrance from whom you would buy Atar, or simply inhale the sweet smell freely. And the other companion is like a blacksmith. If you sit with him at his place of job, you would gain nothing except hot air, heat and soot.

The example of a tobacco user is like the second person that provides you nothing but bad smell, sense of heat, and possible chances of catching fire-ashes. Mufti Abd al Rahman has stated in” Kitab al Sunan wal Mubtadiy’at” on page 4, “the use of a cursed thing like Tobacco is Isr’af in the language of Qur’an and also foolishness, extravagance and ignorance. Qur’an says: [10]

“And do not waste (your resources) extravagantly. Indeed the squanderers are the brethren of the devils”.

Rasulallah (S) said: [11]

“Allah hates for you three things: gossips, begging, and wasting money”.

Smoking is veritably not only Isr’af but it is Har’am and wastage of money. Rasulallah (S) says: [12]

“Allah dislikes three things in His creatures the most:

- (1) To talk about Religious matters undeservedly.
- (2) Wastage to money and property.
- (3) Questioning frequently without any aim or objective”.

Smoking is really Isr’af and wastage of money and to argue as a justification of its use is tantamount to irrelevant talk. Qur’an says: [13]

“Do not indulge in Isr’af. The Musrifin (extravagant) are brothers of Shait’an”. In another Ayat, it has been stated that “eat and drink but do not be extravagant because Allah does not like the extravagant”.

Furthermore, there are numerous cases of burnt carpets, furniture, and even complete houses and establishments that have resulted from this disastrous vice. [14]

Az’ab would surely fall on its user. It is essential, to prevent its users from entering Masjid, because it’s bad odour is even worst than that of onion and garlic, whose users had been expelled from the Masjid by the order of Rasulallah (S)”. As per Hadith: [15]

“One who believes in Allah and Qiyamat should not cause any discomfort to those around him”.

A Hadith says: [16]

“La Zararin Wala Zirarin”- Do not cause discomfort to anybody nor allow anybody discomfort to you i.e. do not harm anybody nor let anybody harm you.

By smoking, not only the nearest and dearest are inconvenienced, but all people who come in touch are also discomforted. Very unfortunately non-smokers have also to inhale the smoke emitted by smokers. Is this not causing distress? Can those sitting beside a smoker remain safe from dirty smoke? Rasulallah (S) says: [17]

“Jahannam is the abode of one who harms others on account of his desire”.

Smokers blow out smoke hither and thither and cause inconvenience and discomfort to others, unethically, they do not feel ashamed. Tibrani has quoted on the authority of Syedna Jabir bin Abdullah al Ansari that Rasulallah (S) said: [18]

“He who caused inconvenience to any Muslim, he caused inconvenience to me and the one who inconvenienced me, inconvenienced to Allah and his abode is Jahannam”.

Who can deny that Tobacco isn't harmful for health? Who can say that its smoke does not cause inconvenience to others? Even smokers are well aware of the harmful effects of this cursed thing; but they prefer to be persuaded by its supposed or imaginary utility, just like an ostrich, which, while seeing a dust storm coming in a desert, hides its face in the sand, and thinks that by doing so it can save itself from destruction.

3. Lame Excuses by Addicts:

Smoking is a precarious habit in which every class of society is indulging blindly following the West. Smoking is now-a-days considered a habit of modern and cultured class. It is a matter of great sorrow that women are also involved in this bad habit. Rasulallah (S) says: [19]

“When you indulge in sins, conceal them”.

Openly smoking is not a sign of cultured or elite class but is an open act of sin, which destroys the health and wealth both. They are ideals for wicked not for good. Qur'an guides us in this matter very clearly as follows: [20]

“For you the Uswat of Rasulallah is the best example”.

He is the pivot of submission, and an ideal personality for Hidayat.

Smokers say that they have become so habituated to smoking that they cannot live without it. When smokers, who observe Siyam of Ramazan, remain quite normal for sixteen hours, than why cannot they live without smoking? No body will die without smoking, but will, with the use of Tobacco. It is disclosed in “New England Journal of Medicine” that Tobacco users have three percent higher risk of paralysis. According to the report of medical Journal, Doctors closely monitored seven thousand eight hundred seventy two persons, in people who totally avoided the use of Tobacco, the risk factor of paralysis automatically reduced up to fifty percent. One should know how to control self by suppressing one's desires. The seekers of ‘Peace’ through cursed Tobacco in grief, worry, anxiety, fatigue and illness should turn to Allah and offer Dua and seek His help. Inshallah, they would be blessed with Tawfiq.

The principles of Islam are not confined to time or location, community or vicinity, but its benefits for all to come. The principles of Shariah cannot be changed neither be reform as Agent of the Lucifer demanded again and again. Qur'an guides on this point and says: [21]

"You would never find any change in Sunnatullah (the commandments of Allah)".

Tobacco is such a cursed fire which burns not only the smokers, but also kills slowly all those who are near about. Smoking and eating Tobacco is an attempt of Suicide, so it is also a burning fire of Jahannam. Qur'an says:[22]

"Do not destroy yourselves by your own hands"

Another Ayat says: [23]

"And do not kill yourselves; Allah is indeed Merciful to you."

4. Conversion of minor sins into major:

Those who do not consider smoking as a sin, are in fact people of less understanding, because if one persists in a minor sin, then the minor sin transforms itself into a major sin. Smokers are parallel to the inhabitants of the Jahannam, who eat harmful dirty plants: No food will be there for them but a poisonous plant, which will neither nourish them nor remove their hunger. Rasulullah (S) says: [24]

"There are five grounds for converting a minor sin into a major sin.

- (1) *Persistence in committing a minor sin converts it into a major sin.*
- (2) *Minimization of the gravity of a minor sin converts it into a major sin.*
- (3) *Happiness and shamelessness over committing a sin converts a minor sin into a major one.*
- (4) *Boasting of committing a minor sin among the public converts it into a major one.*
- (5) *The committing of a minor sin by the learned converts it into a major".*

These are the reasons which convert a minor sin into a major one. Minimizing the gravity of a minor sin is a wicked act and not taking any heed of it is like burning straws, which are burnt before setting fire to bigger piles of wood in order that they catch fire from them. Persistence in extravagance and evil acts, and committing sins openly among the people with a fanfare and gusto is a cause of divine punishment. To wage war against every evil is a Talim of Islam. To do Jeh'ad for this cause is a duty of every Muslim. The lowest grade of Jihad is, one should express hatred against a wicked act openly, if he/she is unable to stop it.

If one is unable to stop wicket act, he should express hatred against it. From these examples it must be quite clear that Tobacco is a Har'am. It is not enough for the Government to mention on cigarette boxes that "Smoking is injurious to Health". It is also incumbent on the Government, religiously, legally and ethically, to enforce Ban on Advertisements which encourage smoking through all effective means of media and communication. If the exploiters (manufactures, distributors and shopkeepers) stop this dirty business, the society may move onward towards a healthy condition. If the government overlooks the revenue, earned from cigarette manufactures, positive results should come.

5. Curse of Tobacco:

A smoker emits his poisons in the faces of his companions, wife, children, and the environment. It is well established that second-hand smoke is almost as dangerous as first-hand. Thus, whether they like it or not, a smoker's associates are forced to inhale the smoke and be themselves smokers as well. In addition to the poisons normally carried in the smoke, if a smoker has a contagious disease, such as tuberculosis or influenza, his exhaled smoke and coughing carry the disease to those around him. Furthermore, a smoker irritates people by the foul smell and poisonous nature of his smoking. If they suffer from asthma or allergies, they are forced to move away from his vicinity. A Hadith says: [25]

“Anyone who believes in Allah and the Qiyamat should not hurt his neighbor”.

Thus, smoking constitutes a definite harm to other people; this is prohibited, it is Right of all people to ask to stop smoking at public places or where people get to gathers. No need to co-operate in this regard as Qur’an guided: [26]

“Co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate with one another in sinning and transgression. And fear Allah; verily, Allah is severe in punishment.”

6. Health problems & Cause of impotency:

Smoking is harmful to the human mind and reason. An obvious demonstration of this is that one who is addicted to it passes through periods of severe craving, making it hard for him to think, concentrate, solve a problem, or do any important matter, until he smokes. When one smokes, his muscles slacken, and he passes through a brief period of delirium that curtains the thought. His digestive system is also affected, causing him frequent nervousness and trembling of the hands. He passes through periods of excitability, irritation, and insomnia. Thus, instead of being slave of Allah, a smoker becomes a slave to his cigarette. He develops a weaker control of his sense and reason. The faculty of reason, clear and unobstructed, is one of divine blessings to the people. Qur’an has praised it in numerous places; and called on people to use it to see the truth, and obey Him in a better way. Allah wants of the believer to be strong and capable of controlling the reigns of his desires. He said (what means): [27]

“Allah wants to let you into His mercy, whereas those who follow the desires want you to drift far away (from the right path)”.

According to Hakim Sharif Khan, who died in 1807, Tobacco damages the senses and physical power, and it weakens the mind. According to Hindu Vaid, it weakens the body, slows the pace of breathtaking and impairs digestion. According to Arab physicians, Tobacco gradually weakens the heart. An expert of eastern medicine mentioned in his book regarding the side effect of the uses of tobacco as follow: [28]

One of the causes of impotency, with the use of Tobacco and smoking besides general physical weakness, weak nervous system, cerebral debility along with the problems of liver and heart, it is also a major cause of impotency.

Scientific Medical Research showed that smoking destroys sexual power; it is a main cause of impotency. [29]

Unfortunately, in America, Europe and other parts of the world, smoking is considered as a sign of smartness. According to the latest report of the Royal College of Physicians, the greatest cause of death among men is Cancer. The recorded cause of death among women firstly is breast Cancer and secondly is Lung Cancer, due to smoking. Smoking is a cause of barrenness in women. Smoking also bring menopause in women quite early. Chances of a failure in pregnancy are greater in women, who smoke. Smokers not only destroy their own health, but their habit is also a grave danger for the health of non-smokers. Healthy persons, who do not smoke, have to live in an unhealthy environment, where Tobacco smoke is spread, and the people who are over there also inhale the smoke. This state of smoking is called "Unconscious Smoking", because in such circumstances a person does inhale the smoke. This also causes cancer, and diseases of the lungs and the heart.

7. Verdicts against the use of Tobacco:

Following Fatawa are enough to explain the heinous value of Tobacco:

1). Syed Jamaluddin Afghani has also waged war against Tobacco and smoking. He referred the matter of Tobacco to the Ayatullah al Uzma, Mirza Buzurg, Mirza Hasan Sherazi, in Samrah, Iraq. He issued an explicit Fatwa against Tobacco as follows: [30]

"From today the use of Tobacco in the form of Huqqah, Cigar, Cigarettes and every other kind is war against the Imam al Zaman".

Ayatullah Mirza Hasan Shirazi did his best to save the Muslim Ummah from the Lanat of Tobacco. He clearly said: [31]

"Tobacco is not only injurious for health but it is Har'am".

2). Fatwa of Imam Kabah, Mufti Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz: [32]

"One who smoke or eats Tobacco commits a Har'am, because it is included in vices".

3). Fatwa of Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Karamuddin Salfi: [33]

"Tobacco produces intoxication; it is of bad smell and damages senses and intellect power. Its use is Har'am is proved by the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the research of physicians and common sense".

4). Fatwa of Mufti Shaikh Ahmad Sanhori of Misar: [34]

"Tobacco is a Har'am practice".

5). Fatwa of Mufti Shaikh Mustafa Hamami of Misar: [35]

"Tobacco is Har'am",

6). Fatwa of Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmad Maliki: [36]

"It is not lawful to offer Salaat behind an Imam who utilize Tobacco. When the harm of a Har'am thing has been proved, to say that its use is most common is no argument of making it Halal according to Shariah. In today's society, interest is very much common; every business is involved in it. Does this prove that interest is Halal and Jaez"?

7). Mufti of United Arab Emirates, Shaikh Saeed bin Khalifah al Kharusi, issued a Fatwa on Jumuah, the 15th April 1991: [37]

"Smoking is Har'am in Islam".

8). I believe and follow the wordings of Syedi Abdlqadir Hakimuddin ((1665-1730), a prince among the friends of Allah, at Burhanpur, India. Some three centuries ago he described the uses of Tobacco as follows: [38]

“Tobacco is an injurious plant of bad odor and bitter in taste. Eating, chewing, smoking and smelling of Tobacco come under the category of Har’am, according to the principles of the Shariah. Therefore, its use even as Medicine is not Halal, because by affecting the brain it greatly injures the nervous system”.

9). It is unjust to ignore the efforts of Dr. Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin to eliminate the practice of utilization of Tobacco in any form. Due to his efforts thousands of people have left the habit of chewing or smoking Tobacco. War with weapons is easy; but through the pen and words is very difficult. It is the wish and will of the friends of Allah that they use every moment to bring people in to the fold of Shariah. At every such step pious people is needed to guide and show the way to the people as to how one should control ones mind and remain aloof from the evil acts. He further has drawn the attention of the Muslims through his sermons at different countries. He says: [39]

“People who are addicted should realize that the place we pronounce the name of Allah and His Rasul (S), we put non pious thing like Tobacco in it? Smoking leads far away from the path of righteousness. Therefore drawing attention towards this matter, all those persons who have been habituated to it, should try to leave it up as soon as possible. They should seek help of Allah and strength to abandon this habit”.

10). It is a fact that in Pakistan there is “Smoke Free City”. Yes, ‘Hunza’! In the northern area of Pakistan, where people neither sell cigarette nor use it. On the explicit instruction of their spiritual head, Prince Karim Aga Khan, the natives of Hunza strictly follow the practice to eliminate the use of Tobacco. The ‘Order’ and the ‘Obeying’ make the valley an ideal place of the world. Prince Aga Khan said:

“Do not think that by puffing smoke into the air you are behaving intelligently or in a healthy manner I strongly advise my spiritual children to stay away from cigarette smoking, pipe smoking, cigar smoking, all types of smoking. It is in your own interest, it is for your own health.....that this is a habit which can cause great unhappiness and great ill health, not only to you, but in your families generally. This is matter of importance....” [40]

8. Nefarious Role of Health Ministry & Media:

Due to the negligence of Federal Minister of Health and his Ministry, not a single smoker of our country have sense, knowledge and information to understand how much their bad habit can annoy non-smokers. The pleasure of a visit to any public place can be ruined and turns into torture by having to sit near a smoker. Passive smoking is much dangerous. Passive smoking means inhaling other people’s Tobacco smoke. This not only produces headache, irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, but is also harmful on the equal level of active smoking. Every educated knows what effects are caused on society by propagation through media. Today the Western nations who imposed smoking in the form of a contagious disease are imposing restrictions on publicity of smoking although alongside they are allowing its use openly and are cultivating Tobacco extensively. But alas smoking is being promoted because Cigarette Companies are sponsoring various games and TV programs, players and artists.

Government & Media both spends huge amounts for sponsoring sports in different countries for sports fans. In doing so what other purpose they have that people attract towards smoking and that thereby their business should continue to prosper. Vices are like plague and they infect other people like infection and contagious diseases. Those who try to eschew them are saved and this is called Taqwa and piety. Minister of Health and Minister of Information should pay attention on this critical matter in the cumulative interest of poor nation. It is not an ordinary matter as it plays a vital role in making the future of the Nation, a prey to various diseases and the wastage of the national wealth. Government must frame such an effective law that cigarette manufacturing Companies should find it extremely hard to carry on their business and the import of foreign cigarettes should be altogether banned. An effective campaign should be launched against the use of Tobacco.

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