

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

AVOIDING CIGARETTES, A HEALTHY LIFE-STYLE
FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

BY

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Insha' Allah this paper will argue for a life of health and well being, for Islam comes to this world to take care of the fundamental needs of humanity: his religion, intellect, wealth, life (including, of course his body), and his honour or self-respect ('ird). From this fundamental vision of human needs Islam comes to make man avoid those actions and attitudes which do harm to the five fundamentals or any one of them. And in relation to a life of health – including caring for wealth and religion- Islam comes with a system of law from which can be derived the prohibition smoking cigarettes, or the recommendation to avoid it. In the following pages this paper will put forward arguments leading to this conclusion.

What is smoking?

“Tobacco” or “at-tabagh” in Arabic is a foreign word, entering into the Arabic language without changing itself; it is from a kind of shrub which is smoked, or inhaled through the nose, or chewed; it is American in origin, that is what the “al-Mausu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah” on line says about it.(1). In Arabic it is called “al-dukhkhan” (“lit. smoke), “al-tutun”, and “al-tunbak”. And something like it is “al-tubbaq”, known among the Arabs.

In the present day practice smoking can be in the form of smoking cigarettes, or pipes, the tobacco being placed in the pipe and then burnt, and then the smoke is inhaled then brought out through the nose or the mouth, or can be in the form of smoking by using the hookah. All this is in the form of inhaling and exhaling smoke. Then there is the snuff being taken through the nose in dust form, without smoking, without burning it. Then there is another form- actually rare- in which the tobacco is chewed in the mouth.

In the article “Smoking: A Social Poison” (2) smoking is defined as”...the action of lighting a cigarette, a pipe, a cigar, a water pipe, or any other object made from tobacco or materials of similar effects. The object is then sucked on with the lips to extract

smoke. This smoke is inhaled into the chest and then exhaled from the nose and mouth as a thick white smoke. "Smoking" is now used to refer to the action of producing this smoke in English, Arabic, and other languages. "" (2).

International Concern about Smoking and Other Means of Using Tobacco:

- In the British House of Commons, there was a letter from the Chairman of the British American Tobacco to the Clerk of the Committee (TB 28B). In it the Chairman of the British American Tobacco asked a number of questions about the effects of tobacco smoking, and the answers are given by Dr Chris Proctor, the British American Tobacco's Head of Science and Regulations, a number of them are as follows:
- Question: *Does smoking cause lung cancer—"cause" meaning that smoking is an activity that results in there being more lung cancer deaths than there would otherwise be—other things being equal?*

Answer: Yes.

- Question: *Do you agree that smoking causes lung cancer beyond all reasonable doubt?*

Answer: In population, yes.

- Question: *Does smoking cause heart and circulation disease—"cause" meaning that smoking is an activity that results in there being more heart and circulation disease related deaths than three otherwise would be—other things being equal?*

Answer: Yes.

.....

- Question: *Does smoking cause respiratory illnesses such as emphysema—"cause" meaning that smoking is an activity that results in there being more respiratory illness related deaths than there would otherwise be—other things being equal?*
- Answer: *Yes*

The letter with the above contents- among others- was signed by Martin Broughton, the Chairman, dated 19th January 2000.(3).

- WHO was provided with grant of \$1.5 million over 12 months – approved May 1999 – for media initiative for a Tobacco Free World.
- Dr Gro Brundtland , Director General of WHO has selected tobacco as one of the top priorities for the WHO’s immediate focus because tobacco “is the single largest contributor to the global burden of disease”.Four million people die of tobacco –associated causes each year, more than 70% of them in the developing countries. The number of deaths is expected to rise to 10 million in a year, yet many do not realize the dangers of tobacco.
- This project of media advocacy initiative in 17 countries is to strengthen the health communicators’ ability to disseminate accurate information about tobacco’s health effects primarily on radio and television.
- The project activities will include training and capacity building of local and national broadcasters....
- News about UN body opposes smoking lounge
- News about meeting in Washington takes aim at youth smoking...
- News about WHO chief urging a global campaign against smoking...(4)

The Director General’s Message for World No Tobacco Day 2001:

- Date: 31 May, 2001. Geneva.Switzerland:
- Summary: the truth is out: that tobacco kills.
- It kills the smokers and also those who are exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Far from only being an annoyance, or minor discomfort, exposure to second-hand smoke causes cancer and contributes to various lung and heart diseases;
- Can cause asthma and other respiratory illnesses in children, and has been implicated in various other childhood diseases such as sudden infant death syndrome or middle-ear infections.
- Second hand smoke must be banned from all public places
- Must not be hesitant about protecting your family and children from second-hand smoke
- “Big Tobacco has spent millions of dollars trying to convince employers and governments that better ventilation or mere courtesy will solve the problem of second-hand smoke.They have paid for bogus scientific studies, unleashed well-funded campaigns to attack legitimate studies, set up front groups to push for smokers’ rights , sued health authorities in court, and done everything in their power to delay and defeat meaningful action on second hand smoke.”(5).
- The report says further:” No more.We need to clear the air of misinformation about second hand smoke. We must take back our right to health and to life. There is no tolerance when it comes to ill-health , disease and death.On this World No Tobacco Day 2001 let us call our parents, ;partners, employers and our elected officials ensure a smoke-free world.Let us pledge to protect ourselves, each other, our children and our families (and our neighbours –for Islam teaches that-wr) from second-hand smoke” (6).

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Dangers of Nicotine Addiction

- It is well known that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and chronic lung diseases. Additionally tobacco is blamed for one-fourth of heart attack deaths and is the leading cause of cancers.
- Nicotine in tobacco is highly addictive; nicotine inhalation stimulates the central nervous system, and every puff of a cigarette moves in the brain in about eight seconds. A sharp rise in the blood pressure results, blood vessels are constricted, sensitivity to pain and stress is reduced.
- Chronic smokers often complain of lack of sense of smell and taste, and less stamina and motor skills, and further smoking causes skin to age prematurely.
- Studies have linked smoking to infertility; at greatest risk are women who smoke before the age of 18; chances of miscarriage are 33% higher for women who smoke; a smoking mother is at higher risk for low-birth weight and pre-mature babies.
- Most teenagers who smoke and are aware of the risks claim that they plan to quit within five years. Conversely most adult smokers started before age 18 and never quit.
- Smoking by parents has been shown to affect the lungs of infants as early as two to 10 weeks of life. Asthma is increased in children of smokers, and recent research has shown that those people exposed to secondhand smoke on a frequent basis are at greater risk for lung and other cancers.
- Nicotine is found in all tobacco products: cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff. Tobacco contains poisons such as DDT, arsenic, cyanide and formaldehyde. Forty-three of the 4,000 chemicals found in tobacco smoke are cancer-causing substances.(7)

Harms Caused By Smoking to Muslim Ummah In Various Aspects of Their Life

- Harms in religion: This is understood from the Prophet –peace and blessings be upon him prohibiting Muslims to approach prayer in the mosques when they have taken garlick. The tradition mesns:”Whoever eats garlick or onion let him avoid our mosque, and stay at home. The angels are surely hurt by the things which hurt human beings.”(8) By taking garlick and onion which smell unpleasantly he hurts fellow Muslims and the angels and the rewards of his devotions in the mosque are reduced thereby. Smoking can be deduced in terms of prohibition from this tradition and the like.
- Harm to the body: smoking involves intake of substances harmful to human health: nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide, arsenic, benzopyrene, DDT, etc. Their harm will accumulate in the body and in time will result in a gradual killing of human organs and tissues.;
- leading to cancer, tuberculosis, heart attacks, asthman, coughing, premature birth, infertility, infections in the digestive system, high blood pressure, nervousness,

mouth and teeth diseases, all strongly linked to smoking. Among the verses related to this are the ones meaning: "Do not kill yourselves, verily Allah is to you Most Compassionate"; "Do not throw yourselves, with your own hands, into destruction", and the hadith, meaning "Do not inflict harm on others and yourself", and the tradition: "The feet of a servant of God will not move on the Day of Judgment, until he is questioned about five things: his life time how made use of it, his youth, how he did use it, his wealth, where did he earn it, how did he spend it, and what he did with his knowledge".

- Harm to the mind and will power: whoever is addicted to will pass through periods of severe craving, making him hard to think, concentrate, solve problems, until he smokes. When he smokes his muscles slacken, and he experiences a period of delirium that clouds over the mind; his digestive system is affected, causing him nervousness, his hands trembling; he experiences excitability, irritation and insomnia. Allah wants the believer to be strong in will and mind. The Qur'an says meaning: "And Allah wants to turn in mercy to you and those who follow their desires want you to drift away far (from the right path)".
- Harm to the environment: a smoker emits smoke hence spreading poison in the faces of his family and children, making second hand smoke, which is almost as dangerous as first hand smoke;
- If the smoker has diseases like tuberculosis or influenza, through second hand smoke the diseases are carried to those around him.
- He also irritates others by the foul smell and the poisonous smoke whereas a Muslim should not do so. The Prophet is reported to have said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last day should not hurt his neighbour".
- Harm to property: he harms his property in spending in something which does not benefit him at all, in fact which harms him. How can he waste the wealth? Should remember verse about the evil of wastefulness ("tabzir"), further we can remember about the burnt carpets, furniture, even houses or other buildings as a result of this evil habit.
- Moral harm: it depicts moral decadence: it is consumed in bars, discos, and other places of moral laxity in the society.
- It is itself an evil substance ("al-khabith") and should remember the verse meaning: "Allah commands you to do good and prohibits you from evil and permits for them the good things of life and prohibits them from evil things ("al-khaba'ith") and lifts from them their burdens and the shackles that were (previously) upon them".
- Bad example: smokers are indeed bad examples for their children and others to follow, whereas the believer is supposed to ask Allah to make them good examples to be followed by those who fear Allah(9).

Islam Wants Muslims To Live Good and Happy Lives:

- Islam wants Muslims to live good and happy life; hence the verse meaning “O God, grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the Fire”.
- Life of happiness in the family as clear from the verse meaning :”O Lord, grant us in our spouses and our progeny the coolness of our eyes and make us examples for those who are God-conscious”
- And the family is the one saved from the Fire as in the verse meaning :”O you believers, save yourselves and the members of your household from the Fire...”
- And the family has the characteristics: “And among His Signs are that He has made for you spouses from among yourselves, so that you feel inclined and feel at ease with them, and He has made among you love and compassion”,
- And the hadith meaning :”Whoever seeks for the wealth of the world which is permissible so that he does not beg from others, and he can provide for his family under his care, and (so that he can show) his compassion for his neighbour, he will come on the Day of Judgment his face shining like the full moon”.
- Islam wants the believer to have a life in which all the fundamental things of life are taken care of: his religion, wealth, life, honour, intellect and progeny. This needs to be free from all habits injurious to these things, and among the habits injurious to these is smoking; hence he must avoid smoking.

The Views of Scholars On Smoking are given concisely below:

- The scholars take the view from “Radd al-Mukhtar” by Ibn ‘Abidin and say that it is permissible, as quoted by ‘Allamah al-Ajhuri in his “Risalah”, and among those following this view is ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi in his “Risalah”, saying:

(Verily (concerning this matter) there is no religious evidence (dalil shar’i) stating it to be forbidden or reprehensible, and as to causing drunkenness or weakness of the body by it is not established by all those taking it, until it becomes forbidden or reprehensible to the degree of being prohibited; hence it comes under the principle: ‘The origin in all things is the principle of permissibility’ and in the ‘Ashbah’ it is under the discussion ‘The origin in all things is the principle of permissibility or state of indecision...’)(10)

- Because of this line of reasoning the rector of al-Azhar then, Jad al-Haq ‘Ali Jad al-Had expresses the view that the ruling about smoking is that it is in origin permissible unless there is something which occurs:

Verily in origin it is permissible, except because of something occurring making it forbidden or reprehensible or disliked to the degree of the forbidden, because of very serious harm on the person, or wealth, or both, or that it is taken in the mosque, or in the occasion of reading the Qur’an because such situation nullifies act of reverence for the Majesty of Allah the Most High.(11).

- The verdict in the “Bughyah al-Mustarshidin” points also to the same direction.(12).He says:

Question (relating to smoking tobacco):... There is no tradition of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him concerning the matter, and there is no athar or saying of the one from among the Pious Predecessors on it, and every narration related concerning it there is origin in it, in fact it is fabricated, because it has just occurred after year 1000 of the Hijrah, and the ‘ulama hold different views concerning it in its permissibility, and prohibition, and many works are being composed concerning it, and long explanations have been given to support the claims for it, and that which appears to be prominent is that if there occurs what can make it forbidden in relation to the person causing harm to his reason or person then it is forbidden just like honey is forbidden on the person whose body is heaty, and earth is forbidden to the person on whom it causes harm, and sometimes it may be made permissible by something, in fact it may become recommended, just like when it is used as a means of cure, based on the opinion of a trustworthy person, or based on the person’s personal experience, as it is a cure for a disrease for which it is taken, just like getting treatment by using an impure substance (“bil-najasah”) other than pure alcohol and when it is devoid from all these occurances, then it is disliked or reprehensible, because strong difference op opinion in prohibition may lead to it being disliked or reprehensible (“al-kirahah”).(13).

- Those who are concerned about smoking from the point of view of contemporary medical findings are of the view that it is forbidden.They mention the fact of the coming of religious law in human society to safeguard the five fundamentals: religion, life, intelligence, wealth, progeny and human honour and hence since smoking causes harms to these fundamentals or some of them then it is forbidden. Verses usually mentioned in connection with this prohibition are like the one meaning “And do not throw yourselves into destruction with your own hands”, and “Do not murder youselves”, and the hadith usually mentioned is the one meaning :”The feet of the servant of God will not move on the Day of Judgment until he is asked about his life how he has spent it, his knowledge as to what he has done with it, and his wealth from what source has he acquired it, and in what activities has he spent it, and his own body how has he made use of it...”Also mention is usually made of the verse”And do not waste your wealth by wasteful spending...”
- The “Mausu’atul-Fiqhiyya” under the heading “tabagh” (14). Discusses the various views of the scholars as to its permissibility and prohibition. Those who view it as prohibited argue with the following arguments: at the initial usage, it causes intoxication for a brief period, then every time it is taken the intoxication becomess less and less until the person is not conscious of it, and there is a certain feeling of elation and delirium (“nashwatan wa tarban”). As for its closing upon the intellect, it is not strong; those who view it this way consider it as impure and taking it is forbidden whether in small doses or large doses.(There are those who hold this view thinking that those who are guilty of smoking are to be inflicted with the “hadd” punishment.)(15).

The tradition related by Umm Salamah about “kullu muskirin wa mufattirin” - every substance causing delirium and causing weakness- is enough evidence of its prohibition, only that the person taking it is not inflicted with hadd. Then the article goes to mention harm on human health, intellect, wealth, and goes to mention the verse meaning “Do not throw yourselves into destruction with your own hands”.

- Then after mentioning those who regard it as permissible, the article is of the view that it is prohibited.

Conclusion:

After examining the evidences from the Islamic legal point of view, including the recent developments, coupled with irrefutable medical evidences, then it is evidently clear than smoking must be avoided so as to practise the life style demanded by the Islamic faith, for the sake of human welfare in their world life and their life in the hereafter, for the sake of guarding their faith, intellect, morals, wealth, life and health, and also the environment and the future generations of mankind. Wallahu a'lam.

Notes:

(1)-(الموسسة الفقهية) in the section (جامع الفقه الاسلامى) under web site : al-islam.com.

(2) “Smoking: A Social Poison”, in <http://www.qss.org/articles/smoking.html>

(3) Select Committee on Health Minutes, Letter from the Chairman British American Tobacco, to the Clerk of the Committee (TB28B) -House of Commons-Health-minutesw-evidence- <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199900/cmsele.../0012704.ht>

(4) http://www.unfoundation.org/grants/4_9_tobaccomedia.asp

(5) <http://www.uicc.org/publ/pr/home/01053101.shtml>

(6) ibid

(7) <http://www.dayton.med.va.gov/PHEALTH/nicotine.html>

(8) Hadith related by al-Bukhari.

See the full article "Smoking: A Social Poison", in
<http://www.qss.org/articles/smoking.html>

(10) Cf (الحكم الشرعى فى التدخين).-
<http://www.islamset.com/arabic/ahip/adict/smoking.html>

(11) *ibid.*

(12) of Syed 'Abd al-Rahman Ba'lawi, p.260.

(13) *ibid.*