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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِدْخَنَ السَّيِّجَارَةَ

Smoking Cigarettes is not Permissible in Islam

Allah ﷻ has made humankind the most honoured of all creation, “Indeed, we honoured the children of Adam (Mankind)...” (Ch 17, v70) granting man the highest status of all created beings.

In physical and spiritual aspects, mankind far exceeds other beings in the whole of creation. In physical appearance there is nothing more perfect that Allah ﷻ created.

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Verily, we created mankind in the best of statures...” (Ch 95, v4).

In terms of knowledge and intellect, Allah ﷻ has given mankind certain qualities which are not found in any of creation such as the facility of reasoning and learning.

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Allah has taught man that which he knew not.” (Ch 96, v5).

In the teachings of Islam it is accepted that the body which we live in this world with is a trust from the creator (Allah ﷻ). A person does not have the right to alter his physical appearance according to his own preference, to put his own life in danger or to utilise those means which will cause harm to ones health. These are most definitely not permissible according to the laws of Islam. This is also the reason why the Scholars of Islam have looked with great respect at the field of Pharmacology and Medicine. Imam Shafi رحمه الله stated: ‘Verily knowledge is of two aspects. One is that of jurisprudence, to use the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah as a means by which to live your life. The second being the knowledge of medicine for the curing of ailments. (Miftahul Sa’ada, p267)

The Slow Poison of Cigarettes

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah Most High is Most Merciful to you.” (Ch 4, v29)

Shaykh Ahmed Umal Hashim رحمه الله said: “The Scholars of the past did not consider the use of tobacco or cigarettes as impermissible. This was due to the fact that the research of the time either was not initiated or it did not allow them to understand the harms that this causes to smokers. Over time, as the research advanced it showed the serious harm to the health of smokers through cigarettes. The scholars then viewed this in light of the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah and passed the ruling that smoking of cigarettes was impermissible. (Al Mu’riful Shar’i)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated: “Whoever, by taking poison killed himself, his abode will be the Hellfire.” (Saheeh Muslim)

Verily it is accepted that the direct effect of death by poison is not found by the smoking of cigarettes. However, there is no doubt that the smoking of cigarettes slowly deteriorates a person’s health and it is a form of ‘slow acting poison’.

The World Health Organisation (W.H.O) has stated in a research paper that smokers of cigarettes die quicker or suffer worse health problems than those affected with Malaria, Typhoid, TB and other such epidemics. Research has shown that smoking causes most COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) cases, approximately 85%, including emphysema. It has also been proven that women who smoke during pregnancy are at a greater risk of harming the mental and physical well being of the child in their womb. There has also been a direct link

established showing that sufferers of throat and lung cancer (as well as other diseases) are smokers/ have smoked as an ongoing habit in their past. (MAYO CLINIC)

Harm to One's Self and Others

The Holy Prophet ﷺ stated: “Do not harm yourself and others.” (Al Ashba wal Nazahir, Ibn Majah p234)

Cigarettes are harmful to both the smoker and also affect those around the smokers through secondary smoke. It also causes the body and clothing of those effected to smell unpleasant. Ibn Sina رحمه الله commented: “If smoke and pollution were not present then man would enjoy long lifespans.” He also stated: “If you stay away from 3 things, you will not require the close attention of a doctor - smoke, pollution and stench/unpleasant odour.” (Majalisul Abrar, p676)

The use of tobacco based sheesha is no different to that of cigarettes, in some ways it is worse due to the absence of a filter.

Sayyidna Jabir رضي الله عنه relates that the Holy Prophet RasulAllah ﷺ stated: “Do not come close to my Masjid after eating raw onion and garlic, due to unpleasant smells, people and angels are inconvenienced.” (Sunan Nasai, no710/ Ibn Majah, no1015)

The odour of cigarettes is such that those who are not accustomed to smoking/ smelling the odour of cigarette smoke, on occasion vomit due to this. It is for this reason that Mufti Abul Hasanat Abdul Hai Lucknowi رحمه الله writes: “To recite the Holy Qur’an and enter the Masjid whilst the stench of cigarettes is present upon a person is Makrooh Tahrimi مكروه تحريمي (very close to Haram).” (Majmu’atul Fatawa, vol 2, p286)

Abuse of Wealth

Allah عز وجل has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not those who waste by extravagance.” (Surah 7, v31)

Even if a smoker is not immediately affected by ill health due to smoking, it is still not permissible in Islam for any one to waste their money on unnecessary things.

In Sahih Bukhari it is related that RasulAllah ﷺ warned against squandering and wasting one’s wealth.

In smoking cigarettes, there is no apparent worldly or spiritual benefit. Without exaggeration, we can say that smoking is nothing more than a means of burning your wealth. If we assess the cost of a smoker’s monthly expense on cigarettes, the very same amount would suffice to provide the monthly food expenses of a family in the 3rd world for a month. Similarly, the same amount of money could be utilised in educating poor/orphaned children in developing countries. Providing them with education which otherwise would be not be available. A single person smoking 20 cigarettes a day is spending an equivalent to about £1980 per year.

The Opinion of the Scholars of Islam

All scholars are unanimous on the opinion that smoking is not permissible. The exact ruling does differ in the exact wording but all are agreed it is not permissible. The Hanbali and Maliki scholars classify smoking as absolutely Haram. Some Shafi and Hanafi scholars classify smoking as Makrooh Tahrimi مكروه تحريمي (very close to Haram).

Shah Abdul Aziz Muhadith Dehlawi رحمه الله and Mufti Abul Hasanat Abdul Hai Lucknowi رحمه الله have through detailed research and evaluation, classified smoking as Makrooh Tahrimi. (Majmu’atul Fatawa, vol 2, p286)

This is considered the logical view according to me. The proofs from the religious texts and research show that cigarettes cannot be compared to alcohol to classify it as Haram. Alcohol is a direct prohibition ordained by Allah عز وجل from the Qur’an and is impure. It is an intoxicant and hinders the mental capabilities of the user. These qualities are not found in cigarettes, however, in light of the balanced evidences provided above it is most definitely Makrooh Tahrimi (very close to Haram).

After understanding the harms of smoking, efforts should be made to relieve oneself of this evil and discourage others also.