

# Smoking: A Social Poison

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## Introduction

### Discovery Of Tobacco

Tobacco was discovered by the Spanish sailors on the American shores at about 1500 CE (900 AH). Since its discovery, 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 Seventeenth Century, the European countries realized the dangers of smoking and fought against it. Laws were ordained 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.

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## **Smoking Among Muslims**

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 to adom smoking and encourage people to do it. This caused the epidemic of smoking to continue to spread in those countries to such an extent that it has become hard to control.

Smoking has become the rule, and abstaining from it the 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 cigaretles to the guests has become among the first rules of hospitality. Anyone who does not offer them to his guests or insist on them to smoke would be violating the ethics of hospitality and generosity!

Furthermore, some of those who pretend to represent the Deen 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 Islaam. They slyly remark that there is no clear text prohibiting smoking. Therefore, they conclude, smoking is not prohibited, but is only makruh (disliked). By this, they provide a poor 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.

Thus, it becomes incumbent to write an article which provides evidence concerning the ruling of smoking in Islam. We hope that this will benefit our Muslim brothers and sisters; and we ask Allah (T) to accept it from us as a sincere deed for His pleasure.

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## **Definition**

Smoking refers to 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.

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# Evidence for the Prohibition of Smoking

There are many reasons, any one of which sufficient to rule smoking prohibited. Most importantly, it is harmful in numerous ways. It is harmful to the Deen, health, environment, family, brotherhood and social relations, property, etc. The following sections will briefly outline some of its harms and evils.

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## Haram To The Deen

Smoking spoils a person's acts of worship and reduces their rewards. For instance, it spoils the prayer, which is the pillar of Deen. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: **Whoever eats garlic or onion, let him avoid us and our masjid, and stay in his home. The angels are surely hurt by things that hurt the human beings<sup>(1)</sup>**

Those with clean and undefiled fitrah (nature) have no doubt that the smell emanating from the mouth of a smoker is worse and more foul than that from the mouth of one who ate garlic or onion. Thus, a smoker is in between two options, either to harm the praying people and the angels with his foul smell, or miss the prayer in jama'ah.

Smoking also spoils fasting. Fasting is very hard for the smoker. As soon as the day is over, he hastens to break his fast on an evil cigarette instead of sweet dates or pure water. Even if he fasts through the month Ramadan, a smoker is reluctant to fast on other days. Thus he loses the great reward of those who fast even one day in Allah's way.

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## Harm To The Human Body

No one can deny the harm of smoking to the human body. The medical evidence for this is well established and overwhelming. Because of this, the law in the United States and many other countries requires including a warning on any smoking advertisement.

Smoking contains poisonous materials, such as nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide, arsenic, benzopyrene, etc., that the smoker swallows in small proportions. Their harm accumulates with time to result in a gradual killing of the human organs and tissues.

The hazards of smoking to the health are hard to enumerate. Cancer, tuberculosis, heart attacks, asthma, coughing, premature birth, infertility, infections in the digestive system, high blood pressure, nervousness, mouth and teeth diseases, etc., are among the many health hazards that have been strongly linked to smoking.

These diseases may not appear all at once, however a smoker is most likely to suffer from some of them, and his suffering increases as he grows older. Furthermore, statistics have established that smokers' age is, on the average, ten years less than other people's.

This is sufficient to prohibit smoking. Islam prohibits any action that causes harm to oneself or to other people. Allah (T) says (what means):

<لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا>

<<Do not kill yourselves, Allah is indeed merciful to you.>><sup>(2)</sup>

<لَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ>

<<Do not cast yourselves, with your own hands, into destruction.>><sup>(3)</sup>

And the Messenger ﷺ says: **No harm may be inflicted on oneself or others.**<sup>(4)</sup>

**The feet of a human being will not depart, on the day of Judgement, from his standing before his Lord, until he is questioned about five things: his lifetime - how did he pass it, his youth - how did he used it, his wealth - where did he earn it and how did he spend it, and how did he follow what he knew.**<sup>(5)</sup>

**Whoever consumes poison, killing himself with it, then he will be consuming his poison in the hellfire, and he will abide in it permanently and eternally.**<sup>(6)</sup>

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## Harm To The Mind and Will Power

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, in itation, and insomnia.

Thus, instead of being Allah's slave, a smoker becomes slave to his cigarette. He develops a weaker control of his sense and reason. The faculty of reason, clear and unobstructed, is one of Allah's great bounties on people. He (T) praised it in numerous places of the Qur'an; and He 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 (T) said (what means):

<وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ

الشَّهَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا>

<<Allah (T) wants to let you into His mercy, whereas those who follow the desires want you to drift far away (from the right path).>><sup>(7)</sup>

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## Harm To The Environment

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 an 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. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt his neighbor.**<sup>(8)</sup>

Thus, smoking constitutes a definite harm to other people; this is prohibited, as was indicated in the hadith cited earlier.

Also, a smoker is certainly a bad companion to sit with, as is depicted in the following hadith:

**Verily, the example of a good companion and a bad one is like that of a perfume merchant and a blacksmith: As for the perfume merchant, he would either grant you (some perfume), or you would buy (some perfume) from him, or (in the least) you would get a good smell from him. And as for the blower of the bellows (ironsmith), you would either get a foul odor from him, or he would burn your clothes.**<sup>(9)</sup>

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## Harm To The Property

A smoker wastes his wealth on that which harms and has no benefit; he will be asked about his wealth and how he spent it, as has been cited in the hadith earlier. His wealth belongs to Allah, so how would he dare to waste it in disobedience to Him? Allah (T) says (what means):

<وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَمًا>

<<And do not entrust to the imprudent ones the possessions that Allah has placed in your charge..>><sup>(10)</sup>

<وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا. إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ>

<<And do not waste (your resources) extravagantly. Indeed the squanderers are the brethren of the devils>><sup>(11)</sup>

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **Allah hates for you three things: gossiping, begging, and wasting money.**<sup>(12)</sup>

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

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## Moral Decadence

Smoking is a form of moral decadence. It is most spread among the low-class immoral people. It reflects blind imitation of the non-Muslims. It is mostly consumed in bars, discos, casinos, and other: places of sin. A smoker may beg or steal if he does not have the money to buy cigarettes. He is ill-mannered with his friends and family, especially when he misses taking his necessary "dose" at the usual time.

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## Evil Substance

Smoking involves the consumption of an evil substance (khabeeth). It has a foul smell, foul taste, and is harmful to the body. This is sufficient to: prohibit it, because Allah (T) says (what means):

<...يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ  
الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ  
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ>

<<(The Prophet) 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.>><sup>(13)</sup>

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## Resembling The People Of The Fire

A smoker inhales the smoke that does not give him any nourishment. This is similar to the action of the people of the Hell fire who eat harmful thorny plants:

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ. لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي  
مِنْ جُوعٍ

<<No food will be there for them but a poisonous thorny plant, which will neither nourish them nor still their hunger.>><sup>(14)</sup>

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### Bad Example

A smoker, whether he likes it or not, makes of himself an example for his children and others to follow. He leads them to commit this evil. Actions sometimes have a stronger effect than words. Thus, even if he advises them or forbids them from smoking, his partaking of it provides them with a strong excuse to do it.

The problem is worse when the smoker is of known piety or knowledge. In such case, his harm becomes more emphasized, because more people take him as guide and example, and are thus lead astray by him. This multiplies his sins and increases his burden.

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### Hostility Toward The Good People

The majority of good people avoid smoking and stay away from smokers. Therefore, a smoker would be forced to stay away from them - at least while he smokes. He puts himself in a selective exile, creating a spiritual distance and hostility between him and the good people, and a closeness to the evil people. The effects of this become more apparent and acute with time. Note that this applies equally to any sin that a person commits, small or large.

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### Low Self Esteem.

A smoker despises himself, because he feels that a little cigarette is controlling him. Realizing his weakness before desires, this creates in him a feeling of defeat in the face of hardships.

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### Scholars' Verdict

Since smoking became known to Muslims, all of the great scholars who have the capability of Ijtihad (deriving verdicts in new situations) agree to its prohibition. Thus, there is no value for baseless

opinions, conflicting with this, provided by self-proclaimed lesser scholars.

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## Warnings

In discussing the subject of the prohibition of smoking, there are some important warnings that need to be mentioned:

1. As indicated before, the prohibition of smoking is not restricted to cigarettes, but applies as well to other objects that have similar effects such as cigars, pipes, water-pipes, chewing tobacco or sniffing tobacco, etc.
2. The reasons mentioned above for prohibiting smoking apply as well, and more strongly, to various types of drugs and hashish such as marijuana and -tat. These materials have additional problems such as causing drunkenness, death, madness, etc.
3. The prohibition of smoking is not restricted to consuming it, but applies as well to offering it to people, sitting with those who are smoking, or selling it. All of this involves helping people commit sins, which is prohibited, as Allah (T) says (what means):

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ  
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ >

<<Help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sinning and transgression. And fear and revere Allah; verily, Allah is severe in punishment.>><sup>(15)</sup>

Also, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **Indeed when Allah prohibits something, he prohibits eating its price.**<sup>(16)</sup>

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## Treating the Disease of Smoking

Only few of those addicted to smoking are able to stop it. The reasons for this are many, among which are the following:

- a. The addictive nature of the poisonous substances contained in it.
- b. The smokers are not totally convinced of its prohibition.
- c. They do not have a strong determination to refrain from it.

The following are some suggestions to help a person stop smoking:

1. Rely on Allah sincerely, with full determination not to return to smoking, in compliance with

Allah's command:

﴿فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ﴾

<<When you decide on a certain course of action, place your trust in Allah.>><sup>(17)</sup>

2. Stop immediately instead of claiming it is best to do it gradually. The gradual approach is the way of one who does not trust his determination and the will power that Allah has granted him. Let the example be taken from the Sahabah who, as soon as Allah's command reached them regarding alcohols:

﴿فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ﴾

<<Will you not then desist?>><sup>(18)</sup> they immediately poured out all the alcohol that they had and said, "We desist our Lord, we desist!" They did this despite the fact that alcohol has a greater addictive power over those who drink it.

3. Avoid the bad company of smokers and smoking environments that are full with the smell of smoke.
4. Change the food diet by abstaining from foods and drinks that would entice the craving to smoke such as spices, meat, tea, and coffee; and eating a lot of vegetables and fruits.
5. Use medically tested and established procedures to help stop smoking, as directed by physicians, such as nicotine patches, nicotine gum, etc.
6. Expel the secret whispers of Satan who continuously dictates to the human being that he is weak and incapable of refraining from sinning, as Allah (T) says (what means)

﴿إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ  
وَخَافُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

<<It is but Satan who instills (into you) fear of his allies; so do not fear them, but fear Me if you are (truly) believers.. >><sup>(19)</sup>

﴿فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا﴾

<<Fight then against the allies of Satan; indeed, Satan's guile is weak.. >><sup>(20)</sup>

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## References

- "The Ruling of Smoking" by Muhammad bin Ibraaheem (r)
- "The Ruling of Smoking" by `Abdur-Rahman Bin Naasir as-Sa`di (r).
- "The Ruling of Smoking" by `Abdul-`Aziz Bin 'Abdullaah Bin Baaz.
- "The Ruling of Smoking" by Muhammad Bin Salih al-'Uthaymin.
- Hukm ul-Islami fit-Tadkhin by Muhammad Jamil Zinu.
- Hukm ud-Dini fil-Lihyati wat-Tadkhin by 'Ali Hasan al-Halabi.
- "Smoking and Its Effects on Health" by Dr. Muhammad 'Ali al-Barr.

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## Footnotes

- (1) Al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Jabir and other Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ .
- (2) An-Nisa' 4:29.
- (3) Al-Baqarah 2:195.
- (4) Recorded by Ahmad and Ibn Maajah from Ibn `Abbaas and `Ubaadah; authenticated by al-Albaani and others.
- (5) Recorded by at-Tirmithi and others from Ibn Mas`ud رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and AbO Barzah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ , authenticated by al-Albaani.
- (6) Al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Jaabir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
- (7) An-Nisa 4:27.
- (8) Al-Bukhaari.
- (9) Al-Bukhaari and Muslim.
- (10) An-Nisa 4:5.
- (11) Al-Isra' 17:26-27.

<sup>(12)</sup> Al-Bukhaari and Muslim.

<sup>(13)</sup> Al-A'raf 7:157.

<sup>(14)</sup> Al-Ghaashiyah 88:6-7.

<sup>(15)</sup> Al-Maidah 5:2.

<sup>(16)</sup> Recorded by Ahmad and Abu Dawud from Ibn `Abbas; authenticated by al-Albaani.

<sup>(17)</sup> Al-'Imran 3:159

<sup>(18)</sup> Al-Maa'idah 5 91

<sup>(19)</sup> Al-`Imraan 3:175.

<sup>(20)</sup> An-Nisaa' 4:76.