

The Right Path to Health
Health Education through Religion

**Islamic Ruling
on
Smoking**

Second Edition
Edited by Dr M.H. Khayat



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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Foreword

Hussein A. Gezairy, MD, FRCS
Regional Director for the
Eastern Mediterranean Region of
the World Health Organization

It is more than 50 years since WHO was founded and the dawn of a new century. This kind of occasion calls for a moment of reflection to review what has been achieved. WHO is proud of the successes it has achieved through its many complementary programmes and is making steady progress towards the attainment of the common goal of health for all.

WHO is particularly proud of the emerging common action, in which everyone is involved, in favour of promotion and protection of health. Health is indisputably the responsibility of both individuals and of society. Individuals, regardless of position or occupation have a fundamental role to play in health. Health is not the sole preserve of physicians or health authorities; everyone must participate in attaining health for all, in fulfilment of the Quranic injunction *Cooperate with each other for righteousness and piety, not for wrongdoing and enmity*. Housewives, farmers, factory workers, teachers, soldiers, indeed everyone, young or old, can work for health or against it. Moreover, the role of individuals does not stop at the protection of their own health through healthy behaviour, such as maintaining cleanliness, observing a sensible diet and taking regular exercise, but extends to avoidance of those things that are harmful to health, both one's own health and that of others.

It is universally accepted that the exercise of one's human rights should not infringe on the rights of others. Anyone who unjustly kills another threatens the rights of everyone because, as the Quran states, *it is the same as killing everyone*. The same is true for those who pollute the water supply, damage the environment or neglect to immunize their children, since these contribute to

spreading and increasing disease and thereby threaten everyone's right to a healthy life.

Smoking is, perhaps, one of the most important threats to individual and community health. It is no secret that more than 4 million people die in the world each year from smoking-related diseases, including lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema, coronary heart disease and cancer of the bladder. To date not a single benefit of smoking has been identified. One of the worst forms of smoking is that known as passive smoking and which refers to the involuntary inhalation by nonsmokers of other people's cigarette smoke, whether in the office, on public transport or in the home.

Religion has a strong influence in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Many of the principles of Islam call upon people to look after their health, to avoid health hazards and risks and to raise their standards of hygiene. The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organization sought the opinions of a number of eminent Muslim scholars with regard to the Islamic ruling on smoking. We gratefully acknowledge the thorough and detailed replies received from these distinguished scholars. The general consensus concerning the Islamic ruling was that smoking is either completely prohibited or abhorrent to such a degree as to be prohibited.

The Regional Office considered it incumbent upon it to make these findings available to the public. We hope that smokers, having read these rulings, will respond for the sake of their personal health and that of their families, friends and fellow citizens by giving up smoking, in compliance with the words of God, *Believers, respond to God and the Prophet ﷺ when He calls you to that which gives you life.*



Jumâda I 1421 AH

August 2000

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of *Islamic Ruling on Smoking* has been one of the most successful publications in the Health Education through Religion series: The Right Path to Health. It was welcomed with great warmth throughout the world and since its release, the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has received uncountable numbers of orders and enquiries about the book and its contents. A reprint was issued and in a short time the Office ran out of copies again. Now with the growing evidence that tobacco use is killing more than 4 million people every year and the fact that more than 70% of the deaths attributed to tobacco use by the year 2020 will occur in the developing countries, the need for a new edition, which is contributing to tobacco control activities with its very special message, arises.

Four great scholars of Islam participated in enriching the contents of this second edition with their opinions, based on the undoubted scientific evidence that condemns tobacco use as one of the most important causes of death in the modern era. Imam Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Sheikh Youssef Al-Qaradhawi, Mufti of Egypt Dr Nasr Fareed Wassil and Mufti of Oman Sheikh Ahmed Al-Khalili followed the same path as the early scholars of Islam, all of them building their religious verdict on the scientific evidence. One conclusion was reached: using tobacco in all its different forms is totally prohibited by Islam.

This new edition also includes an early verdict regarding the use of tobacco issued by Muslim scholars in Morocco in the 17th century. Not only was tobacco use prohibited, but also dealing in and manufacturing it as well. It was decided to include this early verdict in this new edition. The edition includes another important document: a Friday sermon delivered in all mosques in the United Arab Emirates on 11 June 1999 which aimed at promoting cessation of smoking in the community.

The first edition of this publication helped enormously in building consensus among Muslim scholars regarding the total prohibition of tobacco use. Recently the Council of Islamic Ideology of Pakistan declared the use of

tobacco as an “un-Islamic” act, citing the opinions of the scholars given in the first edition. It is hoped that the release of this new edition will continue to disseminate the prohibition verdict among ordinary Muslims and in different communities worldwide, and that non-smoking may become the norm all over the world.

Terms used in the Health Education through Religion series

The following notes are intended for readers who do not know Arabic and who do not have an Islamic background.

<i>fatwa</i>	A formal religious legal opinion.
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence (literally: understanding and acquisition of knowledge).
<i>hadith</i>	A saying, action or approved act ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ, or an act approved by the Prophet ﷺ.
<i>haram</i>	Prohibited, banned, illegal, impermissible, from a religious standpoint. Epithet applied, in general, to actions or things considered sinful for Muslims.
<i>hijra</i>	The emigration of the Prophet ﷺ Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. The event is used as the starting point for the Islamic Calendar.
<i>Prophet</i>	The Prophet ﷺ Muhammad, the Messenger of God. Any reference to the Prophet ﷺ is usually followed by the phrase “Peace be upon him”.
<i>Quran</i>	The Holy Book of Islam; the highest and most authentic authority in Islam. Quotations from the Quran are normally followed by a reference to the number of the chapter (<i>sura</i>) and the number of the quoted verse (<i>aya</i>). All Quranic texts in this publication are printed in italic.
<i>Schools of fiqh</i>	The schools of Islamic thought or jurisprudence, the four most important of which were founded by Malik, Abu Hanifa, Al-Shafie and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.
<i>sharia</i>	The body of Islamic law based on the Quran and the <i>sunna</i> (see below).
<i>sunna</i>	Practices undertaken or approved by the Prophet ﷺ and established as legally binding precedents.

EARLY VERDICTS

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Early Verdicts

On his arrival in the new world, Christopher Columbus was surprised to find the indigenous people smoking tobacco. When he returned to Europe, he took tobacco with him. Then, tobacco was regularly carried across the Atlantic on board British and Portuguese ships. The Portuguese used tobacco as part of their barter trade with African peoples. They carried it to their various trade centres along the Western coast of Africa. Tobacco smoking soon spread across the Niger River valley where Islamic scholars did not object to its use.

Morocco first knew tobacco when the governor of southern parts in Africa sent in 1598 a gift consisting of a number of elephants, marching in a caravan with several guards who were used to tobacco smoking. The arrival of the caravan in any Moroccan city was a great event. People went out to look at the elephants, and saw also the guards smoking. That was a totally unfamiliar sight, but it led soon to the spread of tobacco smoking in Morocco.

However, when King Ahmad Al-Mansoor of Morocco went to Fez in 1602, he requested the scholars there for a verdict on tobacco. Among these was Muhammad ibn Qassim Al-Qassar, the Mufti of the Kingdom, and Sidi Abdullah ibn Hassoon, Wali of Sala. Both ruled that tobacco smoking was forbidden in Islam and all tobacco available in Morocco must be destroyed.

According to an Arabic book entitled, "Glimpses of Moroccan Heritage", when this ruling was issued by the two highly respectable scholars, King Ahmad Al-Mansoor issued orders to confiscate all tobacco quantities available. Large heaps of tobacco were gathered in the new square of Fez, where all tobacco was burnt in a public event. Historians speak of "burnt worlds", and "the wastage of a great wealth" to indicate the large amounts of tobacco that were imported into Morocco which were all put to the fire in this way. That led to a large increase in tobacco prices.

But the disappearance of tobacco from Moroccan markets was short-lived. It was soon on an up-turn again, particularly during the upheaval that followed the death of King Ahmad Al-Mansoor. Again scholars were strong in denouncing it. Among the best that was written in the campaign against

tobacco and disapproval of smoking was a request for a new Islamic verdict written in a flowery artistic style. The author, Ali ibn Ahmad Al-Shami, was himself an Islamic scholar with immense literary talent. He addressed his question to Abul-Qassim Al-Ghassani, the Chief Justice of Fez and Ahmad Al-Muqri, the Mufti and other scholars. He described the miserable state of affairs in relation to tobacco smoking and asked for their views about action that should be taken in this regard. He wrote in his letter to them:

What do you say—may God be pleased with you—about this foul herb which has been the talk of the people at Taba. (I pray that the life of its promoter may not be prosperous and that the business of its traders may not be successful.) It has been concocted by Satan who uses it against mankind as a trap and a distraction leading to the neglect of their duties. He tries to tempt with it everyone except the dedicated servants of God whom He has protected against the Evil One. It is a foul stuff, rejected by peoples and countries, but it has now found a comfortable place in Morocco where it represents temptation for those who disobey the law of Muhammad.

This was the prelude to the second official verdict on tobacco issued by the Chief Justice of Fez. Both he and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Muqri, as well as 17 Islamic scholars, issued separate rulings that were unanimous in their disapproval of tobacco smoking, making it clear that it is forbidden on grounds of its being foul. All 19 rulings were then published in a book entitled: “Rulings on Smoking by the Scholars of Fez”.

The Chief Justice added a binding order, instructing his assistants to issue two official documents. The first confirmed the authenticity of each ruling by each scholar, introducing the scholar himself and confirming that the ruling is written by him personally. The second document states the ruling of the Chief Justice himself, prohibiting tobacco use in the following terms:

When the most eminent scholar, Justice of the Community at Fez informed me of the consensus of the rulings by scholars who—may God grant them insight—have agreed that this foul herb under question is forbidden, he was asked about what he has to say on this. Having considered the matter carefully, he, in his wisdom, has ruled that its use is certainly forbidden and that all trading in tobacco is invalid. The same ruling applies to it, as applies to all intoxicants and harmful substances. He only issued this ruling after having invited all the scholars who are mentioned by name along with their verdicts, written under their own hands. They all agree that it is absolutely

forbidden, without exemption. Hence he has endorsed this ruling and ordered its implementation.

However, this categorical verdict of prohibition was not successful in eradicating the whole epidemic, because people were particularly undisciplined during that difficult period of history. Within a very short time the whole group of scholars were dispersed. The Mufti, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Muqri, fled the country seeking refuge in the Eastern provinces, while the Chief Justice was killed by the mob.

MODERN VERDICTS

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Grand Imam Gadul Haq Ali Gadul Haq
Sheikh of Al-Azhar Mosque

Praise be to God, and blessings and peace be upon His Messenger.

Muslim scholars and scientific researchers have paid great attention to the examination of the nature of tobacco and the consequences of its use and smoking, as well as to the religious ruling that might be made in respect of its harm or benefit, since no text in either the Quran or the *sunna* addresses the matter of smoking specifically. Smoking was unknown in the Muslim world until early in the eleventh century of *hijra*, having first appeared in Europe before spreading to the Muslim world through the Maghreb and Sudan.

Early scholars have differed on the usefulness and harm of tobacco since its introduction into the Muslim world. There were those who said that smoking tobacco was useful in many ways. One said, for example, “smoking helps with digestion, eliminates toxic matter from the body, kills worms in the stomach, works as an expectorant, warms the head and the body, relieves cold, increases alertness and facilitates expelling excreta from the body” !!

Some took the view espoused by physicians and scientists of the time that smoking did indeed have some benefit at the beginning, but that continued smoking blurred the vision and caused heaviness of limbs and constipation. Others held that it caused thirst and dryness, hurt the heart and the brain, increased palpitation and thickened the blood.

As a result, religious scholars differed in their rulings on smoking, some saying it was permissible and others that it was *haram*. These differences are related to a much more fundamental difference on whether things were *haram* unless determined to be otherwise by the evidence of the *sharia*, or permissible unless banned by the *sharia*. This is known in Islamic *fiqh*, as the principle of “presumption of *halal*”; things are presumed *halal* (permissible) unless declared *haram*. A third group distinguished between what was useful and what was harmful, and concluded that *a priori* all things useful were permitted, while all harmful things were *haram*.

Consequently, those who viewed smoking as useful said that it was permissible, those who viewed it as harmful and useless ruled that it was *haram* and those who wavered between the usefulness and harm of smoking said that it was reprehensible. Still others judged smoking as *haram* because it was costly and was thus considered as forbidden extravagance, in addition to its offensive smell. Religious scholars thus failed to agree on one ruling concerning smoking, because they did not possess categorical evidence of its harm, in addition to the fact that there was no specific text or evidence in the sharia that said that smoking was forbidden or reprehensible. The various views were compiled by one scholar as follows.

Smoking is permissible, as judged by Ibn Abidin, a Hanafi scholar, in *Raddul muhtar*. This view was adopted by scholars of the four main schools of *fiqh* as stated in *Al-risala* by Al-Ajhoury. Another Hanafi scholar, Abdul Ghani Al-Nabulsi adopts the same view in his thesis on the permissibility of smoking, and states that there is no evidence in *sharia* that it is forbidden or reprehensible, and that it is not proved to produce an effect of intoxication or languor in smokers in general. Therefore it cannot be *haram*, nor can it be reprehensible as bordering on *haram* but falls under the general principle that “all things are originally permissible”. In *Al-ashbaa* it is stated that “all things are originally permissible or are to be judged according to a statement by the Prophet ﷺ” and this is applied to controversial matters such as tobacco. In *Raddul muhtar*, Ibn Abidin stated that extending this rule to tobacco is an indication of the nonexistence of the intoxicating, languorous or harmful effect of it. Therefore the ruling on smoking was that it was either permissible or held to be judged in accordance with the practice or statements of the Prophet ﷺ. Of these two, the choice is that it is permissible since the consensus of Hanafi and Shafie scholars is that all things are judged as initially permissible, as reported in *Al-tahrir*. However, the great scholar Al-Tahtawi said that it is reprehensible to smoke in specific circumstances, such as being in a mosque for in this case the injunction on eating onions or garlic before going to the mosque would apply. Another such circumstance is reading the Quran because smoking then would be disrespectful to the Book of God. He concludes with the statement that smoking is reprehensible only under specific circumstances since it is generally permissible. The ruling of Al-Emadi that smoking is reprehensible has been interpreted by Abu Suoud as “unpreferable”. Furthermore, the ruling by the Shafie scholar Al-Ghazzi that smoking is

prohibited has been refuted by other Shafie scholars, since the view of Shafie scholars is that smoking is “unpreferable, except in certain circumstances that make it reprehensible”, and that “unpreferable” is nearly “permissible”.

From the above we learn that the ruling on smoking is that it is generally permissible except in specific circumstances that may make it prohibited or reprehensible bordering on *haram* because of its severe damage to life or wealth or both, or in a mosque or while reading the Quran, when smoking would be incompatible with due reverence to God.

Some early scholars, whose judgements were based on the opinions of physicians and wise people of their time, maintained that smoking may, to start with, be of some benefit to the human body but would, with time, blur the vision and cause heaviness in limbs and constipation and that, being hot and solid, smoking causes thirst and dryness. They also maintained that it was bad for the heart and the brain and that it increased palpitation and thickened the blood.

Modern medicine has proved this harm, and contemporary medical doctors have demonstrated the damage caused by smoking to man’s health.

A report by a WHO expert committee, entitled *Smoking and health* stated:

Cigarette smoking plays a major role in causing many diseases, most important of which are coronary heart failures, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and inflammation of the lungs.

In addition to causing these life-threatening diseases, cigarette smoking causes a host of other disablements relating to heart and chest ailments. There is also evidence to link stomach (gastric) and duodenal ulcers, as well as mouth, larynx and throat cancers, with smoking. See also *Smoking and its effect on health* ⁽¹⁾.

The 1977 report of the Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom states that the amount of nicotine in one cigarette is enough to kill a healthy person if injected directly into the blood.

A report by WHO says that the number of deaths caused by smoking is larger than the number of deaths caused by all epidemic diseases combined,

(1) By Dr Muhammed Ali Al-Barr, FRCP.

and that smoking now causes more deaths than were caused by the most dangerous epidemics in the past.

Statistics carefully collected in Europe and the United States demonstrate that smokers are afflicted by many ailments and health problems throughout their life. For this reason, governments, particularly in developed countries exert efforts to combat smoking and to reduce its harmful effects.

The British journal, *The Physician*, published a study indicating that smoking causes loss of memory, because of its adverse effects in this area, and leads also to arteriosclerosis and to cardiac and brain clots.

The Director of the Anti-Smoking Campaign in the United Kingdom stated “Studies have demonstrated that a nonsmoker in a smoke-filled area is exposed to a real health hazard”.

The five imperatives of Islam are the preservation of religion, mind, body, wealth and honour. A Muslim is enjoined by texts in the Quran and in the sunna to avoid anything that may cause his own death or bring about his own destruction, as God says: *And cast not yourselves to ruin with your own, hands.* (2:195), *And kill not yourselves* (4:29)

A Muslim is responsible to God for his wealth and body, as the saying of the Prophet ﷺ declares: “No slave of God shall move on the Day of Judgment until he is asked about his life and how he spent it, his knowledge and what he did with it, his wealth and whence he obtained it and how he spent it, and his body and how he used it” (reported by Al-Tirmithi).

Smoking constitutes an excess and an act of squandering which is banned by the words of God: *But squander not in the manner of a spendthrift* (27:26); and it constitutes a hardship for those who can hardly afford it as it deprives them of some essential requirements of life.

It has become clear that smoking, in no matter which form or by which means, causes people a great deal of damage sooner or later, both to health and to wealth, as well as a variety of diseases. Consequently, and by virtue of these texts, the use of tobacco is forbidden. No Muslim is allowed to use tobacco of any kind or in any form. This is essential for the preservation of life and wealth, to avoid the harm that medicine has proved and to maintain the well-being of families and society. A believer who is in a healthy condition is better and dearer to God than a believer in a weak condition.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali

May I start by expressing my humble gratitude to God. I have not put a single cigarette in my mouth, ever since I was born up till now, and I am now 79. I inherited my dislike of tobacco smoking from my father and grandfather. I have several grandchildren, none of whom smokes. This tells us that religious education and upbringing is of great importance in protecting society against smoking. In addition I may say that the family is the place on which efforts should concentrate. My father used to say to us: Son, our faith does not allow a person who eats onions and garlic to go to mosque, in spite of the fact that both onion and garlic are permissible to eat. That is because of their strong smell. Hence The Prophet ﷺ says: "Whoever eats garlic or onion should not come to the mosque". If such a change of mouth smell precludes mixing with other people, a smoker must not mix with others or live with them. God makes it a duty that we should clean our mouths. It is recommended to use a toothbrush several times a day to clean teeth and mouth. May I add that a Muslim family, by nature, does not smoke.

Before talking about the Islamic ruling on tobacco I would like to say that the information presented here today is new to us. We have been hearing much about the causal role of tobacco in the incidence of various types of cancer, and the harmful effects of nicotine and tobacco. We may compare nicotine in tobacco to alcohol in drinks. Both may be classified as poisonous, having similar effects. The worst that happens to people who drink or smoke is to become addicted, for addiction overpowers human beings and makes away with their willpower. I had a friend who suffered a stroke. I was with him, enquiring after his health when the doctor arrived, only to find him smoking. The doctor told him that he must stop smoking immediately. I was amazed to find my friend pleading with the doctor to allow him even one cigarette. That could only happen because of hard addiction that has left deep marks on my friend's character.

When I look at smoking, I consider it a very serious disease. Of course I do not have a full picture of the damage the ingredients of tobacco smoke and nicotine produce in the human body. That is well known to medical doctors. I was unaware that an unborn child is badly affected by smoking. The poor baby

does not know that his father or mother is an addict. The baby suffers before birth because one or both of his parents smoke. That is terrible indeed. It represents a contravention of God's order: *Let no mother cause harm to her child, nor a father of a newborn cause harm to his child. (2:233)*

When we were not fully aware of the extent of the harm smoking causes, we, scholars able to give religious rulings, used to say that it is reprehensible on the basis that it causes the smoker's mouth to be unclean and that it involves spending money on something that has no benefit. We used to refrain from issuing a verdict of prohibition, because Islam does not like verdicts of prohibition to be added to its list. In a stern warning, the Quran says: *Do not say for any false thing that your tongue may put forth, 'this is lawful, and this is forbidden,' so as to ascribe false things to God. For those who ascribe false things to God will never prosper. (All they get is) a paltry profit, but they will have a most grievous penalty. (16:116-117)* Hence Islamic scholars are always hesitant to issue a verdict of prohibition, because they are apprehensive that they may prohibit something lawful or make lawful what is forbidden. They would prefer to have a text to say clearly that such a thing is permissible and such a thing is forbidden. Nevertheless, when we found out that tobacco is so harmful, and that its smoke causes so many serious diseases, we have no hesitation in issuing a crystal clear verdict of total prohibition of tobacco use.

Is it conceivable that God in His glory would permit the drinking of wine brewed from sugar cane juice after having prohibited wine brewed from grape juice? Both types of drink contain the same substance which works on the mind and leaves a person lost, unable to take a decision, a semi-human being, having lost that reason by which God has honoured man above all His creatures. Similarly, when you discover that tobacco smoking causes the same type of tragic consequences, you definitely make the prohibition verdict applicable to tobacco. This is based on the general statement in the Quran describing the Prophet ﷺ: *He makes lawful to them what is good and pure and prohibits them what is foul and impure. (7:157)* Since tobacco can only be classified as foul, considering the effects it produces on human health, its prohibition is most certain.

We need to ask, from an educational point of view, why does anyone start drinking or smoking? The reason may be found in that an addict loses his sense of his life's difficulties when he has had his dose. A smoker may protest that he has a heavy burden to cope with, and an alcoholic may find a similar

excuse for himself. On the other hand, youngsters may start smoking to show that they have grown up. They imagine that by smoking they impart to others a sense that they have become adult. Hence, it is imperative that those who are engaged in the noble task of educating younger generations give them a clear idea of what true manhood or womanhood means. It is the responsibility of educators and religious scholars in mosques and churches, schools and colleges, to make them realize that manhood is not a cigarette to be lit up. Despicable is manhood if it does not mean more than smoking a cigarette. A person earns respect through his knowledge, moral values and good manners. Imam Al-Shafie says: "If you do not make truth your foremost preoccupation, you will soon be preoccupied with falsehood". To me this is a maxim of proper upbringing.

May I say that we cannot just dedicate all our efforts to combating smoking on its own. Smoking is only one in a long chain of vices. In order to be successful in combating smoking, we should also address other social evils. It is not proper to tell a person who commits every type of sin to stop drinking and leave him to commit adultery as he pleases. We should show him that both practices are forbidden, and we should address both evils, trying to put an end to both. The religious motive is certainly one of the most important in human society, even though religion has lost its place in modern civilization.

An important point must be clarified. We need to combat vice in general, not to concentrate on one aspect at a time. Hence, we say that we want to combat smoking, but not on its own. We want to combat with it drinking, drugs and all similar substances which cast a shadow over the mind and leave a person unable to think properly for himself. We need to fight all these at the same time. If I find a smoker going into a drinking place, I tell him that both his actions are wrong. In Islam we do not accept from anyone a claim to believe in certain portions of God's revelations and reject others. Like virtue, vice is a series of rings forming a chain. We cannot take them one at a time. That is a prescription for failure. We need to combat all vice, equipped with faith and the knowledge that we will be meeting God when He will make us accountable for all that we do. We know that Islam allows a person who suffers from bad smell in the mouth to absent himself from congregational prayers. On this basis I wish to say to smokers that what they do when they smoke and come to the mosque is unlawful.

It is for a definite reason that Islam resorted to a gradual approach in prohibiting intoxicants. Islam did not speak out against intoxicating drinks until the fifth year of the Prophet's ﷺ settlement in Medina. In other words, its gradual prohibition started 18 years after the beginning of Islamic revelations. The reason for this is found in the nature of such addiction-causing substances. They require a gentle, gradual approach. The point of start in forbidding wines and intoxicants was that Muslims were not allowed to offer their prayers when they were under the influence of drink. This meant that a Muslim who offered his five daily prayers must stay sober throughout the day, until well after nightfall. In the second stage Islam acknowledged that there were some benefits in wine and drinks, but it stated clearly that its evil was greater than its benefit. At this point, those endowed with a measure of wisdom realised that it was disapproved of. Islam would never approve of something which produced more harm than good. Therefore some people abstained from drinking at that stage, but the majority continued to drink. Then the final stage arrived when Muslims had shown their true metal and that they were resolved to uphold Islamic teachings at all costs. Hence, the final stage included a complete and full prohibition: *Believers, intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones and divination by arrows, are all an abomination of Satan's work. Refrain from such abomination so that you may prosper. (5:90)*

Addiction may become so hard that people are unable to quit the substance to which they are addicted despite knowing that it destroys their health. One day I asked someone, why don't you stop drinking? He was in tears as he said: "Pray for me because I have tried and have not been able to stop". Drinking had overpowered him so as to destroy his will. That is the outcome of addiction. This incident gave me an insight into the report which says: "A drunken person was brought for punishment and people began to hit him. One person hit him with his hand, another with his shoe, a third with his robes, and a fourth with his stick. He was brought in the same condition a second time and a third. One person said to him, 'You are to be cursed. How often are you brought here'. The Prophet ﷺ was upset, and told them, 'Do not heap verbal abuse on him, for he loves God and His messenger'."

I was so much surprised at the Prophet's ﷺ statement that the man loved God and His messenger. To me the two could not be reconciled. However, I read an authentic tradition, narrated by Al-Bukhari, stating that the man was in a bad way, leading a life of isolation. Such a person does not deserve our

curses. He should be helped by finding some solution to his problem, while telling him clearly that he commits an offence. No position should be assigned to him, and no woman should be given to him in marriage. The same attitude is adopted by all Prophets. In Al-Muwatta' by Imam Malik, a report attributed to Jesus Christ quotes him as saying: "People are of two types: one being tested and one spared. Have mercy on those who are tested and praise God if you are spared". Now we want seriously to combat smoking and to explain to people that it is a cause of numerous types of harm. However before we do that, or before we consider smoking to be the root cause of our present bad state, we assert that lack of faith destroys people's conscience and destroys the community as a whole. Indeed lack of faith is the main cause leading to the loss of our land and our people. It is indeed a very serious matter. Hence it is important to refrain from all offences that God has prohibited. Foremost among these is smoking. Indeed smoking is sinful, because the Prophet ﷺ says: "There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others". This means that causing any harm is forbidden, and it is forbidden also to try to remove one type of harm by causing another. All harm must be prevented. Hence it is important to combat smoking and consider it forbidden because it has been proven beyond any doubt that it causes immense harm to people.

May I also draw people's attention to the fact that we live today in an environment that has gone away from God and His revelations. People today look with an air of disbelief at prophethood and divine revelations. Hence my warning that the way ahead to a tobacco-free world is long indeed. As I say, smoking is linked to other sinful practices that are rife in society today. We need to fight all sin if we want to do something truly worthwhile for humanity. May I reiterate that mankind will never make real progress towards sublimity unless they adhere to what God has revealed. God is our Lord, and it is our duty to worship Him alone, and to show our gratitude to Him for having given us sustenance. As He has sent us messengers to take us out of darkness into light, it is our duty to say to people: We have been indulging in too many sinful practices, including drinking, smoking, gambling, and other dishonourable acts. We must now desist from all that.

I hope that I have been able to shed some light on this very important subject.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Professor Youssef Al-Qaradhawi
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It is now four centuries since tobacco appeared and began to be used by people. Scholars at that time felt that they needed to issue a ruling on tobacco use. As the practice was new and without an earlier ruling by eminent scholars in previous generations, scholars differed widely in their rulings. Another factor contributing to such differences was the absence of a proper scientific study explaining the nature of tobacco and the effects of its smoking. One group felt that it should be prohibited, another considered it reprehensible or discouraged, and a third group viewed it as permissible. Some others felt unable to issue a clear ruling on it, preferring to wait for further evidence about its effects. In each one of the four Sunni schools of thought we find scholars adopting any of the aforementioned rulings. This means that no school of thought was associated with any particular ruling of permissibility or prohibition of smoking.

Evidence cited for prohibition

Scholars who in the past considered tobacco smoking to be forbidden relied on various considerations that may be summed up as follows:

1. Intoxication: Some scholars felt that tobacco could be grouped with intoxicants which are evidently forbidden. Some of them went as far as to say: "It is well known that whoever smokes is intoxicated in the sense that tobacco affects thinking, breathing and body function". A number of scholars in this group even said that a smoker may not lead congregational prayer.
2. Causing languor: Some scholars say: "while it is disputed that tobacco intoxicates, it certainly causes languor". Imam Ahmed and Abou Dawood relate on the authority of Umm Salamah, the Prophet's ﷺ wife, that "God's messenger has prohibited every substance causing intoxication or languor". They define the latter as any substance causing a feeling of tiredness in a person's limbs. They consider this hadith as a very strong basis for a ruling of prohibition.

3. Causing harm: They mention under this heading two types of harm which are caused by tobacco smoking:

- Physical: such as general debility, pallor and acute coughing which makes a person more vulnerable to contracting tuberculosis.
- Financial: Scholars considered spending money spent on tobacco as extravagance because it buys something that has no benefit for body or soul, or for this life or the life to come. The Prophet ﷺ has prohibited spending money on useless matters. Moreover, God says in the Quran: *Do not squander your wealth. Indeed spendthrifts are brothers of the devils, and the devil is ungrateful to his Lord (71:26-27).*

In this respect some scholars have pointed out that there is no distinction in a ruling of prohibition between harm being caused all at once or being the result of a cumulative effect. Indeed what is cumulatively harmful is more common in our world.

Among scholars who prohibited smoking are Sheikh Ahmed Al-Sanhouri of the Hanbali school of thought and Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Laqqani of the Maliki school of thought. Both of them from Egypt. Similarly, the Maliki scholar, Abou Al-Ghaith Al-Kashash of Morocco, issued a verdict of prohibition. In Damascus the Shafie scholar Najmuddin ibn Badruddin was of a similar opinion. Distinguished Yemeni scholars, Ibrahim ibn Joma'an and Abu Bakr ibn Al-Ahada, and Hijazi scholars such as Abdulmalik Al-Essami, Muhammad ibn Allamah and Umar Al-Basri, and also Turkish scholars such as the Grand Mufti Muhammad Al-Khawajah and Eissa Al-Shahwai of the Hanafi school of thoughts and Makki ibn Farrouh and Saad Al-Balkhi were among scholars insisting on the prohibition of tobacco and smoking.

Evidence cited for a “reprehensible” verdict on smoking

Scholars who have returned a verdict of reprehensibility on smoking make the following argument in support of their view.

1. There is evidence of smoking causing some harm, particularly when used frequently. Moreover, it is true that moderate smoking will inevitably lead to excessive smoking.
2. Loss of money. Even if we do not consider spending money on tobacco to be squandering or extravagance, it certainly reduces one's financial ability.

It wastes resources that could have been used for something far more useful to the individual, family and community.

3. It has a bad smell that irritates anyone who is not used to it. Anything that causes a foul smell, such as eating uncooked onion and garlic, is reprehensible.
4. It is unbecoming of people in good position or those considered to provide a role model.
5. It distracts a worshipper from attending properly to his worship.
6. When a smoker is unable to obtain tobacco, he is particularly irritated.
7. The same applies when a smoker finds himself in the company of people and he cannot smoke in front of them.

Evidence cited in favour of permissibility

Scholars who ruled that smoking was permissible relied on the principle that all things are permissible, unless ruled otherwise. They maintained that the claim that tobacco causes intoxication or languor was untrue. They argued that intoxication means loss of consciousness while limbs continue to move. Languor, on the other hand, means loss of consciousness with reduced strength in the limbs. Neither of these conditions results from smoking. It is true, they further said, that a person unused to smoking may feel some irritation when he smokes for the first time, but this is not sufficient to say that smoking is forbidden. As for the argument that it is a waste of money, the same applies to different substances other than tobacco. This is the gist of argument advanced by eminent scholars such as Sheikh Abdel Ghani Al-Nabulsi and Sheikh Mustafa Al-Seyouti Al-Ruhaibani.

Views of contemporary scholars

If we turn to contemporary scholars we find that a number of them return a clear verdict of prohibition on tobacco. Some have written pamphlets or articles on the matter. Most scholars of Najd agree that it is forbidden. Prominent among these was Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Mani', the most distinguished scholar of Qatar who held the post of Director of Education in Saudi Arabia. In his annotation of *Ghayat Al Muntaha* (vol.2 p332) he writes: "The claim that tobacco smoking is permissible should not be paid any attention. Tobacco smoking is evidently harmful, causing languor, giving the

smoker a foul smell, and involving the spending of money on what gives no benefit whatsoever. No heed is to be paid to those who claim that it is permissible”.

Perhaps one of the best statements on the Islamic view of smoking that combines strong evidence with logical argument is the one made by the late Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, the former Rector of Al Azhar University who says:

It is true that tobacco neither intoxicates nor impairs one’s faculties, but it certainly causes great harm which the smoker feels in his deteriorating health. In fact, non-smokers also recognize its harm. Medical research has identified the poisonous elements in tobacco which gradually undermine the smoker’s happiness. It is undoubtedly a major cause of harm, and as such, it qualifies for prohibition in Islam. If we add to this the money a smoker spends on tobacco, which may be particularly needed for other, more important uses by the smoker or his family, we have a financial argument that requires, from a religious point of view, that it should be prohibited. On the basis of our intimate knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco smoking on health and wealth, we realize that smoking is viewed by Islam as repugnant. To return a verdict of prohibition or reprehensibility on something does not require a specific statement concerned with that particular thing. The general rules of legislation and the rationale behind a ruling are particularly important. Indeed it is such rules and rationale that give Islam its ability to issue a verdict of permissibility or prohibition on any matter. The basis for such rulings will always be the main characteristics of the matter in question and its effects. Whatever causes harm is prevented. Where benefit is ascertained or likely to be preponderant, it becomes permissible. If something causes equal benefit and harm, then the rule applies that: “prevention is better than cure”.

Weighing up the arguments

It seems to me that the controversy among scholars of different schools of thought at the time when smoking began to spread was not the result of a difference in the basis on which scholars deduced their verdicts. It was perhaps

due to how they viewed tobacco and its effects. Some of them felt at the time that smoking resulted in certain benefits; others thought that its harm was limited and counterbalanced by some benefits; others still, felt that it had no benefit whatsoever, but they were unsure that it caused any harm. What this boils down to is that scholars would have not hesitated to rule that tobacco was forbidden, had they been aware that it caused definite harm.

At this point we must make it clear that the task of proving physical harm caused by tobacco or any other substance is not something that Islamic scholars should undertake. It is the responsibility of medical doctors. It is to them that we must refer in this area because they are the experts. Islam requires us to refer to the experts on any matter: *Put your questions to someone in the know (25:59)*.

Medical doctors have made clear statements concerning the harmful effects tobacco smoking causes to man's general health, and its particular effects on the smoker's lungs and respiratory system in particular. They have emphasized that it is the major cause of lung cancer. Hence, the whole world has started recently to call for action against smoking.

In our present times, scholars should be unanimous in their verdict on tobacco smoking. A scholarly ruling on this must be based on medical evidence. Hence, when the doctor says that this practice, i.e. smoking, is harmful to health, the religious scholar must say that it is forbidden. Whatever causes harm to human health must be forbidden in religion.

Yet in respect of smoking, certain aspects of harm need neither a medical doctor nor a laboratory to confirm. They are well known to the public at large.

The rationale

Some people may ask: how can you prohibit the use of a plant without a clear statement? The fact is that it is not necessary that every prohibited matter should be mentioned by name. Religion lays down certain rules and principles which may apply to numerous matters. It is not difficult to outline the rules, but it is impossible to enumerate every single matter. It is sufficient to make a rule prohibiting what is foul or harmful to include under it a large number of harmful types of food and drink. Hence we find scholars returning a unanimous verdict of prohibition on cannabis and other drugs, although there is no statement prohibiting them in particular.

No scholar takes religious statements at face value as strictly as Imam Ibn Hazm. Nevertheless, he makes it clear that harmful food is prohibited. In this he relies on the general sense of religious statements. To quote Ibn Hazm: "Whatever causes harm is forbidden, because the Prophet ﷺ says, "God has decreed that every thing to be done must be done well. Whoever causes himself or others harm does not do well. When a person does not do things well, he contravenes God's decree to do things well". Other evidence that may be cited in support of this verdict is the Prophet's ﷺ statement, "There shall be no infliction or harm on oneself or others", and the Quranic verse, *Do not kill yourselves. God is most compassionate to you.* (4:29)

Among the most comprehensive statements on the prohibition of eating or drinking harmful substances is this quotation from Imam Al-Nawawi "Whatever causes harm when consumed, such as glass, stone and poison, is forbidden to eat. Every substance that is not impure and causes no harm is permissible to eat except what is considered disgusting, such as semen and mucus. These are certainly forbidden... It is also permissible to take a medicine that may contain mild poison, if it is needed and it is, in the considered expert's view, safe to take".

The financial aspect

It is not permissible for man to spend his money on something that brings him no benefit either in this life or in the life to come. Man is placed as a trustee in charge of his wealth. Thus, both health and wealth are blessings God has given us. It is not permissible for any person to impair his health or waste his wealth. The Prophet ﷺ has forbidden the wasting of money. A smoker pays his money to buy what causes him definite harm. That is certainly forbidden. Moreover, God says: *Do not be wasteful, for He does not like those who are wasteful.* (7:31)

The psychological aspect

The psychological aspect of harm is often overlooked by people who write on tobacco. The point is that when smoking becomes a habit, the smoker falls in the grip of this habit and cannot get rid of it easily. It soon becomes an addiction which robs smokers of their will. Smokers are thus unable to stop it, even when they need to do so, either because its physical harm becomes excessive, or to set a good example for their children, or because they need the money wasted on tobacco for some beneficial purpose.

In actual fact tobacco enslaves smokers. Hence, a smoker sometimes gives priority to buying cigarettes rather than spending his little money on buying food and other essentials for his family. Should such a person be compelled to refrain from smoking for any reason, whether personal or enforced, his general condition suffers, and his judgement becomes easily impaired. He may become highly irritable. Such harm makes it necessary to issue a ruling concerning tobacco smoking.

Smoking is forbidden

There is no way that any scholar could issue a verdict of permissibility on smoking, after the medical evidence of the harm it causes has become so strong, and supported by a large number of medical and scientific authorities. Indeed the extent of the harm caused by tobacco is now common knowledge, supported by indisputable figures.

Since a verdict of complete permissibility of tobacco smoking cannot be given, then the only verdict possible is to consider smoking either reprehensible or forbidden. It is already clear that a verdict of prohibition is more valid and relies on stronger evidence. This is my ruling, based on the fact that habitual smoking will inevitably cause certain harm physically, psychologically and financially. Indeed whatever is harmful to health is prohibited in religion.

God says in the Quran: *Do not, with your own hands, cast yourselves to destruction.* (2:195) *He also says: Do not kill yourselves; God is ever most merciful to you.* (4:29) *He also denounces wasting money in several verses of the Quran: Do not be wasteful, for He does not like those who are wasteful.* (7:31) *Do not squander (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift, Indeed spendthrifts are the brothers of Satan.* (17:26-7) The harm caused to health and wealth by smoking is most definite. Indeed taking any thing that is injurious to health is forbidden on the evidence of God's commandment: *Do not kill yourselves.* (4:29) Hence we must rule that smoking is definitely forbidden.

In point of fact, medical doctors are unanimous that smoking causes certain harm. It is true that the harm in this case is cumulative, not immediate, but a slowly active harmful substance is forbidden in the same way as a rapidly active one. It is forbidden for anyone to take a slowly acting poison just in the same way as it is forbidden to take an instantly killing one. All suicide is forbidden in Islam, whether slow or instant. A smoker kills himself, or herself,

gradually. Moreover, it is not permissible for a human being to harm or kill himself or others. Hence the Prophet ﷺ says: “There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others”. As it is unanimously agreed by medical doctors that smoking represents definite harm to human beings, countries of the world have required tobacco companies to include a health warning on cigarette packets, stating that tobacco is harmful to health. Hence it is not acceptable that religious scholars should issue any ruling on smoking other than its complete prohibition.

All five basic needs of human beings are adversely affected by smoking. These five needs have been identified by religious scholars as self, mind, offspring, faith and money. It is obligatory for every human being to preserve these five needs and to take no risks with them. A man’s faith is adversely affected when we see that some smokers do not fast in Ramadan, when fasting is obligatory to all Muslims. Such smokers feel that they cannot refrain from smoking during the fasting day. Offspring are harmed by the tobacco consumption of either one or both of their parents. The fetus is subjected to definite harm when a pregnant woman smokes. Also, a smoker harms other people in what is known as passive smoking whereby a non-smoker inhales the smoke of other people’s cigarettes when he or she is in close proximity to them. With all this harm a smoker causes to oneself and to others, it is not possible to return any verdict on tobacco smoking other than complete prohibition. Indeed all Muslim scholars should give a unanimous verdict of its prohibition.

Some scholars have tied their verdict of smoking to the financial ability of the smoker, prohibiting smoking to people who cannot afford it and making it less than prohibited to those who are easily able to buy it. This view is incorrect, as it does not look at the problem of smoking in its totality. The long list of injuries tobacco smoking presents to physical and mental health must be considered when giving a verdict on smoking alongside its financial aspect. Moreover, it is not permissible for a rich person to squander money at will, because money belongs to God in the first place, and then to the community.

Besides, every Muslim with sound judgement should refrain from approaching this seriously harmful and foul habit. Tobacco smoking is definitely foul, not wholesome. It has no material or spiritual benefit whatsoever.

My advice to Muslim youths in particular is to make sure that they do not yield to the temptation of taking up this habit which ruins their health and weakens their bodies. They must not entertain the fallacy that smoking is glamorous or a mark of independence. Young people who have started to smoke should try hard to get rid of this habit while they are still at the beginning. Otherwise it will soon become an addiction that is hard to quit.

The media has an important role to play in the fight against tobacco. It should include in its output only material that makes people aware of the harm caused by tobacco. Writers and producers of soap operas and other entertainment programmes must stop promoting tobacco by showing smoking as socially acceptable or advantageous.

Governments should work in collaboration to curb the smoking epidemic, even though this means a loss in revenue. The physical and mental health of its people should be viewed by a government as far more valuable than any monetary gain. Indeed all states incur substantial monetary losses when tobacco smoking is allowed to spread. The expenditure a state sustains on caring for people with smoking-caused diseases is far greater than its revenue in tobacco taxation. The state also incurs loss in productivity because of the greater absenteeism of smokers.

Finally, I pray to God to give all of us His guidance on all matters, and to make our judgement sound and correct.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Dr Nasr Fareed Wassil

Mufti of Egypt

Smoking is forbidden by all religious standards, because of the great harm it causes to the smoker and those who are in close proximity to him. Indeed it is more strongly forbidden than intoxicants, because intoxicating drinks harm the person who drinks, while smoking is harmful to others as well, as has been scientifically proven.

One of the fundamental principles in Islam is that when God created man, He bestowed great honour on him, putting him in charge of the Earth and assigning to him the task of making use of all potentials in order to build proper human life on Earth. Indeed God prepared the whole universe to receive man, God's vicegerent on Earth. In the Quran we read: *We have honoured the children of Adam; provided them with means of transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours to distinguish them above many of our Creation.* (17:70) The honour God has bestowed on man is seen in the fact that man has been given reason which makes him able to discharge responsibility. That is the ultimate goal of human existence on earth.

Indeed God's grace has many aspects, one of which is the commandment applicable to all mankind not to expose their own lives or the lives of other human beings to any serious danger or destruction. God says in the Quran: *Do not kill yourselves; for indeed God has been most merciful to you.* (4:29) *He also says: Do not with your own hands expose yourselves to destruction.* (2:195)

It is well known that Islam aims to preserve and protect the five most essential elements of human life: self, mind, offspring, religion and property. Whatever endangers any of these is reprehensible and must be avoided in all situations. Hence Islamic law prohibits the causing of bodily harm to oneself, or any organ or system of one's body, or to others, by any harm-causing substances or practices. Whoever does that is threatened with hell where he may dwell for ever. The Prophet ﷺ says: "Whoever kills himself with a blade will be in hell, stabbing himself with his blade for ever" (narrated by Muslim).

Islamic law also requires human beings to take all measures that are conducive to the preservation of life and to the protection and promotion of health or the prevention of harm and death. There is no doubt that whatever causes health damage to oneself or to others is covered by religious prohibition. Therefore, anyone who contributes to, or assists in, causing harm or health damage, in whatever means or methods, commits a sin. God says in the Quran: *We have ordained for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person-unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land-it would be as if he killed all mankind.* (5:32)

It has been established that tobacco is more harmful to human beings than intoxicants which are categorically prohibited by religious injunction and unanimity of scholars. Hence we rule, based on analogy with wines and intoxicants, that tobacco is forbidden because of the harm it causes. This is in addition to other evidence supporting prohibition, both of general and specific nature. Indeed *Dar Al-Ifta* of Egypt, which is the authority to issue religious rulings, has issued an official verdict establishing the complete prohibition of smoking and other methods of tobacco use, because tobacco is injurious to man and wasteful of money. It is well known that the Prophet ﷺ has cursed not only the one who drinks wine, but also the one who brews, sells, carries, or serves it.

By the same token, tobacco is similarly cursed. Since it is forbidden to use tobacco, so anyone who manufactures, buys, sells or otherwise promotes tobacco and its products is engaged in undoubtedly forbidden activities. Whatever such people earn out of such work comes under “illegitimate earnings”. It may not be used for charity or any benevolent purpose, because God accepts only what is good and wholesome. The Prophet ﷺ says: “God—limitless He is in His glory—has issued the same orders to believers as he issued to His messengers. He says in the Quran: *Messengers, enjoy (all) things good and pure, and do righteous works.* (23:51) And He says: *Believers, eat of the good things We have provided for you.* (2:172) He then mentions the case of a man who travels long and comes with dishevelled hair and dusty clothes, stretching his hands out to heaven in supplication, saying, ‘My Lord! My Lord!’ Yet he eats and drinks what is forbidden and earns his provision in forbidden ways. How could his supplication be answered?” (narrated by Muslim).

Should a person who trades in tobacco use his earnings to cover his pilgrimage expenses, the duty of pilgrimage is deemed to have been fulfilled by him, but he receives no reward for his pilgrimage. This is due to the fact that he is paying for pilgrimage with unlawful earnings. In evidence we cite the Prophet's ﷺ statement: "When a pilgrim starts out with unlawful earnings and he starts his journey and declares, 'I respond to your call, my Lord', or 'Labbaik Allahumma labbaik,' a voice from heaven will say to him, 'No response is given to you. Your food is forbidden and your money is unlawful, and your pilgrimage is thrown out'" (narrated by Al-Tabarani).

To reiterate, since tobacco smoking is forbidden, then to manufacture and to trade in tobacco and to advertise it are forbidden, as is any activity that promotes it. Any earnings from tobacco advertising are unlawful, because tobacco promotion represents 'aiding someone in committing a sin'. It is unanimously agreed by scholars that to help someone in disobeying God is in itself an act of disobedience to God. Under this heading we may include smoking in public, particularly if the smoker's position makes him or her a role model to others, as in the case of a teacher smoking in front of his students. A teacher may be placed in the same group as 'scholars' who are described as 'the heirs of prophets'. The essence of knowledge is to fear God and guard against disobeying Him. God says: Fear God. It is *God who teaches you*. (2:282) A teacher certainly provides an example for his students to follow. Hence it is obligatory to a teacher to give a good example. That is the way to ensure reward for him from God. The Prophet ﷺ says: "Whoever sets a good example will be given its reward and the reward of every one who follows his example. Whoever sets a bad example will shoulder its burden and the burden of everyone who follows his example, up to the Day of Judgement".

A teacher who smokes in front of his students certainly gives a bad example for which he is likely to incur punishment in this life and in the life to come. That is because he actually encourages his students to pick up a harmful habit that no religion will approve. Indeed, he teaches them what is harmful to them and how to waste their money and health. Thus, he contravenes the injunction: *Do not waste (anything useful), for God does not love the wasteful. (6:141) Do not squander (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Indeed spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones. (17:26-27) Do not kill yourselves; for indeed God has been most merciful to you. (4:29) Do not with your own hands expose yourselves to destruction. (2:195) The same applies to parents, doctors and others who may be taken as role models.*

Within the context of altering social wrongs we may include refraining from any dealing in the shares of tobacco companies. That is definitely forbidden. A Muslim may not be involved in such commercial dealings. Such companies concentrate their activities on the manufacturing and promotion of tobacco, which are forbidden, since tobacco is harmful, causing death and illness and wasting money. Indeed the World Health Organization and specialists in the field confirm this. Every harmful product and practice is forbidden, according to all Islamic scholars, on the basis of already quoted Quranic verses and the Prophet's ﷺ statement: "There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others".

In Islam, means are considered in the same way as results. Hence, means are forbidden if they lead to forbidden results. The means that tobacco companies are forbidden means, because they produce and deal in forbidden products which, when used, cause serious harm, physically and financially. Hence, to buy or sell shares and stocks of tobacco companies is forbidden.

The best way to eradicate the social ill of tobacco smoking is to seal the outlets of this forbidden business, increase people's awareness, with gentle reminders and admonition, enforce stringent controls, educate new generations in the noble Islamic principles, ensure full cooperation by all sectors involved in the tobacco problem, such as the media, economy, education and social groups to face up to this pandemic, and to provide good example by parents and educators. Such full cooperation will be highly useful in reaching the ultimate goal of making society tobacco free.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Dr Abdul Galil Shalabi

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Smoking, has nowadays become a common habit all over the world. The fact that it is so widespread may have left many people with the illusion that it is permissible, i.e. neither *haram* nor reprehensible.

Smoking was not known at the time of the Prophet ﷺ nor at the time of the codification of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) by the early scholars who established the various schools of *fiqh*. Thus, we have no text in either the Quran or the *sunna*, nor a ruling by the founders of the schools of *fiqh*, relating to smoking. When smoking appeared around the sixteenth century AD, contemporary scholars sought to reach a ruling on it in the light of the information available to them at the time. All they could do to make such a ruling was to judge it by analogy. It was not known to them that smoking caused any health hazard; thus they focused on the user of tobacco rather than on tobacco itself. As they were told that smoking was harmless they considered it to be like any other permissible substance that was used in beverages. They agreed that the five rulings of the *sharia* applied to the smoker himself, but differed about the final ruling. They ruled that smoking was:

1. Permissible for the wealthy whose financial situation or health would not be affected by smoking, thus considering smoking like coffee, tea and similar beverages;
2. Reprehensible for those with little money, provided the price of tobacco does not adversely affect their health and ability to procure the essentials for their livelihood and that of their dependents.
3. Forbidden for a poor man who needed the money spent on tobacco to procure the means for living, or whose health would be adversely affected by it;
4. Desirable for a person who used it to gain energy to perform his work, as in the case of coffee; and
5. Imperative if it were proved to cure an illness, thus being similar to a medicine that must be taken to preserve health.

Reaching the above judgements, it becomes clear that early scholars focused on the status of the user of tobacco. They also took the precaution of including health considerations in their judgements, even though the health hazards of smoking were not established in their times.

Some independent thinkers, including the Wahhabis, ruled that smoking was *haram* under all circumstances, even for a well-to-do or a solvent person. They said that smoking meant spending money uselessly and to no avail, and that the money paid for tobacco, however little, should be spent on something useful. Wasting any money, they said, was squander and an excess prohibited by God, as well as a violation of the divine order of economy. They argued that a person who is in the process of ablution is ordered to use water sparingly, even at the bank of a running river; and surely, they added, little money would affect the wealth of a rich man more than a little water would reduce the river. In fact, God has cursed spendthrifts, describing them as brothers of devils and has forbidden excess even in permissible matters saying: *Eat and drink but waste not by excess* (7:31).

Valid as this view may be, one still has to consider the matter of smoking with reference to the condition of the person who smokes and presuppose that smoking does not affect public health.

However, it is now proven that smoking affects to a great extent the health of the person who smokes and that the harm is not confined to this person but also extends to his community and children. Researchers have determined the many adverse effects of smoking and these have been documented in relevant publications.

Harm to the health might not show while the smoker is still young and strong but, in fact, the smoker carries around latent maladies from smoking which may appear only in old age and at time of weakness. It should be recalled here that certain kinds of food have been prohibited in view of their ascertained anticipated harm to the body, such as carrion, blood and poisons. Snakes are prohibited in order to avert the harm caused by their poison, although the Imam Malik allows snakes to be eaten if no risk of poisoning is involved. In other words, a thing may be ruled *haram* because of a known or a feared harm.

Since it has been established that smoking causes harm, or, at least, is not safe, it becomes *haram* from a religious point of view, for two main reasons:

wasting of money and exposing of the body to disease. Furthermore, it has been proved that smoking does not stimulate either mental or physical activity and that it is not a cure for any disease whatsoever. The fact is that when a person becomes addicted to smoking he finds it difficult to quit smoking and imagines that he smokes to maintain himself. This is a fallacy, because smoking in fact only adds to their malady.

Having read various medical publications which clarify the effects on health and the social harms of smoking, I say that it is categorically *haram*, and smokers should stop smoking and nonsmokers should avoid it. God knows best.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Dr Hamid Jamie

Former Secretary of Al-Azhar University

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Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe, and his blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, the last of the prophets and the imam of the apostles.

Smoking is a habit that has spread among men and women of all ages. The widespread nature of this habit is a phenomenon of deep concern to health authorities and religious scholars, as it produces destructive effects on the health of present and future generations, who are entrusted with the duty of protecting the faith and building a better world.

Religious and medical scholars, and others, have made it clear that they are fully determined to confront this lethal habit and check its spread by demonstrating its numerous risks and defining Islam's stance on the subject.

Islamic rulings range from the obligatory, the recommended, and the permissible to the *haram*, all of which are ordained by God who says: *None can command except God. (22:67)*. Scholars have defined a ruling as a divine injunction that concerns the acts of His adult responsible subjects, and the injunction may be imperative or optional ⁽¹⁾.

When it is said that a religious ruling is God-ordained this means that it rests on a legal foundation acknowledged in the *sharia*: in other words, it is inferred from legally-recognized evidence and not from a purely mental attestation.

The duly recognized evidence for religious rulings are the Quran, the *sunna*, consensus and analogy. If a jurist is asked to give a ruling on a certain matter the first thing he does is to consult the Quran. Should he find no provision in the Quran with a direct bearing on the matter at issue he proceeds to consult the *sunna* of the Prophet ﷺ. If he is still without the proper guidance the next legislative authority to consult is the consensus of opinion of scholars. If no consensus is available with regard to the matter in question he may use his own judgement based on analogy, but observing all relevant considerations.

(1) *Nihayat al-saul* by Al-Asnawi, an annotation of *Minhaj al-wusul* by Al-Baidawi.

Smoking is not specifically mentioned in either the Holy Quran or the *sunna* of the Prophet ﷺ. A consensus of opinion on it was out of the question as smoking was unknown to the learned men at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, and for a long time thereafter. For the same reason it was not dealt with by the founders of the four schools of Islamic fiqh, Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik, Al-Shafie, and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. Smoking came to be known for the first time in the 16th century AD, through Spanish explorers who brought tobacco from the New World to their country, where it spread to various parts of the world, through France.

When Muslims came to know smoking in the late 10th or early 11th century of Hijra⁽²⁾, scholars endeavoured to formulate an opinion on it but they were unable to reach a consensus. Most of them ruled that it was *haram*; some did not go as far as that, judging it as reprehensible; others thought it to be permissible, while a last group withheld judgement (on the basis that they did not have at their disposal any provisions from the Quran or the *sunna* to guide them one way or the other).

There follows an outline of the opinions of some of these scholars

A. Scholars who ruled that smoking was *haram*

1. Sheikh Shirnibali of the Hanafi school. In no ambiguous terms Sheikh Shirnibali decided it was *haram*. He summed up his ruling in the following statement: “It is forbidden to sell or smoke tobacco. To smoke while fasting undoubtedly breaks the fast”.
2. Hanafi scholar Sheikh Al-Misairi is reported by his disciple Sheikh Ismail Al-Nabulsi to have declared that smoking was *haram*.
3. Sheikh Al-Emadi of the Hanafi School. Ibn Abdin in his annotation says: “Al-Emadi’s words seem to indicate that he considered smoking reprehensible bordering on *haram*, and that a smoker is a sinner (*fasiq*)”.
4. Hanafi scholar Ala’ Al-Din Al-Haskafi in his work entitled *Addur al-muntaqa* was emphatic that smoking was *haram*, not in itself, but on the basis of the Sultan's fiat banning its use.⁽³⁾

(2) *Fathul alyyel malik* in *The Fatwa according to the Imam Malik*.

(3) *In Raddul muhtar ala addur al-mukhtar*, as quoted in *Addur al-muntaqa* (in the annotation of Majmaa al-anhar to Multaqa al-abhur): “Nutmeg and tobacco which have spread in our times are prohibited on the basis of a ban issued by the authorities”.

5. Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Laqqani of the Maliki school ruled it to be *haram*.
6. Sheikh Salim Al-Sanhouri of the Maliki school. Al-Sanhouri's disciple Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Laqqani reports that "when smoking became first known in Egypt a man from the Maghreb named Ahmad ibn Abdullah brought in some tobacco and enquired about it from our guide and imam the learned scholar Salim Al-Sanhouri who ruled that it was *haram*. Sheikh Al-Sanhouri continued to hold on to this ruling till his death without ever running up against any dissenting opinion. His ruling, which I heard verbally from him and read in his writings, was meticulously observed by men of piety from the Hanafi school as well as from other schools".⁽⁴⁾
7. Sheikh Shihab Al-Din Al-Qalyubi of the Shafie school says: "All solids which have a drugging effect and could benumb the brain are clean in themselves but *haram* due to their effect. Some of our mentors have stated that this rule applies to smoking, and rightly so. For one thing, smoking opens up the passages of the body, making them vulnerable to several grave diseases. For example, a smoker's body becomes flabby. Smoking could also lead to blindness. Knowledgeable people report that it also causes dizziness. It is obvious that this is more harmful than *makmour* (a kind of food) which was prohibited by Zarkashi in view of its harm".⁽⁵⁾
8. Sheikh Al-Najm Al-Ghazi of the Shafie school quotes the author of *Addur al-mukhtar* as saying: "Even if one does not dispute the smoker's claim that smoking is not intoxicating there is no denying that it causes languor, and is therefore *haram* on the basis of the saying of the Prophet ﷺ quoted by Ahmad through Umm Salama to the effect that whatever caused intoxication and languor was *haram*. Indulging in smoking once in a while may not constitute a major sin, however if the ruler forbids its use, it becomes categorically *haram*, as its use may harm the body. And, like all minor sins, persisting in it makes it a major sin."⁽⁶⁾
9. Sulayman Al-Bujairami, of the Shafie school rules that "smoking that is now in vogue and which is called tobacco (may the person who introduced it be cursed) is but an ugly innovation (*bida'a*). Our mentor Sheikh

(4) *Fathul alyyel malik* in *The fatwa according to the Imam Malik* by Sheikh Muhammad Elaish.

(5) Qalyub and Omayrah, annotation to Jalaluddin Al-Mahalli.

(6) *Raddul muhtar ala addur al-mukhtar*.

Al-Ziyadi initially ruled that it does not violate the rules of fasting because he was not sure what it was. However, when he saw the stains it left on the smoker's pipe he changed his mind and ruled that it did after all constitute a violation of the rules of fasting".⁽⁷⁾

10. Hanbali scholars of Najd: Sheikh Mustafa Al-Rahibani says: "In all the four schools of *fiqh* there are those who ruled that smoking was *haram*, those who ruled it was reprehensible, and those who ruled that it was permissible. Most Shafie and Hanafi scholars were of the opinion that it was either permissible or reprehensible, but some of them went further and declared it *haram*. Maliki scholars, on the other hand, are mostly of the opinion that it is *haram*; so are our Hanbali scholars, especially those of Najd. However, it has not come to my attention that any of our Hanbali colleagues has explicitly ruled that it was *haram*." ⁽⁸⁾

These were the opinions of earlier scholars on the prohibition of smoking. As to contemporary scholars, many of them are of the opinion that smoking is *haram*. The following are but a few of the advocates of the prohibition of smoking:

1. Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee has passed a ruling on smoking that says:
Smoking has definitely been proved to be detrimental to health as stated by knowledgeable persons and international medical conferences. It has been established that smoking causes cancers of the lung and larynx and poses serious hazards to the arteries. Furthermore, it wastes money being spent on something that brings no good to human beings. The Prophet ﷺ has banned everything that causes harm to both health and wealth, whether of oneself or of others. Therefore, we are of the opinion that it is *haram* to smoke, import, export or trade in tobacco. God knows best.⁽⁹⁾
2. The International Islamic Conference to Combat Intoxicating Substances and Drugs, at which scholars declared that smoking, growing and trading in tobacco were *haram*.⁽¹⁰⁾

(7) Annotation by Al-Bujairami to *Sharhul khateeb*.

(8) *Mataleb ulin fi sharh ghayatel muntaha*.

(9) *Islamic Sufism Review*, Muharram 1405 AH (October 1984).

(10) Held in Al-Medina al-munawarah, 27-30 Jumada Al-Ula 1402 AH (22-25 March 1982).

3. Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. In his ruling he declared that smoking was undoubtedly foul, noxious, languorous and sometimes intoxicating. He further stated that smoking was *haram* on the basis of authentic quotations, Sound judgement, and the opinion of authoritative physicians.⁽¹¹⁾

Evidence used by scholars who declared smoking *haram*

Those who said that smoking was *haram* substantiated their ruling by the following arguments:

1. Smoking is harmful to health, according to authoritative physicians, and anything that has such an adverse effect is ruled *haram* by consensus.
2. It is a form of drug whose use is forbidden by the *sharia* on the strength of Umm Salama's report that the Prophet ﷺ prohibited everything that caused intoxication or languor, a prohibition which applies to smoking as it causes languor.
3. Smoking is malodorous and offends nonsmokers, especially at congregational prayers and similar gatherings; it also offends the honourable angels. The Prophet ﷺ, said "Whoever eats garlic or onions, let him stay away from us and from our mosque and let him stay at home" (reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim quoting Jaber) Another saying by the Prophet ﷺ tells us that "the angels are offended by the same things which offends human beings". Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ says: "Whoever offends any Muslim has offended me, and whoever offends me has offended God" (reported by Al-Tabarani quoting Anas).
4. Smoking is an extravagance, since it has no use and causes certain harm as reported by specialists.⁽¹²⁾

B. Scholars who ruled smoking was reprehensible

1. The Hanafi scholar Sheikh Al-Emadi as reported by the author of *Addur al-mukhtar*. Ibn Abidin, however, commends the fact that the statement of Al-Emadi apparently indicates that smoking is reprehensible bordering on *haram* and that a person who smoked was a sinner.⁽¹³⁾

(11) *Smoking according to medicine and religion*, by Sheih Ahmed Al-Qattan.

(12) *Ibid*.

(13) *Raddul muhtar ala addur al-mukhtar*.

2. The Maliki scholar Sheikh Muhammad Elaish says that Al-Laqqani ruled smoking to be *haram*, whereas Al-Ajhourī ruled that it was not prohibited. Later scholars have followed Al-Ajhourī’s ruling in spite of the fact that evidence was more in favour of the ruling that it was *haram*. He also says that it is a form of piety to abstain from smoking.⁽¹⁴⁾ The body of his rulings as a whole suggests that smoking is reprehensible.
3. The Shafie scholar Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sharqawi says: “...and with regard to smoking the accepted opinion is that it is reprehensible. Al-Qalyubi’s ruling that it is *haram* on account of the fact that smoking leads to blindness and causes boils, flabbiness and inflation of veins is debatable. Those who are more convinced of its harm are prohibited from smoking. However, this ruling is not confined to smoking, for it applies in some cases even to honey which is also a cure for physical ailments as we are told by God”.⁽¹⁵⁾
4. The Hanbali scholar Sheikh Mustafa Al-Rahlbani says: “As for me, I have no doubt that it is reprehensible”.⁽¹⁶⁾
5. Hanbali scholar Sheikh Mansour Al-Bahuti. Sheikh Al-Rahibani says that Sheikh Mansour in his book *Adabun nisa* apparently suggests that smoking is reprehensible.

Evidence used by scholars who declared smoking reprehensible

Those who said that smoking was reprehensible supported their ruling by the following arguments.

1. Smoking is a waste money.
2. It fouls the breath in the same manner as raw onions, garlic, leek and similar food.
3. It is incompatible with decency in the sight of those who champion virtues and high ideals.⁽¹⁷⁾

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Fathul alyyel* in *The fatwa according to the Imam Malik*.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Annotation by Al-Sharquawi to *Sharhul tahreer*.

⁽¹⁶⁾ *Mataleb ulin nahi fi sharh ghayatel muntaha*.

⁽¹⁷⁾ *Ibid*.

C. Scholars who ruled that smoking was permissible

1. The Hanafi scholar Sheikh Abdulghani Al-Nabulsi who wrote a treatise proving that smoking was permissible, entitled: *As-sulh bayn al-ikhwan fi ibahati shurb ad-dukhan*.⁽¹⁸⁾
2. The Hanafi scholar Sheikh Muhammad Amin “Ibn Abdin” said that should it be established that smoking was nothing but detrimental, one could rule it to be *haram*; otherwise the general rule of permissibility would be applicable. “As most Muslims are afflicted by the habit of smoking, a ruling of permissibility would be a great relief. Let us keep in mind that whenever the Prophet ﷺ had two things to choose from, he always chose the easier. That smoking is an innovation (*bida'a*) should not give cause to worry, for it is an innovation in terms of what one consumes and religion is not, involved”.⁽¹⁹⁾
3. The Hanafi scholar Sheikh Muhammad Al-Abassi Al-Mahdi says that smoking which does not affect the brain, causes no harm to the body, does not produce languor, leads to nothing that is forbidden by Islamic laws and incurs no harm whatsoever is most probably permissible.⁽²⁰⁾
4. The Maliki scholar Sheikh Ali Al-Ajhoury is in favour of permissibility, on which he wrote his work entitled *Ghayatul bayan fi hill shurb ad-dukhan*.⁽²¹⁾
5. The Shafie scholar Sheikh Al-Sharwani says that a tobacco allowance must be included in the money a husband pays for the maintenance of his wife if she is a smoker.⁽²²⁾
6. The Hanbali scholar Sheikh Mar'i Al-Karimi is of the opinion that the use of tobacco and coffee is permissible although it is more appropriate for decent people to avoid both.⁽²³⁾

These were the scholars of an earlier era who ruled that smoking was permissible. Contemporary religious scholars who are of similar inclination include the following.

(18) *Raddul muhtar ala addur al-muktar*.

(19) *Al-uqood al-dorria fi tanqueeh al-fatawi al-hamidiya*.

(20) *Al-fatawi al-mahdiya*.

(21) *Ibid.*; *Fathul alyyel malik in The fatwa according to the Imam Malik*.

(22) Annotation by Al-Sharwanik to *Tuhfat al-muhraj ala sharh al-minhaj*.

(23) *Mataleb ulin nahi fi sharh ghayatel muntaha*.

1. Sheikh Hassanain Makhluf, who said in his fatwa dated 25 Muharram 1367 AH (8 December 1947): “The right judgement to us, as in *Raddul al-muhtar*, is that it is permissible”.⁽²⁴⁾
2. Sheikh Hassan Mamoun, who made a *fatwa* to this effect on 7 Jumada Al-Ula 1349 AH (10 November 1959).⁽²⁵⁾

Evidence cited by scholars who declared smoking permissible

Those who said that smoking was permissible substantiated their ruling by the following arguments.

1. As a general rule all things which cause no harm are classified as permissible, as long as they are not prohibited by any religious injunction.
2. Prohibition and reprehensibility are two religious rulings which are applicable only if they are supported by evidence. In the case of smoking, there is no evidence for prohibition or reprehensibility.
3. There is no evidence that smoking causes intoxication, languor or harm. On the contrary it has been established to be beneficial. Thus it is covered by the general rule that unless proved otherwise all things are presumed permissible. Even if it presumably poses certain hazards to some people, it should not be prohibited to everybody. Honey, for example, is categorically stated to be a cure, yet it is harmful to people who are of choleric temperament, and may ail them.
4. Safe judgement is not achieved by inventing prohibition or reprehensibility without evidence, but rather by ruling permissibility, which is the original status⁽²⁶⁾ of all things.

A comment on the arguments of those who ruled that smoking was permissible

All scholars who stated that smoking was permissible did so on the basis that there was no evidence in the *sharia* proving that impermissibility of smoking had been established nor had smoking not been proved to cause

(24) *Islamic Fatwas* by Egyptian Fatwa House. Vol. IV

(25) *Islamic Fatwas* by Egyptian Fatwa House. Vol. VII.

(26) *Mataleb ulin nahi fi sharh ghayatel montaha; raddul muhtar ala addur al-mukhtar*

intoxication, languor or harm so as to make it *haram* or reprehensible. That being the case, smoking was treated under the general rule of presumption of permissibility of all things, as indicated in their arguments above.

After these scholars made their rulings, it was established beyond doubt that smoking posed serious health hazards and caused grave diseases that were difficult to treat and might be fatal. Thus, the grounds for permissibility are no longer valid and smoking should be ruled upon differently in light of the valid evidence that we shall advance after briefly stating the opinion of specialists with regard to the effects of smoking.

Influence of medical views

Reliable medical specialists, whose views and reports are to be respected, have determined (as other scientific bodies and scientists have determined), both in laboratory and applied experiments and from statistics, that smoking is a cause of the potentially fatal diseases. Together with our faith in God's absolute power in life and death, we also believe that God has established a relation between cause and effect, action and result.

Governments have accepted the views of medical experts and now require tobacco producers to print a warning on their products saying that smoking is harmful to health. Had these producers been able to oppose such a directive they would have not submitted to it, and they would have certainly endeavoured to remove this stigma from their product. This in itself is but another proof that smoking is harmful.

Islamic ruling on smoking

In the light of the above comment on the ruling by some scholars that smoking is permissible, and of the statements of medical experts, as well as their reports on the diseases caused by smoking, and since these statements and reports are made by Muslim physicians whose testimony is reliable and acceptable; and, further, in the light of the evidence produced by those scholars who declared smoking to be *haram* the religious ruling that is acceptable and convincing, is that smoking is *haram*. This is supported also by the following.

1. Smoking causes severe harm to human health and leads to death. God has forbidden self-destruction: "Kill not yourselves, for verily God has been to you most merciful" (3:29). The companions of the Prophet ﷺ understood

that this verse forbade a Muslim to expose himself to danger or to destruction. Amr ibn Al-As invoked this verse when he refused to wash himself with cold water when he was in a state of major ritual impurity at the battle of Thatu al-asalasil lest he should suffer severe harm. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the justification given by Amr, laughed and said nothing.⁽²⁷⁾

Abu Saïd al-Khodary reports the saying of the Prophet “Do not harm yourselves or others”⁽²⁸⁾. The Hanbali scholar Ibn Rajab⁽²⁹⁾ says: “In any case, the Prophet ﷺ has forbidden unjustified harm. The general statement of “Do not harm yourselves” also covers the fact that God has not ordered men to do anything that may cause them any sort of harm: thus He allows an ill person not to use water for ablution when it is harmful to do so, has relieved a travelling or a sick person of the obligation to fast and removed some of the obligations of pilgrims, such as cutting the hair should it be necessary, provided that the pilgrim makes up for it”. Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet ﷺ was asked: “What is the dearest religion to God?” upon which the Prophet ﷺ said: “The true and tolerant religion”. Aisha reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: “I have been sent with a true tolerant religion”.

It is thus evident that harm itself is prohibited in the *sharia*, as is causing harm. Consequently, bringing about harm to oneself through smoking is haram. Prohibition against self-destruction and against causing harm to oneself or to others is in fact provided for in the Quran and in the *sunna*. To do something prohibited is haram unless otherwise stated; and there is no exception in the case of smoking.

2. Smoking incurs financial waste and loss, which are prohibited in the *sharia*. Al-Moghira ibn Sho’oba reports that the Prophet said: “God has prohibited undutifulness towards mothers, withholding the dues of others, and asking aggressively for charity; He hates you to indulge in gossip, to ask useless questions, to bury your daughter alive (pre-Islamic custom), and to waste money”.

No one can dispute that the worst way to lose money is when it is wasted and burnt in tobacco which has been bought with it. For this money ends in

(27) *Tafsir Al-qurtubi*, 157/5.

(28) Narrated by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni and others; narrated by Malik.

(29) *Jamie al-uloum*. pp. 292-293.

smoke, lost in the air, ashes scattered away and diseases which attack the human body to destroy health and cause death.

God has prohibited excessive spending and described spendthrifts as brothers of devils: *Give the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer, but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the devils, and the devil is to his Lord ungrateful*⁽³⁰⁾ The Imam Al-Shafie said: “Squandering money in the manner of a spendthrift is spending money wrongly, but spending for charitable purpose is not squandering”; this interpretation is accepted by the majority of scholars⁽³¹⁾.

Money, or wealth, in the hands of people surely belongs to God, whereof He has made them trustees. It should be spent only in obedience to God, as He said: Believe in God and this messenger; and spend of that whereof he has made you trustees (107:7). Explaining this verse, Al-Qurtubi says that it establishes that God owns everything in the first place and that human beings can dispose of what they have only in a way that pleases God, who rewards them in return with paradise⁽³²⁾.

Spending money on smoking does not constitute obedience to God, nor does it please him.

Furthermore, the national economy is adversely affected by the frequent absence from work due to diseases caused by smoking, as has been stated by authoritative experts. Such absence may amount to millions of working days. The economic status of the individual may also be badly affected by money spent on the treatment of diseases caused by smoking. Moreover, the money spent in this direction may be needed by the individual himself or his family, and the Prophet ﷺ has said: “It is a sin that a person should deprive those whom he supports”⁽³³⁾.

3. Smoking is bad and impure and God has prohibited all such things: *Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet ﷺ who could neither read nor write, whom they find described in their Torah and the Gospel, He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will allow them all good (and pure) things and prohibit them all foul things*

(30) Sura 27: 26-27.

(31) *Tafsir al-qurtubi*.

(32) *Tafsir al-qurtubi*.

(7:157). A normal person will find tobacco obnoxious in both smell and taste. As Sheikh Elaish said: tobacco has an offensive smell and to deny this fact is nothing but obstinacy⁽³⁴⁾.

The foul smell of tobacco is indeed the least of its adverse effects; for the diseases and ailments it causes are far more serious than bad smell or bad taste. Smoking therefore is a foul thing, in view of its bitter taste, bad odour, and grave and fatal consequences. That makes it *haram*.

(34) *Fathul alyyel malik* in *The fatwa according to the Imam Malik*.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

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When tobacco was introduced in Islamic countries and Muslims began smoking, they, in fulfilment of their religious duty, started to examine the *sharia*, ruling on smoking.

One group held smoking to be *haram* on the basis of the fact that it was harmful to the body, causing languor and weakness and drugging the body in a way that affected physical sensations, movement and energy. This group of scholars was guided by the authentic saying of the Prophet ﷺ in which he prohibited all things causing intoxication and languor.

A second group based their views on the general harm caused by tobacco to its smokers. They said that the Islamic *sharia* is founded on the admissibility of everything useful and the prohibition of all harmful things. If usefulness and harm were combined in one thing, but the harm was greater than the use, the ruling was prohibition. This principle has been established by God in prohibiting drinking: *They ask you concerning drinking and gambling, say: in them is great sin and some profit for men, but the sin is greater than the profit* (2:2 19).

Others said that it was reprehensible, thus placing it in a category less than *haram*⁽¹⁾. These, too, were divided as to the basis for their ruling. One group considered that the harm caused by smoking was not so great as to make it *haram*, while another group based their views on the fact that smoking produced a bad and repulsive odour⁽²⁾.

(1) For the difference between the two grades of ruling, see any work on the principles of Islamic *fiqh*, including my book, *Principles of Islamic fiqh*.

(2) Islam stresses the importance of good smell and a clean environment, and exhorts Muslims to use the *siwak* for cleaning the teeth and to keep the mouth clean, and enjoins them to stay away from mosques and gathering if they eat garlic or onions.

Still others allowed smoking and ruled that it was permissible on the basis of the general principle that all things are originally permissible unless otherwise prohibited. One group argued that the fact that tobacco caused harm or languor was not proven, in general, meaning that, it could not be ruled as *haram* or reprehensible for all people. If, however, it was proven to be harmful to one smoker, or was likely to cause harm to one smoker, then it may be prohibited for that person, but not for others who were not harmed by it. Smoking, to them, was like anything that is permissible in general but forbidden to a person harmed by it, such as in the case of permissible food or beverages that may be banned during an illness. A group of those scholars who allowed smoking, however, added that it was preferable to avoid smoking.

Other scholars said that the five rulings (*of fiqh*) were applicable to smoking:

Smoking is **imperative** if it is indispensable for balance and ability to perform physical and mental duties, which could be true in some cases;

It is **recommendable**, or desirable, if it produces greater balance and greater, ability to work;

It is **permissible** if the smoker remains unaffected, whether he/ she smokes or not;

It is **reprehensible** if the harm caused is slight or if it is likely to cause harm;

And it is **impermissible** (*haram*) if harm has actually occurred or if severe harm has been ascertained to occur.

The view that smoking is permissible has prevailed in Islamic countries and it has become common to permit smoking, both by ruling and by example. Many scholars and pious people smoke, finding no religious embarrassment in smoking. The ruling that smoking is forbidden or reprehensible has become limited to persons who were harmed physically or financially by smoking.

However, accurate medical and experimental tests have settled the matter⁽³⁾ confirming that smoking is generally harmful. Many governments have

(3) In this case, physicians are the ones in authority on this matter and their opinion should be need in obedience to the divine command: Obey God, obey the Prophet and those among you who are in authority (4:59). Scholars agree that those in charge are those who are specialized in a given matter. Thus, doctors are in charge in medical matters, executive authorities in matters of law enforcement and religious scholars in matters of jurisprudence.

responded to such conclusions and have taken steps to combat smoking, either by raising prices to reduce access to it or by banning smoking in public places, as Egypt has done recently in response to the efforts exerted by the former chairman of the Medical Association, Dr Hamdy Al-Sayed. Governments are also forcing tobacco producers to clearly state on their products the health hazards of smoking, so that a smoker may reconsider smoking, and urge others to abstain from it, and, by so doing, become a good example in social reform for which he would be rewarded by God. Such a person will also receive, according to the Prophet ﷺ, the reward for a good action undertaken by those who follow his example, without minimizing their own reward.

Now that medical specialists have settled the matter, the religious ruling on smoking ranges from *haram* to reprehensible, bordering on *haram* for those who start smoking.

Taking into consideration the human condition, and since many people took up the smoking habit at a time when it was believed that smoking was permissible, and since to stop smoking altogether and abruptly, as I did, may constitute an extreme and intolerable difficulty, the ruling in respect of such persons is that they should progressively reduce their intake until they reach the minimum level of smoking whereby harm is reduced or eliminated, or until they eventually succeed in stopping smoking altogether according to their respective capacities and within the limits of their particular health and financial conditions. They may also choose the least harmful kinds of tobacco and methods of smoking. In fact, such a course of action has been followed, and continues to be followed, by many people who either have become convinced that it is *haram* or are following the advice of their doctors.

People should also avoid smoking in public gatherings and in closed places because it has been demonstrated that the harm caused by smoking is not limited to the smoker but also affects others. Although a smoker may not mind the risk to himself, preferring to indulge himself rather than to heed the dictates of reason, he should not be allowed to bring harm to others; for no harm should be inflicted or suffered. Islam also commands that the environment should be kept clean⁽⁴⁾, for this is one of the human rights in Islam.

(4) Islam has established the ritual bath before Friday prayers, bans urinating in still water and curses those who relieve themselves in places which shelter people from the sun.

I have initiated procedures against the authorities responsible for failure to enforce the recently passed law on smoking, having initially campaigned for this law in the religious monthly *Liwaa al-islam* and later on the front page of the mass-circulation newspaper *Al-akhbar*. Seeking to remedy social ills by enacting laws that then remain only ink on paper and are unenforced is dangerous; in such cases it is better not to pass the law at all.

That is the ruling on smoking today. The same ruling applies to trading in tobacco. It ranges from *haram* to reprehensible bordering on the *haram* in the case of those who seek to start such a trade, because it would be a trade in a product which is *haram* and harmful, or reprehensible bordering on the *haram*.

In appreciation of the needs of those who have built their lives on trading in tobacco, either as a main source for living or as an auxiliary source, and taking into account the extent of such needs, we say that those people should phase out their dependence on this trade and should refrain from selling tobacco to young people who only seek to imitate the bad habits of adults and who want to start smoking; they will lose nothing by not starting. As a second step, those who trade in tobacco should progressively try to earn their living by trading only in products which are permissible and useful, until we pass through this transition, from a generation used to smoking to other generations which should not smoke.

There is in fact a need for a law that organizes trade in tobacco, so that selling and smoking tobacco are confined to those who are addicted to it, with a view to banning its sale eventually. No new licences should be issued for trading in tobacco, and those who currently earn their living from such a trade should be helped to pursue other activity and to seek other sources of revenue to make up for the loss of the tobacco trade income. The great savings to be achieved will be more than adequate, God willing.

And upon God it rests to show the right way. May He lead to success.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

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Islam endorses antismoking campaigns, whether smoking itself is considered *haram* or reprehensible, because a Muslim is generally desired to enjoy full soundness in all aspects of his life: mental, Spiritual, economic and behavioural. The Prophet ﷺ said: “A strong believer is better and more preferred in the sight of God than a weak believer, although each has a share of good in him. Direct your attention to what is beneficial to you, relying on God without submission to failure” (narrated by Muslim).

Islam accords high attention to matters of health. In all acts of worship requiring physical effort, such as prayers, fasting, pilgrimage and *jihad*, ailing Muslims are granted certain exemptions as specified in *fiqh*. Islam prohibits anything that affects human health in order not to prevent the performance of worldly and religious duties. Islam establishes that health is a blessing, the value of which is only appreciated by people when they do not have it, as the popular saying states “health is a crown on the heads of the healthy recognized only by the sick”. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Health and leisure are two blessings which many people do not appreciate” (narrated by Al-Bukhari). In other words, people lose them if they do not make good use of these two blessings, just as they lose by selling a precious commodity for a low price. It is also narrated by Al-Tirmithi that the Prophet ﷺ said: “On the Day of Judgement, when every person will be called to account for their blessings foremost in that account they will be asked: Did We not give you a healthy body and quench your thirst with cold water?” In a reference to the Quranic verse: *And then you shall be questioned that Day about the blessings you enjoyed* (102:8), some commentators are of the view that blessings here means good health.

The Prophet ﷺ counted good health as one of the basic elements for happiness. He said: “Whoever starts his day with no worries concerning safety and security, with a healthy body and a means of livelihood for the day is as blessed as one to whom the entire world has been given” (narrated by Al-Tirmithi). He was also reported as saying: “Ask God for forgiveness, well-being and exemption from all difficulties. For verily beyond the certainty

of belief, one is blessed with nothing better than exemption from all difficulties” (narrated by al-Nasa’i). Some commentators of this *hadith* are of the opinion that it guarantees forgiveness of past wrong-doings, health in the present and exemption from future difficulties.

For the purpose of protection against health hazards, Islam prohibits anything that may cause harm to either the body or the mind. It forbids hazardous foods and drinks, such as carrion, pork and wine. It also forbids the exhaustion of the body through excessive sleeplessness, even if for night worship, or through prolonged fasting. The Prophet ﷺ said: “You have an obligation towards your body as well an obligation towards your Lord” (narrated by Al-Bukhari). Even excessive indulgence in the permissible is forbidden. God says: *Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; for God loves not the spendthrift (7:31)*. Islam also cautions against mixing with people with contagious diseases and calls for precautions against all types of hazards.

As regards the management of wealth, Islam calls for it to be preserved and put to good use and forbids improper spending, whether in wasteful or inappropriate ways, as both are considered objectionable. God says: *And squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift, verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Devil, and the Devil is ungrateful to his Lord (17:26-27)*. Even when enjoining the paying of *zakat* (alms) God says: *And render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered, but waste not by excess, for God loves not the extravagant (7:41)*. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ said: “God hates the squandering of wealth” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). The Prophet’s tradition is also clear in forbidding harm to be caused, either to oneself or to others.

On the basis of all this the control of smoking should proceed along two basic lines: prevention and treatment. Prevention aims at stopping people from giving in to smoking and also at preventing new smokers from starting. In treatment, attempts are made to save those who have become captives to smoking. From the Islamic viewpoint, both prevention and treatment have certain methods and approaches on which we shall try to shed some light.

Prevention is achieved through awareness-raising which cautions against smoking. One may be tempted to try smoking in order to find out what its effect is, and once known to give it up. However, one is most likely to fall captive to the habit and find it difficult to get rid of. In Arabic literature, a story is told about two shrewd men who contested which of them had more wisdom.

The first boasted that after getting caught in evil he knew how to get out of it. “I have more wisdom than you” replied the other “because I identify evil and then avoid it”. Truly, he is wiser. Preventing oneself from falling into evil is easy and incurs no effort or suffering; while getting out of evil once one has fallen requires effort and suffering and the outcome is not guaranteed.

Awareness-raising is also one aspect of enjoining what is righteous and forbidding evil: a characteristic of the noblest *umma* (community) which God has created for mankind. It is, further, one aspect of the mutual exchange of advice which should feature as a prevalent characteristic in the society. Awareness-raising, in addition, is one aspect of cooperation for the general good, which is a prominent feature of advanced societies. Islam has a high standing in this regard. Among the numerous relevant texts, I may cite the following Quranic verses: *Let there be of you a community of people who invite to good, enjoining what is righteous, and, forbidding evil. Such people shall surely prosper* (3:104); *The believers, men and women, are supporters of one another: they enjoin what is righteous and forbid what is evil* (9:71); *Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and injustice* (5:2). Also, in this connection, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Religion is advice” (narrated by Muslim); “Whoever among you sees an evil he should change it by acting; if he cannot then let him change it by speaking out; if he cannot then let him change it in his heart, which is the minimum faith” (narrated by Muslim); “For you to be willed by God to guide one man (to the path of faith) is better than possessing red camels” (narrated by Muslim), red camels being most cherished as property among the Arabs.

Advising smokers to seek treatment, shows concern for others, by guiding them to good, and freeing them from evil. This is an Islamic trait encouraged by the Prophet ﷺ who said: “Whoever relieves a believer of a torment, God will relieve him of one of the torments of the Day of Judgement. God helps him who helps his brother” (narrated by Muslim). He warned against indifference, saying: “Whoever does not take interest in the affairs of his fellow Muslims may not be considered one of them” (narrated by Al-Tabarani). He also said: “No one of you is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

In expounding this point, it is my intention to underline the importance of awareness-raising and of encouraging those who undertake the task. It is hoped that, as one of the means utilized in anti-smoking campaigns, awareness-raising

will prove more effective than other means, especially if it is done wisely, with ample knowledge of human nature and of the best ways of influencing people. God says: *Call (men) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation* (16:125). Judicious awareness-raising will succeed in convincing and conviction is the basis of stable conduct, safe from change and relapse.

One of the most judicious approaches in awareness-raising is to eliminate the false notion that smoking has appealing or tempting benefits, while highlighting the dangers which should not be underestimated in relation to the uncertain benefits. Sexually, smoking has a weakening effect. According to Dr Karl Schern of Hamburg University, smokers have been found to suffer severe spermflow disruption and infertility ⁽¹⁾.

As a soothing element, smoking has a weak transient effect. It may even lead to persistent preoccupation with one's worries. In assessing the financial gains from the production of tobacco and trading in it, one should not forget the other moral losses which, directly or indirectly, leave an inevitable adverse effect on producers and traders, as well as on other society members whose strength and weakness are but a reflection of the state of affairs in their society.

Developing countries, in particular, should be cautioned against the dangers resulting from the production and export of tobacco. The financial gains which they may reap from tobacco-related activities will not offset the losses involved. Developed countries have become aware of the dangers involved in smoking and are in the process of giving it up. *Take warning, then, you who have eyes (to see)* (59:2).

Even with the enacting of anti-smoking laws, awareness-raising through explanation and clarification of the truth cannot be dispensed with. Personal conviction is the best guarantee of faithful compliance with legislation. This, in fact, is the Quranic approach in prescribing commands and prohibitions, i.e. supporting them with what we call "the *raison d'être* of legislation", so that human beings, knowing the benefits of obedience, Submit to those commands and prohibitions. God says in the Quran: *And establish regular prayer: for prayer forbids indecency and evil* (29:45). *Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you; perhaps you will be Godfearing* (2:183) In forbidding drinking and gambling. God says: *Satan seeks to stir up enmity and hatred among you, by means of drinking and gambling, and to keep you*

(1) Dr Muhammad Ali Al-Barr, *Smoking and its effect on health*, p. 133.

from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not then abstain? (5:94). In forbidding backbiting, God says: And do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely, you would abhor it (49:12).

If the premises are valid, the human mind easily accepts a conclusion. When a verdict is based on the truth, one feels reassured and sets out to implement it without hesitating.

Without conviction and acceptance, no advice or guidance will meet the success aspired to. People are inclined to hate orders of which they are not convinced. Even the implementation will be token and to meet the minimum requirements. Unless there is an authority to monitor the implementation of such orders, people will try to get rid of the imposed undertaking. In such a climate, people become hypocrites who give an outside facade different from the reality inside.

Another aspect to convincing people successfully is that those engaged in the campaign should themselves be role models. If physicians, preachers and writers are to take the lead in the anti-smoking campaign, then they themselves should not smoke at all. Otherwise they will give those targetted the impression that the campaigners are not serious, for if they were truthful in their campaign they would have been the first to practise what they preach. Such are the assumptions that cannot be denied. For this reason Islam urges those who take up a call not to present a distorted image to those they seek to reach, for that discredits or, at least, weakens their cause. God says: *O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is grievously odious in, the sight of God to say that which you do not do (61:1-3) and Do you enjoin right conduct on (other) people and forget (to practise it) yourselves, and yet read the Scriptures? Have you no sense.? (2:4).* As the wise saying goes: "Do not forbid an act and then do the same. If you did, that would be a great shame!".

In promoting awareness through audiovisual and written materials, data should be honestly presented. The negative aspects of smoking should not be exaggerated, because people measure the information they receive against what they actually see in life and if the Information received does not correspond to the reality, their confidence will be shaken and the desired impact will be lost.

When God began to turn people away from drinking and gambling, He said: *In both is great haram and some benefit for men; but the harm in them is*

greater than the benefit (2:219). Every good thing carries a certain measure of bad and every bad thing may have a certain measure of good.

Thus, those who undertake such campaigns should be moderate in their zeal so that they do not give false information, for not all people are ignorant and truthful presentation is the most effective means to ensure favourable response.

Awareness-raising should be a comprehensive process. In other words, it should involve specialists in various fields, so that all areas of the problem may be expertly covered. Thus, an anti-smoking campaign should not be limited to the health hazards of smoking but should also deal with the economic, social and other harms caused by smoking. The epidemic is indeed like an attacking enemy and those fighting against it should share the various tasks of the battle: command, supply, watch, reconnaissance, etc. To this cooperative effort, no one should fail to make his contribution; thus, God says: *Go forth all of you, light and heavy and struggle with your possession and yourselves, in the cause of God* (9:41).

It would be useful in this respect to have training programmes for those who are to undertake an awareness-raising campaign, so that they may increase their knowledge in areas that will help them to carry out their task. Incomplete or distorted information may do more harm than good. The Quran refers to the need to seek thorough knowledge through understanding of the religion as follows: *It is not right that all the believers should go forth. A band from each community should stay behind to acquire thorough knowledge of the religion, and to warn their people when they return, so that they may take heed* (9:122).

Furthermore, it may be useful for anti-smoking campaigns to be an essential part of general health education, since information components complement each other, and various diseases have many causes in common. Care must be taken, however, that such campaigns begin in a simple form suitable for children at home and at school. It is important at this stage that adults take the lead and set a behavioural example to children. This pattern setting is more effective than any eloquent preaching, and it makes the strongest impression on others. Hence, Islam attaches great importance to parental care. The Prophet ﷺ is reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim to have said “A man is a guardian of his household and is accountable for those in his charge; a woman is the guardian of her husband's children and is accountable for those in her charge”. Another saying of the Prophet ﷺ is reported by Al-Tirmithi: “No gift a father can offer his child is better than good manners”.

Awareness-raising should not follow one pattern but should be diverse in order to avoid monotony, which usually results in disinterest and lack of response. More effective approaches should be applied, so that they can appeal to different audiences and backgrounds. Eloquence is merely saying the right thing on the right occasion. This is the Quranic way of citing evidence, drawn from the various manifestations of the might and blessings of God, to prove His oneness and to invite people to believe in Him. There are many texts in the Quran pointing in this direction, particularly in the *suras* revealed in Mecca. As a certain poet said: “In everything is a sign to prove He is the only One”.

That is the basic idea as to how awareness-raising could work as a preventive measure against succumbing to the dangers of smoking, and how Islam might help in the organization and the promotion of awareness campaigns.

Treatment, both preventive and therapeutic, should follow a gradual course, especially in the case of addiction, since it is not easy to give up smoking abruptly. There are experts who know best which gradual course to follow in order to stop smoking. In Islam, we have a good example in the measures taken to prohibit intoxicants. First, wine was prohibited at certain times of the day, and at times of prayer: *O you who believe! do not come near to (perform) prayers when you are under the influence of intoxicants, until you are fully aware of what you say (4:43)*. At a later stage, God categorically prohibited intoxicants once people had been psychologically prepared for this prohibition, and after they had realized their serious effects: *O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Eschew them, so that you may prosper (5:90)*.

Before the partial prohibition was imposed, people were told of the harm that exceeded the benefit and were left for a while to weigh the arguments and to reach a judgement based on conviction that they should avoid that which was more harmful than beneficial.

Another method of treatment pursued along with awareness-raising is to make necessary arrangements for the treatment of addicts, either with pharmaceutical products or psychologically. Religion in fact urges every patient to seek treatment for any illness. The Prophet ﷺ says: “Servants of God, treat yourselves with medicine, for God has not brought into existence a malady without bringing into existence its remedy” (narrated by Al-Tirmithi).

Islam also urges people to help addicts in their treatment by all available means, for this would fall under “Cooperation in a good cause” and “kindness to the weak”. As the Prophet ﷺ said: “Believers in their shared compassion, love and sympathy, are as one body: when one organ complains the rest of the body suffers sleepless and fever” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Perfect treatment requires a search for the reasons that have led to smoking in order to treat each of those reasons appropriately and to guarantee that the treatment is radical and comprehensive. The reasons may be economic, social or psychological. Treatment, therefore, requires various types of experience.

Specialists talk of the importance of advising addicts of smoking to reduce the amount they smoke each day as well as the amount of smoke inhaled, to remove the cigarette from the mouth after each puff, and to try other measures which may be helpful in the slow treatment. They also speak of substitutes which may not be as dangerous as tobacco and which, if supported by the psychological factor, might help in giving up smoking altogether. Religion encourages all efforts in this direction.

Another means of treatment is government intervention, through legislation to combat smoking, a step that has been taken in several countries. Regulations should include:

1. Prohibition of the sale of tobacco to minors.
2. Warnings affixed to tobacco products.
3. Reduction in the level of harmful substances in tobacco.
4. Giving preference to nonsmokers in filling vacant posts, particularly at higher levels, promotions and granting bonuses and other privileges, thus encouraging smokers to follow the examples of nonsmokers.
5. Banning smoking in public places such as parks, public transport and closed meeting halls, in order to protect the right of nonsmokers to enjoy clean air. Smoking should be banned also in dangerous places which contain inflammable products in order to protect lives and property.
6. Scaling down the production and promotion of tobacco by imposing taxes on producers and dealers.
7. Banning commercial advertising of tobacco in the media, such as television and posters.

8. Banning smoking in films and television programmes in order to remove the impression that smoking is a normal and safe practice and that it is a characteristic of distinguished figures.
9. Imposing severe penalties proportional to the violation of these measures.

It is the right, even the duty, of governments to take such measures to safeguard the interests of the state, and citizens should observe and implement them, for God says: *O you who believe, Obey God and obey the Prophet and those among you who are in authority* (4:59). This is obedience for the general good and not for a sin.

In this regard, one may not claim—as was the case in the West when similar measures were taken—that the personal freedom of every individual must be preserved and may not be violated. On the grounds of both common sense and religion, such a statement is refutable, especially where community life is concerned. Enjoying personal freedom is a right which is balanced by the duty to preserve the right of others to enjoy their life, health, money and other rights. This is a requirement of justice: to balance the rights of the individual and those of the community. The Prophet ﷺ used to order a person who smelled of garlic or onions to leave the mosque and to go to the graveyard to stay with the dead as long as he smelled of such food.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that such measures should generate respect by avoiding gross injustice or partiality. Rather, they should aim at the well-being of the public. If such measures are enforced, compliance with them should be carefully monitored and should not be left to the individual conscience, because not all persons are equally conscientious.

I also caution those who monitor compliance with such measures, whether monitoring is carried out individually or collectively, against reluctance. Sufficient caution can be found in the following parable from our literature: a child on the Day of Judgement will hold onto his father's neck and say to God: "O Lord, avenge me! This man has wronged me!" The father will ask: "How have I wronged you? Did I not feed you? Did I not clothe you?" The child will say: "Yes, but you saw me committing sin and you did not stop me".

Once we have attained education of the conscience many of our problems will be easily solved. For this reason, all the revealed religions have placed importance on the generation and development of strong faith in people, by inculcating in them that God sees everything, he knows all that is secret and

what is even more hidden, and is closer to man than man's jugular vein: *If three men talk in secret together, He (God) is their fourth; if five He is their sixth: whether fewer than that or more He is with them wherever they may be. Then, on the Day of Judgement He will inform them of what they have done. Surely God has knowledge of all things (57:7).*

Surely in this, there is a reminder for him who has a heart, or gives ear with a present mind (50:37). God alone may lead us to success.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

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Smoking is a recent phenomenon. In a treatise on the subject, Imam Al-Laqqani says that smoking became known only in the late 10th century of *hijra*. This is why there is no textual Quranic reference to it as there is to wine which was quite common at the time of Revelation. In the circumstances many people came to believe that smoking was permissible and, with that in mind, smoking tobacco in cigarettes, the hookah, and the tobacco water-pipe (*goza*) became quite common, so did tobacco sniffing and chewing.

People were wrong in believing that smoking was permissible simply because they did not come across a ruling on it in the Quran. In Islam, rulings are made on the basis of either specific statements with a direct bearing on the matter at issue, general statements dealing with this and other matters similar to it, consensus or analogy. Therein lies the great merit of the *sharia*.

Both the Quran and the *sunna*, the two major sources of legislation in Islam, contain indications that smoking is forbidden: on the basis that it causes immediate or later hazard to health. Anything that poses such a hazard to health is considered *haram* by all religions and by Islam in particular. God says: *And do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction (2:195)* This verse contains a general stipulation that all self-destructive acts are forbidden. Smoking, as I will explain later, comes under this category. The Prophet ﷺ says: “Do not yourselves or others”, which indicates total forbidding of all things that harm oneself or others. Smoking is, without any doubt, hazardous to one’s health and anything that poses such a hazard is judged *haram* by religious law as by reason.

The World Health Organization declared war on smoking because of the hazards it poses. It adopted the slogan: “Smoking or health, the choice is yours”. In Britain 15 000 physicians, alarmed by the proven hazards involved in smoking, declared that they were giving it up, thus setting others a good example.

In Egypt, the head of the Physicians’ Association, Dr Hamdy Al-Sayed, said that while the Association was taking part in the worldwide campaign against

smoking, it called on legislative and executive bodies to promulgate legislation to minimize the danger posed by smoking and protect citizens, especially the young, from it. Smoking is a deadly habit which poses undeniable hazards, and undermines happiness and the right to lead a normal life, which is fundamental to the progress and prosperity of the community.

Reliable doctors all around the world unanimously agree that smoking is detrimental to health, and this is why conscientious governments oblige tobacco companies, by law, to print the following warning on every packet of cigarettes: "Smoking is harmful to health. It causes cancer, and heart, chest and other diseases".

Doctors have compiled a comprehensive list of smoking-induced hazards affecting various parts of the body.

Smoking not only endangers health, it wastes money too. Wasteful expenditure is defined by Imam Al-Shafie as spending money on that which is not worthwhile. Ashhab quoted Imam Malik as saying that waste is taking money from what is worthwhile and placing it in something that is not worthwhile. Such a state of affairs is *haram* by virtue of the injunction made by God: *And squander not (your wealth) in the manner of spendthrift, verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Devil, and the Devil is ungrateful to his Lord (17:26-27)*. That is, money must not be spent extravagantly because spendthrifts are held by God to be brothers of the devils in that both strive to do mischief on earth or both are to be bracketed together in the fire of Hell.

To sum up, one may say that any form of smoking is bound to cause, sooner or later, a variety of diseases, the most serious of which are heart diseases and cancer of the respiratory and urinary tracts. Smoking also involves wasting money and spending it improperly. Therefore, smoking is *haram*, from the religious point of view, for God says: *And squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift, verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Devil, and the Devil is ungrateful to his Lord (17:26-27)*. As smokers are considered "squanderers" smoking must be held to be *haram* by the force of both religious law as well as common sense.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

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In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Peace be upon the best of prophets, our master Muhammad, his family and his companions.

Tobacco came to be known in the East in the 11th century of *hijra* under different names, including: *tutton*, *tabgh*, *tunbak*, *tuniako*, *tabghi*, *tabgha*, *tabah*. Before this, tobacco and the various kinds of narcotic drugs, hashish, opium, heroin, cocaine, etc., were not known. This explains why no clear-cut ruling declaring them unlawful is found either in the Quran or the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ. Accordingly no punishment for their use is specified by the *sharia*.

However, the scholars of *fiqh* and the legislators who formulate independent rulings based on the four fundamentals of the sharia, (Quran, *sunna*, analogy and consensus) have specified *haram* as that which is *haram* in itself and that which is *haram* on account of something else. An example of that which is *haram* in itself is the abandonment of one's obligatory duties or the committing of acts which are in themselves *haram*. There is as much *haram* in one as there is in the other.

An obligatory duty is one which a responsible adult is required to do and failure to do it entails severe punishment, as is stipulated by the Book of God in clear-cut terms which allow this obligation to be interpreted as nothing other than mandatory, just as are prayer, the giving of alms, fasting, the pilgrimage, the worship of God alone, honouring pledges and contracts and being benevolent to one's parents. God says: *Perform prayers and pay zakat (compulsory alms) (2:110). You are foreordained to fast (2:183). Pilgrimage to the (holy) House is a duty men own to God (3:97). Your Lord has enjoined you to worship none but Him (17:23). And fulfil the covenant (17:34). Fulfil (all) contracts (5:1). And out of kindness lower to them (your parents) the wing of humility (17:24). We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents (19:8).*

Haram resulting from committing a forbidden act is that which a responsible adult is required to shun and forbid others to do, and which, if committed, entails severe punishment, as stipulated by the Book of God in clear-cut terms which allow it to be interpreted as nothing other than forbidden, just as are adultery, theft, usury, drinking wine and blood, eating carrion and pork, slandering chaste women, being undutiful to one's parents, perjury and unlawful spending of money which belongs to others. God says: *Do not approach fornication; surely it is an indecent deed* (27:32). *As for the male and female thieves, cut off their hands* (5:38). God has permitted trading and forbidden usury (2:275). *He has forbidden you carrion, blood and the flesh of swine* (17:115). *And those who defame chaste women and do not produce four witnesses, give them eighty lashes* (4:24). *Say, Come, I will tell you what God has really forbidden you: do not associate other gods with Him, and be good to your parents* (6:151). *And avoid uttering falsehoods* (22:30). *O you who believe! Do not spend the wealth of one another unlawfully* (4:29).

Haram on account of something else is that which is not ruled unlawful in itself by an explicit injunction, but is classified as *haram* because it is a means that could lead to that which is *haram* in itself, such as smoking and the use of poisonous substance such as drugs which are harmful to one's life, mind and wealth—the very things which the *sharia* has made incumbent on man to preserve and protect, and forbade him to destroy or violate. The Prophet ﷺ said: “*Halal* is what God specified in His Book (the Quran) as permissible; *haram* is what He specified in His Book as forbidden and the things He passed over in silence are allowances for you to enjoy” (reported by Al-Tirmithi and Ibn Majah).

Again, the Prophet ﷺ says: “That which God declares in His Book as lawful is *halal*; that which He declares forbidden is *haram*; and the things He passed over in silence are gifts for you to enjoy. Therefore accept God's favour. He indeed would not be the One to forget” (reported by Abul-Dardaa). Then the Prophet ﷺ proceeded to recite the Quranic verse: *And your Lord never does forget* (reported by Al-Bazzar and Al-Hakim through an authentic ascription).

The Prophet ﷺ also said: “God has sanctioned certain obligations which you shall not neglect; He laid down certain limits which you shall not exceed; and He passed over certain things in silence out of compassion for you and not out of being forgetful and these you had better leave undiscussed” (reported by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and Al-Daraqutni, as relayed by Abu Thaalaba).

The *sharia* as laid down by God for His servants, has specific purposes, namely: necessities, needs and supplementaries to help in meeting the requirements of *sharia*.

Necessities are components upon which the life and welfare of people depend, as they bring benefit to them and keep evil away from them. If one such component is missing, the whole life system is disturbed and chaos and corruption prevail.

Since men of good judgement and competent medical authorities have unanimously established that smoking and narcotic drugs are harmful and wasteful of self, mind and wealth, and that they disrupt them and weaken their productivity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the ruling must be that it is *haram* to take them, and deterrent penalties must be imposed on those who import, trade in or use them, whether in small or large amounts. To deter others the punishment ought to fit the crime. The penalties, which would also deter others, should be of a castigatory nature and are left to the ruler to impose at his discretion. God did not create the human soul, the creative mind and wealth purposelessly, neither purposelessly did He reveal rules for their protection and impose penalties on those who violate their sanctity. Rather, He created and protected them and forbade their destruction in the interests of His servants.

God says: *Our Lord! you have not created all this in vain. Glory be to you* (3:191). He also says: *It is He who created for you all things that are one on earth* (2:29). He did not create them for harm, amusement or corruption, but for the maintenance of the universe, for the general good of mankind and for the establishment of human beings as God's representatives on earth.

With the help of medical examination and its various tools (radiography, laboratory tests, etc), doctors have have been able to prove that the health hazards caused by smoking are an established scientific fact. Overwhelming evidence has shown that smoking is a factor in a variety of diseases that attack the human body, such as cancer of the lungs, lips, tongue, pharynx, oesophagus and bladder, inflammation of the respiratory tract, cardiovascular and artery diseases. It is estimated that 80% of all deaths, especially in developing countries, are due to these diseases. Women who smoke during pregnancy run the risk of transmitting health hazards to their unborn children. Jurists must act upon this scientific fact in formulating a stand to be legally observed with regard to smoking.

Thus it is established by conclusive evidence that smoking is profoundly detrimental to the soul, mind and wealth of the individual and may lead to the destruction of these necessities which God has enjoined should be preserved and kept out of harm's way. For this reason and with the aim of protecting the health, the wealth and the lives of both individuals and communities, smoking, in all forms, must be categorically forbidden.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Dr Ahmad Omar Hashim
Rector of Al-Azhar University

Under Islam good things are allowable while bad things are forbidden. Islam calls on its followers to remain strong and not to allow their strength to be weakened by smoking and other harmful habits which pose a menace to the health and the mind and induce a state of stupor and addiction.

Smoking is a real hazard, not for being an intoxicant because it is not, and not simply on account of being a costly practice with dangerous effects on health but also because it is habit-forming. Once addicted the smoker cannot hold himself back from smoking for long intervals. There is another equally dangerous side to smoking. It is a simple practice and spreads quickly, and one can easily indulge in it at any time.

Recent medical findings have revealed that smoking poses such hazards to the respiratory tract as cancer of the lung, cancer of the larynx and chronic bronchitis, as well as cardiac thrombosis and cerebral thrombosis.

In the case of the digestive system smoking contributes to the development of cancer in the lips, the mouth, the pharynx, the oesophagus and the pancreas. It is also associated with peptic ulcers. The urinary tract can also be affected. Such hazards as benign and malignant tumors of the urinary bladders and kidney cancer are associated with smoking⁽¹⁾.

So much for the medical research on the hazards of smoking. From the standpoint of Islam we find that people are enjoined to avoid inflicting harm on themselves *And do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction* (2:195). *Kill not yourselves* (4:29).

The Prophet ﷺ says: “Discard that which fills you with suspicion and hold on to that in which you trust”. He also says: “Do not harm yourselves or others”. He also “forbids taking any intoxicants or stupor-inducing agents”.

When these religious texts taken from the Quran and the *sunna* are considered against the background of the foregoing medical findings it

(1) *Smoking and its effect on health* by Dr Muhammad Ali Al-Barr, p62.

becomes quite clear that smoking is *haram*. If the learned men of times past did not pass a ruling of *haram* against smoking it was simply because they did not know much about the hazards involved.

To elucidate the matter further, I am going to explain at length how the Message of Islam takes a firm stand against smoking and similar practice and advocates health protection. Hence, in the following paragraphs we shall be able to see how smoking is inconsistent with this Message and incompatible with health, and how it is tantamount even to an invitation to self-destruction or, at least, to a waste of wealth and health.

Islam, as the religion of justice and good, worship and work, calls on its followers to work hard for the achievement of such worthy goals as advancement and progress. These targets can be achieved only through sound health and physical fitness.

- On account of that Islam takes a keen interest matters of health and directs its followers as to how they can attain physical safety and well-being.
- Islam calls for preventive measures to be taken against disease. It directs its followers to guard against infectious diseases and all that may lead to the deterioration of health.
- If disease sets in, Muslims are required to seek medical treatment immediately.
- In order to protect the health of man from being dominated by harmful habits which spread on account of certain phenomena in a given environment or community, Islam categorically opposes the phenomenon of addiction to such habits.

Of the other measures prescribed by Islam for the preservation of good health, diet occupies an important place. One is expected by Islam not to eat or drink to excess. The Prophet ﷺ says: “Never had man filled a receptacle worse than his own belly. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to have a few mouthfuls of food that provide him with the means of subsistence. If he cannot be restrained then let him spare one third of the space for his food, one third for his drink and the rest (of that cavity) for his breath” (narrated by Ahmad and Al-Tirmithi).

The Prophet ﷺ also said: “Do not drink the way camels do (taking in as much water as they need at one time) but drink in two or three gulps. Invoke

the name of God when you begin drinking and praise Him when you finish” (narrated by Al-Tirmithi). The Prophet ﷺ also spoke against breathing into the vessel.

Good health depends not only on what one eats or drinks but also on sound sleeping habits. Islamic texts recommend that one sleep on the right side and not the left side, the latter posture being considered to have bad effects on the heart and respiration.

The emphasis Islam puts on cleanliness and the purity of the human body, place and clothes is part of the Islamic general concept of sound health. So central to Islamic thinking is this objective that in the case of prayer the purity of one’s body and clothes as well as the place where one performs the prayer is made a prerequisite condition for its acceptance. Ablution (the ceremonial washing of parts of the body) is enjoined by Islam as a precondition to prayer. God says: *O you who believe! When you rise for prayer wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows; wipe a part of your heads (with water); and wash your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body* (5:6).

Islam lays emphasis also on teeth brushing and mouth hygiene. It recommends the use of *siwak* (a small stick, the tip of which is softened and made brush-like by beating, used for cleaning and polishing the teeth). The Prophet ﷺ says: “If it were not for the extra burden involved, I would have asked my people to use *siwak* before each and every prayer”.

From the Islamic point of view, disease prevention is next in importance to body health care, since maintaining good health cannot be realized without disease prevention; and “prevention is better than cure” as the popular saying goes.

Likewise Islam cautions against coming into close contact with disease-infected people. When the Prophet ﷺ learned that there was a leper among the Thaqif delegation (that came to offer their pledge of allegiance) he sent word to the man to go back, with the reassurance that his mission was as good as accomplished (narrated by Muslim).

It is for these specific considerations that the Prophet ﷺ directed that people were not to enter or leave a place afflicted with an infectious disease such as the plague. A *hadith*, on the authority of Saad ibn Abi Waqqas says of plague: “When you learn of the prevalence of plague in an area, do not go there; and if it occurs while you are there, do not flee from the area”.

The Prophet ﷺ spoke against urinating in still and running water as that could be a cause for the outbreak of endemic diseases. When people neglected these matters disease and infection spread. Likewise He condemned all wicked practices that dishonour the doer, offend others and bring about their disgust and aversion. For instance, He said “Avoid three cursed acts: defecating in water sources, on roads and in the shade” (narrated by Abu Dawood). The Prophet ﷺ was also reported to have said: “Any one who offends Muslims by laying mischief in the roads they use, deserves their curses” (narrated by Al-Tabari).

With regard to the treatment of disease, Islam lays emphasis on dealing with the causes, the use of medicines and medical treatment. The Prophet ﷺ says: “God sees to it that there is no disease but has a cure” (narrated by Al-Bukhari). He also says: “God sends down both disease and cure. For every disease He provides a cure. Therefore seek cure but do not use in that any items that are *haram*” (narrated by Abu Dawood). On the authority of Usama ibn Shareek some bedouins came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “O Messenger of God, shall we seek treatment?” He said: “Yes, O bondsmen of God, seek treatment for God sees to it that there is no malady but has a cure, except one”. They said: “And what’s that? He answered: “Aging” (narrated by Ahmad and Al-Nasa’i).

Let none therefore think that taking precautions and seeking medical advice as well as taking medicine could ward off divine decree. Indeed these measures are all part of that divine decree.

Abu Huraira asked the Prophet ﷺ whether such acts as supplicatory prayers, medication and other curative and preventive measures taken by people at the time of fighting disease, would hold back the divine decree. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Those acts are but a part of the divine decree” (narrated by Ibn Hanbal and Al-Tirmithi).

There are those who justify, and those who even believe in the use of forbidden drinks on the basis of their alleged therapeutic value, but it must be kept in mind that when Islam bans anything the ban is final and categorical. God would not have chosen to forbid a thing and at the same time make it a kind of cure. This fact is made clear in a saying by the Prophet ﷺ narrated by Ibn Mas’ud: “God would never make your cure in something which He has already forbidden” (narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Judging by the foregoing arguments one comes to the conclusion that sound health is greatly valued by Islam. In the first place, Islam urges its followers to keep up their body health and at the incidence of diseases it advises them to seek medical treatment.

It often happens that a person or a community acquires a harmful habit and with the passage of time such a person or community becomes dependent on and tied to it. This is the phenomenon of addiction which occurs with certain (intoxicating) drinks, or habits or even certain types of behaviour which may be insinuated by the Devil, or may be unintentionally adopted under the effect of the prone-to-evil human soul.

Islam forbids all intoxicating drinks, and rules that they all fall under the category of wine. Drinking wine is a major offence which is totally forbidden. Islam leaves the door of repentance wide open to those who repent of their sins, give up wine and other intoxicants and willingly return to God. However, those who fail to refrain from doing what is wrong become addicted to wrongdoing and are not forgiven by God, for the abandonment of wrongdoing is prerequisite to repentance. The Prophet ﷺ says: "Every intoxicant is wine, thus it is forbidden. And he who drinks wine and becomes addicted to its dies unrepentant, and will never drink it in the Hereafter" (narrated by Muslim). As is well known God has promised his devotees gardens wherein flow *rivers of wine, delicious for those who drink* (47:15). The wine of Paradise is, of course, different from the intoxicant wine of this world.

Alcoholic beverages pose great hazards to drinkers especially when they become addicted. It has bad effects on the nervous and digestive systems; it renders the addict a prey to tuberculosis and diseases of the heart, stomach and liver. All this is substantiated by scientific evidence. The Prophet ﷺ confirms that "wine is a malady and not a cure" (narrated by Muslim). The ban on wine is all-embracing in the sense that taking even a small quantity of it is forbidden. Therefore, it is stated that "if only a large amount of a drink proved to be intoxicating, then taking any amount, no matter how small, is forbidden".

The phenomenon of addiction is not limited to intoxicants alone, but is of a much wider scope which includes smoking and narcotic drugs.

With regard to intoxicants and alcoholic beverages it must be made clear that they lead to addiction which in turn exposes the human body to various diseases and disturbances. Furthermore they are an abomination and are

impure. God says: *Wine, games of chance, idols and divining arrows are but abominations devised by Satan (5:90).*

Giving up intoxicants and alcoholic beverages contributes to man's well-being: *therefore you are ordered to avoid them, so that you may prosper (5:90)*, whereas addiction to them could incite enmity and hatred among people and make them negligent of their duty to praise their Lord and perform their prayers. God says: *Satan seeks to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance and thus keeps you from the remembrance of God and from your prayers; will you not give (them) up? (5:91).*

Islam forbids taking intoxicants even in the form of medicine. When the Prophet ﷺ was asked about wine used as a part of medical treatment he said: "Wine is a malady. It is not a cure". Some seem to think that wine may occasionally have therapeutic benefit, but the fact of the matter is that it causes illness and pain.

Addiction to other intoxicants induces in the addict such despicable characteristics as cowardice, lack of any sense of duty and weakness of will. These shortcomings are in addition to physical and mental hazards such as health deterioration, dementia and weakness of the memory along with financial and other psychological damage.

The evidence against drugs is overwhelming. God says: *He will make good and wholesome things lawful to them, and prohibit all is foul (7:157).*

The Prophet ﷺ says: "Do not harm yourselves or others" (narrated by Ahmad and Ibn Majah). Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ said: "The Prophet ﷺ forbade all intoxicants and devitalizers" (narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawood). The prohibition of narcotic drugs is governed by the same rule that prohibits alcoholic beverages and other intoxicants on account of the fact that both categories of intoxicants permeate, overcome and change the nature of the mind. Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: "An intoxicant is something that overcomes the mind" (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Those addicted to hashish, opium similar drugs have certain problems in common: they misjudge distances, imagining what is distant to be near and vice versa, and they imagine things which do not exist.

Both Al-Qarafi and Ibn Taymiyya refer to a consensus of opinion declaring hashish a forbidden substance. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya says: “He who holds it (hashish) permissible slides into apostasy”.

Smoking, which is far more widespread, is to be judged in the light of the Prophet’s saying: “Do not harm yourselves or others” and in his other declaration against all intoxicants and devitalizers, even though the hazards involved in smoking have been discovered only lately. This explains why a ruling on it has to be based necessarily on account of its harmful and devitalizing effects. Some scholars are of the opinion that smoking is abominable; others think it impermissible. Its status as abominable or impermissible is contingent on the pathological manifestations and the extent of harm associated with it. In recent years science has established that certain health hazards are caused by smoking, a fact that justifies its classification as one of the things that the Prophet ﷺ spoke against when he ruled: “Do not harm yourself or others”.

Society is under obligation to do battle against all forms of addiction until they have been eradicated root and branch. For the eradication campaign to be effective the following measures are recommended:

1. The setting of a good example by educators, reformers and parents;
2. Education and guidance through intensive religious and medical information campaigns;
3. Making informative books available to interested readers;
4. Choosing good friends, keeping company with the good ones and avoiding the weak minded.
5. Prohibiting intoxicants, wine and narcotic drugs by law and punishing those who traffic in or use them according to the penalties specified.

Unless all forces in society join hands to fight addiction to evil and harmful practices, the danger may get out of control and become widespread. The Prophet ﷺ says: “The relation between the one who abides by God’s specified limits and the one who falls foul of them is the same as that of a group of people aboard a boat: they drew lots and split. Some occupied the upper deck and the others the lower deck. The latter had to pass by those in the upper deck each time they fetched some seawater. To avoid doing so they thought of drilling a hole in their part of the boat so as not to be a nuisance. If the other

party allowed them to have their way all those on board would perish (be drowned), but if they took them to task (prevented them from doing so), both sides would be safe”.

The ruling of Islam on smoking

- What has already been said helps to demonstrate that Islam attaches great importance to good health and acquaints humans with the means by which they can secure safety.
- Furthermore, Islam advocates the adoption of preventive measures on the basis that prevention is better than cure.
- Islam takes a tough stand against addiction so as not to allow unhealthy habits to prevail. As smoking is the worst and one of the most dangerous habits; a ruling on it takes into consideration the following factors:
 1. A smoker feels himself to be devitalized. We have already mentioned that the Prophet ﷺ spoke against all intoxicants and devitalizers. The devitalizing effect of smoking is felt by one who smokes for the first time or one who smokes intermittently as well as by a regular smoker who resumes smoking after a certain period of abstention. These cases are always associated with dizziness and stupor. In fact the devitalizing effect of smoking affects every smoker although some smokers may not be fully aware of it.
 2. Smoking incurs dissipation which is forbidden by Islam. God says: *Eat and drink but never dissipate* (7:31). It also incurs squandering. God says: *But squander not your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily squanderers are Satan's brothers* (17:27). Another Quranic verse enjoins: *Make not your hand chained to your neck, nor make it widespread altogether* (17:29).
 3. Smoking wastes money, which is forbidden by Islam. The Prophet ﷺ says: “There are three things which God would like you to do and three others He would hate to see you engaged in. He would like you to worship him and to associate none with him; to hold fast, one and all, to the cord of God and to let nothing divide you; and to give good advice to he whom God has appointed in charge of your affairs. He would hate to see you engaged in gossiping, asking too many questions, and squandering your wealth”.

Smoking, if anything, is an outright waste of money, and wasting money is altogether *haram*.

4. The health hazards posed by smoking have been established by modern science. This leaves no doubt whatsoever that smoking is impermissible. One may recall the report issued in 1977 by the Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom, asserting that “the amount of nicotine found in one single cigarette is enough to kill a man in the best of health if it is given to him as an intravenous injection”.

A report by the World Health Organization in 1975 revealed that “the number of those who die or live a miserable life as a result of smoking each year exceeds the total number of those who die of the plague, cholera, smallpox, tuberculosis, leprosy, typhoid and typhus”. The report asserts that smoking is responsible for a much higher death toll than are all the epidemic diseases combined, and that giving up smoking could contribute to improved health and longevity in a manner which all medical means put together would not be able to match⁽¹⁾.

In the light of all such health hazards involved, smoking is certainly *haram*. God says: *Do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction* (2:195). The Prophet ﷺ calls on men not to cause harm either to themselves or to others. In transgression of all these injunctions, the smoker insists on inflicting harm on himself and others, who are forced to inhale the smoke he exhales at home, in the office or in other places.

(1) Dr Muhammad Ali Al-Barr, *Smoking and its effect on health*, pp. 36-37

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Dr Al-Hussaini Abdulmajid Hashem
Former Deputy Rector
of Al-Azhar

Praise be to God and peace and blessings be upon the best of prophets, our Master Muhammad, his family and companions.

Before passing judgment on smoking we consider it best to explain the keen interest Islam has in health especially in the light of the serious effects of smoking on the health of human beings.

Islam takes an interest in the care of the human body and the need to maintain it in good working condition. It regulates one's eating and drinking habits in accordance with an orderly pattern. God, says: *Eat and drink but never dissipate* (7:31). The thing that catches the eye in this Islamic plan of personal hygiene is the attention it pays to purity. As part of purity one is required to perform ablution and have ceremonial baths. Such state of purity activates various parts of the body and provides them with the necessary protection against microbes. God says: *O you who believe! When you rise to pray wash your faces and hands as far as the elbows, rub your heads with water and wash your feet up to the ankles* (5:6). Taking good care of the body and stressing health protection are manifested in the following verses from the Holy Quran: *Do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction* (2:159). *Kill not yourselves, for verily God has been to you Most Merciful* (4:29).

Smoking leads to self-destruction, against which Islam has strongly warned. It incurs a waste of money and Islam forbids excessive expenditure. It irritates the throat and it fouls the breath, in addition to its other health hazards.

Using the *siwak* (toothstick) is recommended by Islam. The Prophet ﷺ says: "The siwak purifies the mouth and is a means to win God's pleasure" (narrated by Ahmad, Al-Nasa'i and Al-Tirmithi). Islam forbids anything that may cause physical or mental harm. The Prophet ﷺ says: "Do not harm yourself or others".

Apologists for smoking claim that it soothes tense nerves, eases psychological strain and helps cure certain ailments. Yet, these claims are nothing but a figment of the imagination. The fact of the matter is that smoking is a malady and not a cure.

The emphasis placed by Islam on health care is proof of the attention Islam pays to physical fitness. A believer who is strong is better and dearer to God than a believer who is weak. There is no denying that health is one of the greatest graces which humans are blessed with. Thus people have a duty to preserve it and thank God for it. The Prophet ﷺ says: “There are two blessings which many people do not appreciate: health and leisure” (narrated by Al-Bukhari). In another saying the Prophet ﷺ states that: “Whoever of you wakes up in the morning and finds that he is in good health, secure among his own people and in possession of enough food for the day, is as one who owns the entire world”.

Since Islam takes so much interest in promoting good health, and since smoking is so harmful to the health of man, then it must be ruled impermissible. This ruling is further justified by the fact that smoking adversely affects productivity, since its bad effects on health sap the energy of smokers. The tar that is in smoke may cause cancer while the nicotine increases blood coagulation. Furthermore, smokers can easily develop chronic infection of the respiratory tract.

Smoking hazards are not restricted to smokers only. Those who regularly inhale smoke by coming into close contact with smokers (children, other family members and friends) are in danger of developing chronic bronchitis. In the case of pregnant women smoking hazards are passed on by the mother to her unborn child, causing what is known as intra-uterine growth retardation.

Statistics compiled on smoking hazards show that the death rate before the age of 65 is twice as high among smokers as among nonsmokers. The incidence of lung cancer is 70 to 90 times more among smokers than nonsmokers. The ratio of smokers to nonsmokers among those who absent themselves from work is as high as 3:1.

Smoking is closely associated with peptic ulcer and blood circulation malfunction. Women smokers reach menopause at an earlier age than nonsmokers. Furthermore, smoking is incompatible with contraceptives. A woman who smokes and is on the pill at the same time risks malformation of the fetus.

The Islamic ruling on smoking

Having reviewed the bad effects of smoking, the health hazards associated with it, and its role as a cause of disease and a waste of the health and wealth of the individual, as well as a considerable share of the national economy, we declare that smoking is *haram*.

If smoking was declared in the past by some scholars as abominable rather than outright impermissible that was because detailed information about its actual health hazards were not fully known at the time. Science had not then discovered how damaging to health smoking could be, and that it caused countless number of perilous diseases, such as cancer of the mouth, the oesophagus, the lungs and the urinary bladder, as well as blood clots and other diseases.

Undoubtedly Islam holds smoking impermissible on account of the aforesaid hazards which could lead to self-destruction. God, says: *Do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction (2:195)*.

Furthermore a measure of extravagance and waste is involved in smoking. Islam forbids waste. God says: *Eat and drink but never dissipate (7:31)*. He also says: *But squander not your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily squanderers are Satan's brothers (17:27)*.

As has already been mentioned smoking is harmful to the health of smokers as well as to their associates and members of their families. Any such thing that could cause damage or harm is considered impermissible in Islam. The Prophet ﷺ says: "Cause not harm either to yourself or to others".

There is no longer any doubt as to the health hazards caused by smoking. Modern science and medicine have proved smoking to be a major cause of some of the most serious diseases such as cancer, blood clotting and a great deal more. Some smokers are affluent and they claim that they are not at all bothered by smoking, from the financial point of view. But they must be made to understand that money paid for tobacco products is a waste. This means profitless expenditure, or placing something where it is not needed. Smoking, as such, is but a form of waste.

In the light of the evidence so far, the conclusion is that smoking is *haram* and that Muslims have a duty to fight against this deadly habit. Those who are in affluent conditions had better invest their money in useful projects and to the benefit of the poor and the needy.

SUMMARY VERDICTS

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Sheikh Ahmed Bin Hamad Al-Khalili
Grand Mufti of Oman

Rational persons should not argue the prohibition of smoking by Islam, as Islam prohibits all substances that harm the physical and mental health of human being. It is well known that smoking causes cancer and cardiovascular diseases in addition to more than 70 ailments, as stated by some physicians, or 120 as said by our ancient scholars. Man shall not sip or eat poison as it kills and God Almighty has said in the Holy Quran *Do not kill yourselves for God Almighty is most merciful to you (4:29)*.

Since it has been proved that smoking causes cancer, the verdict on a smoker will be commensurate with the verdict on one who sips poison. Tobacco is a slow poison. The smoker who understands this fact and does not give up will be considered as killing himself in this context. God Almighty explained the verdict of self-killing when he said: *One who does that, with hostility or unjustly, will be set on fire by us, and that is easy for God Almighty.* Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also clarified this when he said: “One who sips poison will eternally sip the same poison on the day of final judgement.” Smoking also means spending money for nothing besides the harmful impacts it imposes on passive smokers.

In view of the above, smoking and sale of tobacco is prohibited by Islam.

Islamic Ruling on Smoking

Permanent Committee of Academic Research and Fatwa, Saudi Arabia

Abdul-Aziz bin Baz, Chairman

Abdul-Razzaq Afifi, Vice-President

Abdullah bin Ghadian, Member

Abdullah bin Qa'oud, Member

In view of the harm caused by tobacco, growing, trading in and smoking of tobacco are judged to be *haram*. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, “Do not harm yourselves or others”. Furthermore, tobacco is unwholesome and God says in the Quran that the Prophet ﷺ *enjoins upon them that which is good and pure and forbids them that which is unwholesome*.

A Summary of the Islamic Ruling on Smoking as Stated by Contemporary Muslim Scholars

Sheikh Mahdi Abdul-Hamid Mustafa
Director of Information, Al-Azhar
Member of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs

The World Health Organization has played a constructive role in the service of humanity since its inception in 1948. Its message is based on promoting man's happiness and welfare. People may have ready access to the components and pleasures of life but cannot enjoy any of these unless they are in good health and enjoy well-being. Enjoyment of the highest standard of health is the Organization's ultimate target, not just by a few countries, but aiming at the attainment of health for all by the year 2000.

While working hard to achieve this objective the Organization does not discriminate between one people and another on account of race, religion, political ideology, or economic and social conditions. On the contrary, it tries to fairly distribute its resources and health potentialities among all the peoples of the world so that every individual may enjoy the benefits of health care in the framework of full participation on the part of the community.

The Organization pays due attention to primary health care and considers it the key to the achievement of its objective of health for all, with the components of primary health care being as follows:

1. Health education, with emphasis on prevailing health problems and means of prevention and control.
2. Improving methods of food supply and providing a well-balanced diet.
3. Providing adequate potable water supply and sanitation.
4. Maternal and child health care.
5. Immunization against communicable diseases.
6. Prevention and control of endemic diseases.
7. Proper management of common diseases and accidents.
8. Provision of essential drugs.

The World Health Organization shoulders this responsibility as part of its mandate in directing and coordinating international health efforts and securing fruitful technical cooperation, as well as promoting scientific research.

Among the major problems which the World Health Organization has been trying to manage and overcome is that of smoking. The pressing nature of the problem lies in the fact that smoking resembles an epidemic which is spreading throughout the world despite its health, economic and social hazards.

A committee of experts set up by the Organization in Geneva to deal with smoking and its effects on health, held its first round of discussion September 9-14, 1974. On that occasion the committee examined medical reports and health studies relating to smoking and its hazards and drafted the necessary recommendations dealing with this epidemic. The committee also drew up strategies to be followed in combating smoking throughout the world and in the developing nations in particular.

The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), one of six regional offices affiliated to the Organization, made an independent study of its own supplementing the reports prepared by the Expert Committee. EMRO asked a number of internationally recognized Egyptian physicians to help with its humanitarian mission by explaining to the public the serious hazards involved in smoking, which include cancer, coronary thrombosis, chest diseases and other killer diseases.

Recognizing the importance of the role played by religious teachings in the moulding of people's attitudes, EMRO approached a number of eminent Muslim scholars, inviting them to spell out the religious attitude and the ruling of Islam with regard to smoking. EMRO has done the right thing and acted in a sound educational manner by taking this step, which could prove quite effective in combating smoking and rooting it out.

After this introductory statement we move on to present the views of this group of elite religious scholars hoping that these efforts will be crowned with success.

The smoking phenomenon: when did it start? how did it spread?

It is likely that the people of Mexico were the first to know about tobacco over 2500 years ago. When Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492 he found that tobacco smoking was quite common among the natives.

A Spanish explorer brought the tobacco plant with him on his way back from Mexico to Spain in the region of King Philip II. Tobacco seeds were introduced in France by Jan Nicout, the French Ambassador in Portugal. Towards the end of the sixteenth century smoking became quite common all over Europe.

It was through Europe that Africans and Asians came to know about tobacco. A Jew carried it to Morocco and other Arab neighbouring countries towards the end of the tenth century after hira (16th century AD), while a Christian took it all the way from England to Turkey. It reached Egypt, the Hijaz, and other countries from central Africa through some Magi.

The stand on smoke and smoking in the old world

Many Europeans resisted the new smoking phenomenon coming all the way from America. They adopted various approaches in expressing their hostile reaction to the transfer of tobacco seeds to their countries. Some took a firm stand on the issue. Religious leaders preached against it. They wrote a treatise on it entitled. The dry intoxicants. James I of England was the author of a book on the health hazards involved in smoking. In Russia penalties were imposed on smokers and those trading in tobacco. As a penalty a smoker would have his nose broken or else he would be banished to Siberia. Several other countries enacted, in the 17th century, certain laws prohibiting the use of tobacco.

In the Muslim world the hostility to smoking was much severer. We are told by Hussein Mujib al-Misri in his book, Farissiyat wa Turkiyyat, that the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV persecuted smokers and arranged for his men to infiltrate their ranks and spy on their private meetings. By his orders, smokers were sentenced to death. During his war against Persia he would put smokers to death, whether they were soldiers from his own army or enemy prisoners. The punishment of a smoker during the reign of Shah Abbas I (1629) was to have his nose pierced and a stick placed through the hole. His son, Shah Safiyy went a step further and ordered that molten lead be poured into smokers' mouths.

The opinions of former scholars on smoking

At the time the divine Message of Islam was revealed, and for many generations to follow, neither Arabs nor any other Muslims had any contact with tobacco. It was only towards the end of the 10th or early in the 11th

century after *hijra* (late 16th and early 17th century) that they had their first encounter with smoking. This fact explains why no conclusive ruling on smoking was made at the time and no direct divine ruling on smoking was ever revealed. Those experts of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) who were contemporaries of the smoking phenomenon tried their best to derive from religious provisions some kind of ruling on smoking, but their task was not easy. In the absence of direct and clear-cut religious provisions classifying smoking under one of the five verdicts of Islamic law (inevitability, impermissibility, abominability, recommendability, and permissibility) it is quit understandable that the jurists were of diverse opinion with regard to smoking. Some of them ruled that smoking was *haram*; others were of the opinion that it was abominable; a third group judged it to be permissible; a fourth group did not wish to give a ruling one way or the other on account of the fact that physical and financial hazards and effects of smoking differ from one person to another.

There are jurists from different schools of jurisprudence who ruled that smoking was impermissible or strongly abominable, namely:

Shirniablali, Ismail Al-Nabulsi, Al-Massiri, Al-Imadi, Muhammad Alaa-uddin Al-Hussqafi, Rajab ibn Ahmad, Muhammad ibn Al-Siddiq Al-Zubaidi, Muhammad ibn Saadeddeen, Muhammad Abdul-Azim Al-Makki, Muhammad Abdul Baqi Al-Makki, Muhammad Al-Sindi, Muhammad Al-Aini, Abul-Hassan Al-Misri, of the Hanafi School; Shihabu Al-Din Al-Qalyoubi, Al-Najm Al-Ghozzi Suleiman Al-Bujairami, Umar ibn Abdurrahman Al-Hussaini, Ibrahim Jama'an Aamir, of the Shafie School; Ibrahim Al-Laqqani, Salim Al-Sinnawri, Khalid Al-Sweidi, Muhammad ibn Fathallah ibn Ali Al-Maghribi, Abu Ghaith Al-Quashash Al-Maghribi, Khalid ibn Muhammad Abdullah Al-Jaafari, of the Maliki School; and Mustafa Al-Ruhaibani, Muhammad Al-Hanbali, Mansour Al-Bahooti, Ahmad Al-Sanhoori; Abdullah ibn Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdel Wahhab, of the Hanbali School.

Similar opinions and *fatwa* by contemporary jurists

Rulings in line with the opinions of those jurists have been made by contemporary scholars. One such ruling was made by the Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee and published by the Islamic Sufist Magazine in its issue of Muharam 1405 AH (October 1984). It reads in part: "Smoking is detrimental

to health as has been proved by knowledgeable people, specialists and international medical colloquia. It causes cancer of the lungs and the pharynx as well as artery disease. It is equally harmful from the financial point of view, as money spent on smoking is lost for no return. A meeting on toxicants and narcotics held in Medina, Saudi Arabia, 22-25 March 1982 ruled that using, growing and trading in tobacco are impermissible”.

A ruling made in this connection by the former Grand Mufti in Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Aal Al-Sheikh exposes the unsavoury nature of smoking and declares that “it is devitalizing and sometimes has an intoxicating effect”. In the same emphatic manner he declares that “smoking is impermissible on the basis of authentic quotations, sound judgment, and the opinions of reputable physicians”.

Arguments in support of impermissibility or strong abominability

Jurists who consider smoking impermissible and those who hold it to be strongly abominable base their stand on certain proofs of which the following are of special significance:

- Reputable physicians and medical researchers are convinced that smoking is harmful, and anything harmful is impermissible.
- It is devitalizing too. The Prophet ﷺ is quoted by Umm Salama to have forbidden every intoxicant and devitalizer.
- The unpleasant smell of smoke annoys not only nonsmokers but the honoured angels as well. Islam forbids annoying others by offensive smells. The Messenger of God says: “Let him keep away from us; let him keep away from our mosque; let him stay home; he whose breath reeks of garlic or onion”. The smell of smoke is not less offensive than that of garlic or onion. That the angels should not be annoyed by human beings is manifest in the following saying by the Prophet ﷺ “The angels are annoyed by the same things that annoy human beings”:
- The Prophet ﷺ speaks forcibly against causing annoyance to other Muslims: “The one who annoys a Muslim is annoying me; and the one who annoys me annoys God”.
- It is quite clear, that money spent on smoking is squandered. Far from helping to achieve any good, such spending causes definite harm. Squander is forbidden by the *sharia*.

- God tells us that the Prophet ﷺ *Allows them (His followers) as lawful what is good and pure and prohibits them from what is bad and impure (7:157)*. Undoubtedly, smoking is impure.
- God enjoins people not to kill themselves (4:29) and not to make their hands contribute to their own destruction (2:195). Smoking is a means of self-destruction.
- A saying of the Prophet ﷺ enjoins: “Cause harm neither to yourself nor to others”. Since smoking is at the root of much harm, it is *haram*.

Pro-smoking opinions examined

It is obvious that the jurists who ruled that smoking was permissible did so prior to the recent discovery by modern medical research of the many health hazards posed by smoking. Those hazards, far from being negligible, are fatal, destructive and incurable. In the circumstances, taking a soft line on smoking might have been justifiable. Not so now with all the incriminating evidence that we have at our disposal. In other words, arguments for permissibility are no longer valid. As the harm caused by smoking has been firmly established through evidence and experience, the ruling must be anything but permissibility.

The group of Muslim scholars polled by the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean were almost unanimous in declaring that smoking was impermissible or at least strongly abominable. Before passing their judgement, EMRO had placed at their disposal all the scientific medical evidence reached by distinguished specialists and scientific authorities on the subject.

Smoking hazards as documented by medical experts

Dr Abdul Aziz Samy, professor of chest diseases and former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Cairo University, says that the medical evidence against smoking is overwhelming and that any lingering doubts as to the serious nature of the health hazards associated with smoking are no longer justified. He explains those hazards as follows:

Available data indicate that the number of smokers who die before they have reached the age of 65 is twice that of nonsmokers; that for every

nonsmoker who stays away from work there are three smokers; that the incidence of lung cancer is 70 to 90 times greater among smokers than nonsmokers and that the incidence of acute bronchitis among smokers is six times more than among nonsmokers. Moreover, smoking is closely associated with early death of patients with cardiac diseases. It is equally related to peptic ulcers and diseases of the peripheral blood circulation. A woman smoker reaches menopause much earlier than a nonsmoker. Furthermore, there is a higher risk of stillbirth, birth defects and premature birth. Those who come into close contact with a smoker are exposed to health hazards similar to those faced by the smoker himself, especially if they meet in places which lack proper ventilation. The quantity of smoke which the nonsmoker is forced to inhale in this manner in one hour's time may be equivalent to the actual smoking of one cigarette.

Professor Ismail al-Sebai, member of the Board of Directors of the World Cancer Federation, has the following to say about the topic under discussion:

The diseases associated with smoking are considered to be the most serious cause of death known so far. Diseases of the blood vessels, the heart and the brain cause 50% of all deaths in any developed country, while cancer is responsible for 30%. Smoking is a major factor in these diseases as well as numerous other diseases and physical disorders which could lead to death, such as the diseases of the lungs.

Professor Sherif Omar, professor of cancer surgery, Cairo University, says that:

Smoking has definite bad effects on health. It causes cancer and heart diseases as well as other kinds of disease. The following are some of the diseases which are associated with smoking: cancer of the lungs, cancer of the pharynx, cancer of the mouth, cancer of the oesophagus, cancer of the urinary bladder, cancer of the kidneys, cancer of the pancreas, diseases of the heart and blood vessels, such as blood clotting and mitral and aortal arteriosclerosis, and lung disease.

In the case of women, smoking can stunt the growth of unborn children, lead to a drop in their weight, and expose them to physical defects and deformities. The mortality rate among unborn children is 28% higher in the case of smoking mothers than it is in the case of nonsmokers. Likewise smoking speeds up the onset of the menopause.

The fetus is directly affected by smoking. The ill effects of smoking are transferred from the mother's blood to her unborn child through the umbilical cord and may last after birth until the child is eleven years old.

The opinions expressed by Professor Sherif Omar were endorsed by Professor Ismail al-Sebai as well as by Professor Abdul Basit Al-Asar, Head of the Department of Cancer Biology, the National Institute for Cancer.

Dr Mahmoud Muhammad Al-Marzabany, Professor of Chemopharmacology and Experimental Cancer Therapy at the National Institute for Cancer, Cairo University, says:

It has been proved beyond any doubt that smoking causes numerous diseases of which the most serious are diseases of the respiratory tract, heart diseases and arteriosclerosis. It is a major factor in the development of lung cancer as well as cancer of the oesophagus, pancreas and the urinary bladder. Smoking hazards also affect nonsmokers who are forced to inhale smoke as a result of living or working with smokers.

Professor Muhammad Ali Al-Barr, member of the Royal College of Physicians, says that "Smoking hazards are not to be denied. It is far more dangerous to health than the plague, cholera, smallpox, tuberculosis and leprosy combined".

Elaborating on the health hazards posed by smoking, Professor Al-Barr says:

Millions of people die each year as a result of their addiction to smoking. Tens of millions more contract serious diseases that make their lives a continuous chain of unrelieved suffering and misery—all because of smoking.

Professor Al-Barr gives a detailed list of the diseases which afflict smokers more than any other group of the population. The list runs as follows:

Respiratory tract diseases

Cancer of the lung and the larynx, chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Heart and circulatory system diseases

Cardiac thrombosis, fatal heart attack, blood vessel clotting resulting in paralysis, and disorders and clotting of the peripheral blood circulation.

Digestive system diseases

Cancer of the lips, mouth, pharynx and oesophagus as well as peptic ulcers and cancer of the pancreas.

Urinary tract diseases

Benign and malignant tumours of the urinary bladder and cancer of the kidneys.

Pregnancy and childhood diseases

Recurring miscarriages, high incidence of low birth weight and high perinatal mortality rates, increase of stillbirths, and higher incidence of infant bronchitis.

Rare diseases

Inflammation of the optic nerve, blindness, aggravation of allergic diseases, such as asthma urticaria and skin inflammation, as well as diseases of the nose, ear and throat. This is in addition to the aggravation of hypertension and diabetes, a rise in the level of the cholesterol, and excessive obesity.

Dr Al-Barr goes on to state that 95% of all patients suffering from leg arterial diseases are smokers and only 5% are nonsmokers. "Thus the disease is one that almost exclusively attacks nonsmokers. It has also been ascertained that smokers run ten times the risk of developing cancer of the mouth, the oesophagus, the pharynx, and the larynx as nonsmokers. Likewise smoking takes a heavier death toll than all the infections diseases combined. One smoker in three is destined to lose his life as a result of smoking.

Ruling by contemporary Muslim jurists in the light of the views of physicians and reports of research experts

As we have already mentioned, the World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office placed at the disposal of the group of eminent scholars whom it polled in connection with smoking all the available medical reports and studies prepared by specialists and distinguished physicians on the question of smoking. By so doing the Office was trying to spare these distinguished scholars the difficulty of having to pass judgement on a particular matter without being fully equipped with the necessary information as to its drawbacks and hazards. Thus these eminent scholars had the good fortune of having access to information and scientific evidence which other

religious scholars did not have. They were able to acquaint themselves with the real damage caused by smoking, and the hazards associated with the use of tobacco. Basing their judgement on established facts, strong arguments and undisputable findings, they were in agreement that smoking was *haram* or at least strongly abominable. If jurists in former times were of a different view it was because they did not have at their disposal the same emphatic evidence. As their conception of smoking hazards was based on mere assumption rather than established truth their ruling was of a similar nature to their assumptions.

The group of eminent scholars who were of the opinion that smoking is *haram* based their verdict on the following evidence:

1. Smoking is associated with serious health hazards which can lead to destruction. Under Islam people are forbidden to destroy themselves, for God says: Kill not yourselves for verily God has been to you Most Merciful (4:29).

Also the Prophet ﷺ says: “Do not harm yourselves or others”.

2. Smoking involves a large measure of extravagance and waste. Such things are forbidden under Islam, for God says: *But do not be extravagant, for God does not love the extravagant* (6:141, 7:31).
3. Another Quranic verse enjoins: *But squander not your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily squanderers are Satan’s brothers* (17:27).

The Prophet ﷺ says: God prohibits you from showing disobedience towards your mothers and burying your daughters alive. Likewise He hates to see you involved in malicious gossip, in asking too many inquisitive questions, and in money wasting. Moreover the Prophet tells us that we will be asked on the Day of Judgment how we earned our money and in what ways we spent it.

The offensive odour associated with smoking justifies the classification of smoking as one of the evils. The stand which religion takes on all forms of evil is well explained in the following verse from the Quran: *Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they shall find in their scripture—in the Torah and the Gospel—who will enjoin righteousness upon them and forbid them to do evil* (7:157).

Our Lord! Do not be angry with us if we forget or fall into error.

SERMON
DELIVERED IN ALL MOSQUES
IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
ON FRIDAY 11 JUNE 1999

**Sermon delivered in all mosques
in the United Arab Emirates
on Friday 11 June 1999**

Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

God commands us in the Quran: *Do not kill yourselves; God is ever most merciful to you.* (4:29) This is an order to refrain from killing ourselves. It is indeed a horrible action that a human being should kill himself, or do something that brings his own ruin. There is no doubt that persistent smoking leads to such ruin in addition to its being a total waste of money. Life is a trust God has assigned to us, and money is a blessing He has given us. Every human being will have to account for both on the Day of Judgement. Everyone will be asked about their money; how it was earned and how it was spent. How he or she spent their lives, particularly the years of their youth. This has been clearly pointed out by the Prophet.

Studies have clearly shown that tobacco smoking causes no fewer than 25 serious and life-threatening diseases. Most of these are easy to prevent, delay or moderate by quitting the habit of smoking, a most destructive and wasteful habit indeed. Chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, are now among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in many developing countries.

It is estimated that the number of smokers in the world today is in excess of 1.1 billion people. If only a small portion of them would quit, substantial, long-term gains will be made in both health and wealth. It is a duty of all believers to preserve and protect the blessings God has bestowed on them, one of the most important of which is health. Another duty incumbent on all believers is to try hard to fulfil what preserves life, promotes health and prevents disease. It is a grave sin to omit to do that. Whoever happens to be guilty of that should hasten to make clear their repentance. No action a person does is more detrimental to health than smoking. A smoker actually pollutes his body with black, poisonous chemicals that accumulate in the lungs and breast, adversely affecting all body organs, until they leave him weak, unable to attend to his own needs or those of his family and community.

Brothers and sisters,

Just like health and money are blessings from God, so are children. They are a gift from God to parents who must, in return, protect children so that they prove themselves to be true to their trust. Only when they take good care of their children do parents truly express their gratitude to God for this blessing. Nevertheless, some parents pay no heed to their duty and, instead, inflict harm on their children by smoking tobacco when children are around. Bad as their action is, such parents are totally oblivious to the serious effects of their smoking on their children. In fact they provide a very bad example for their children to follow, encouraging them to start a very harmful habit that remains with them for life. Indeed such parents shoulder responsibility for their own offence as well as that of their children.

Parents who so encourage their children to take up the foul habit of smoking should hasten to quit their habit and to declare their repentance of having themselves committed this sinful action and seriously endangered the health of their children. They must take particular care of their children so as to steer them away from falling victim to this serious epidemic. Parents should know that the risk to which they expose their children is serious indeed, and its effects are far-reaching. They should also know that they will be accountable for this to God on the Day of Resurrection, when such accountability could turn into sorrowful humiliation. That is a day when nothing could avail a person except good intention and a pure heart: *[On that day] neither wealth nor sons will avail [anyone], but only he [will prosper] who turns up before God with a sound heart. (26:88-89) Mankind, remain conscious of God and fear a Day when no parent can avail anything for a child, nor a child avail anything for a parent. Indeed, God's promise is true. (31:33)*

God's messenger says: God will certainly question every shepherd about his trust, and whether he has protected that trust or allowed it to waste. God has entrusted us all with wealth and children. He is certain to hold us accountable for our trust. It is important, therefore, that we should not spend our money on matters that have no value or usefulness for us, such as tobacco, intoxicants and other forbidden stuff. We must all realize that our responsibility for our children is great and our accountability on the Day of Judgement is serious indeed. To be careless of one's children represents a grave sin. Let us remember the Prophet's saying: "It is sufficient of a sin for anyone to be negligent of those in his care".

Moreover, the Prophet said: “...God dislikes idle talk, unending questions and wasting money”. God also wants Muslims and all mankind to use money and wealth only in what is useful. To refrain from smoking and to quit the habit of smoking is equivalent to repelling aggression and sparing oneself and others unnecessary harm. As the Prophet said: “There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others”.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is smoking hazardous to health?

A: The unanimous answers is 'yes'.

- In 1962, the British Royal College of Physicians established a link between smoking and bad health.
- In 1970, A senior medical consultant in the United States of America gave strong health warnings that "smoking is harmful to health".
- In 1978, World Health Organization experts announced that "smoking is a major cause of ill-health and premature death; but this is avoidable by giving up smoking or not smoking at all".

Q: What are the harmful substances to be found in tobacco?

A: The most well-known and most dangerous substances are: carbon monoxide, nicotine and tar.

Q: What harm do these substances cause?

A: Carbon monoxide, also found in car exhaust fumes emitted into the air, reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen inside the human body.

Nicotine similar to cocaine and morphine, is addictive and makes the smoker dependent on tobacco. It aggravates blood pressure and heart beat, thereby increasing the load on the heart which is already weakened by a shortage of oxygen. The combination of carbon monoxide and nicotine leads to clotting of the blood in the arteries leading to the heart and the brain as well as in the blood vessels. This normally leads to the heart failure. Tar is a carcinogen which, together with other harmful substances found in tobacco, can cause lung cancer, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Q: Would cigarettes with a lower tar and nicotine content be less hazardous?

A: No. Smokers tend to make up for the reduction in these substances by smoking more and inhaling more smoke, thus taking in the same amount of these harmful substances.

Q: Are filter cigarettes harmless?

- A: No. Filters do not prevent carbon monoxide and other harmful substances passing through. Smokers of filter cigarettes run the same risk of heart attack and brain stroke as smokers of unfiltered cigarettes.
- Q: Do cigars and pipes carry a lower health risk?
- A: Cigars and pipes, in fact, have a higher tar and nicotine content than cigarettes. Moreover, smoke given out by cigars and pipes is more concentrated and therefore more dangerous to nonsmokers.
- Q: What is 'smoke-free' tobacco?
- A: It is tobacco that is not smoked but chewed or carried inside the mouth for long periods of time or sniffed. It is usually available in soft lumps, called snuff, cut into small pieces; as leaves for chewing; or as ground, dried snuff in powder form.
- Q: Is smoke-free tobacco a safe substitute for ordinary tobacco?
- A: No, despite claims to the contrary. It causes cancer of the mouth and tooth decay as it contains all the cancer-causing substances, including nicotine.
- Q: How many people die of smoking-related diseases every year?
- A: Around 4 million people die each year worldwide due to smoking-related diseases.
- Q: What is the death rate due to the various smoking-related diseases?
- A: 85% of all the deaths due to lung cancer, 75% of those due to chronic bronchitis and 25% of those due to other heart diseases are smoking-related.
- Q: What other risks are faced by mothers who smoke, in particular?
- A: Mothers who smoke and are taking oral contraceptives run 10 times the risk of heart attacks, brain strokes and clotting of the blood in the legs. Health risks are higher in mothers who smoke with high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol. Women who smoke reach menopause between one and three years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Q: What risks are faced by pregnant women who smoke and by their unborn babies?
- A: When a pregnant woman smokes, her baby also smokes. Carbon monoxide and nicotine are carried through the blood stream from the mother to the baby, leading to lower levels of oxygen intake and higher pulse rate. Such

babies run the risk of being born prematurely or underweight, and when they start walking may show signs of lack of coordination and general ill-health. In developing countries, these risks are even higher as mothers are likely to come from poorer families, to be anaemic and have a higher fertility rate.

Q: What is “passive smoking”?

A: Passive smoking is involuntary or forced smoking when nonsmokers have to breathe smoke-filled air. Nonsmokers, in this situation, find themselves forced to smoke against their will.

Q: How is this dangerous to non-smokers?

A: Tobacco smoke has certain chemical properties that cause irritation of the eyes, the nose and the throat to nonsmokers sitting with smokers in enclosed areas, such as offices, homes and public places. This is more than just a minor inconvenience, it is a real health hazard. It has also been shown that the incidence rate of lung cancer for women whose husbands smoke is higher than that for women whose husbands do not.

In 1985, for the first time, a court in Sweden decided that the “most likely” cause of the death of a nonsmoker from lung cancer was smoking by his office colleagues with whom he had shared the same office. It ruled that his death was work-related and granted compensation to his family.

Q: What are the benefits to be gained from giving up smoking?

A: Getting rid of bad breath and foul smells which stick to hair, clothes and curtains; getting rid of staining of teeth and fingers; eliminating the risk of fire to homes, table cloths, furniture, mattresses, carpets, and sofas; not having to apologise for smoking and being rid of a very costly addictive habit.