

SMOKING

Definition

Smoking refers to the action of lighting a cigarette, a pipe, a cigar, a water pipe, or any other object made from tobacco or materials of similar effects. The object is then sucked on with the lips to extract smoke. This smoke is inhaled into the chest and then exhaled from the nose and mouth as a thick white smoke. "Smoking" is now used to refer to the action of producing this smoke in English, Arabic, and other languages.

Smoking among Muslims

Smoking was introduced to the Muslim countries by the Europeans around 1000 AH. Its spread among the Muslims was similar to that in the West. The unfortunate fact, however, is that in the Muslim countries, no similar measures were exerted to protect the people from it. To the contrary, the media continues to promote smoking and encourage people to do it. This caused the epidemic of smoking to continue to spread in those countries to such an extent that it has become hard to control.

Smoking has become the rule, and abstaining from it the exception. Often, people look with astonishment and disdain at a person who when a cigarette is offered to him, declines to smoke explaining that he does not smoke.

Offering cigarettes to the guests has become among the first rules of hospitality. Anyone who does not offer them to his guests or insist on them to smoke would be violating the ethics of hospitality and generosity!

Furthermore, some of those who pretend to represent the Deen are among the worst addicts to smoking. When they are reproached or reminded of their vice, they respond by providing weak excuses to justify it in the name of Islaam. They slyly remark that there is no clear text prohibiting smoking. Therefore, they conclude, smoking is not prohibited, but is only makruh (disliked). By this, they provide a poor excuse for the ignorant, and establish a very bad example for others.

Many Muslims have been influenced by such statements, falling into the snares of addiction to smoking. This is observed all over the world. A striking example is that all American airlines now prohibit smoking, even on most international flights; on the other hand, for Muslim airlines, one travels in a near-suffocation state, even on short trips, because of the high number of smokers.

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

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

1) Rely on Allah sincerely, with full determination not to return to smoking, in compliance with Allah's command:

"When you decide on a certain course of action, place your trust in Allah."

- 2) Stop immediately instead of claiming it is best to do it gradually. The gradual approach is the way of one who does not trust his determination and the will power that Allah has granted him. Let the example be taken from the Sahabah who, as soon as Allah's command reached them regarding alcohols they immediately poured out all the alcohol that they had and said, "We desist our Lord, we desist!" They did this despite the fact that alcohol has a greater addictive power over those who drink it.
- 3) Avoid the bad company of smokers and smoking environments that are full with the smell of smoke.
- 4) Change the food diet by abstaining from foods and drinks that would entice the craving to smoke such as spices, meat, tea, and coffee; and eating a lot of vegetables and fruits.
- 5) Use medically tested and established procedures to help stop smoking, as directed by physicians, such as nicotine patches, nicotine gum, etc.
- 6) Expel the secret whispers of Satan who continuously dictates to the human being that he is weak and incapable of refraining from sinning, as Allah (T) says (what means)

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

Scholars' Verdict

Since smoking became known to Muslims, all of the great scholars who have the capability of Ijtihad (deriving verdicts in new situations) agree to its prohibition. Thus, there is no value for baseless opinions, conflicting with this, provided by self-proclaimed lesser scholars.