

## **Use of Tobacco in the Light of Shariah**

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**Abstract:** *The foundation of Tibb al Nabavi or Tibb al Islami has placed great emphasis on preventative measures relating to lifestyle incorporating the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of a human being. All classical references of Tibb al Nabavi attribute the onset of illnesses to the disturbance of one's health. This paper aims to shed light on ancient texts of Tibb al Nabavi and its practical application for the promotion of good health and prevention of diseases. Therefore, it forces us to write an article which provides clear evidence concerning the ruling on the use of Tobacco in Islam. We hope that this will benefit our Muslim brothers and sisters, and we ask Allah to accept it from us as a sincere deed for His pleasure. Role of media is evil in the promotion of tobacco uses, like other evils. Just for money, media owners continue their advertisement and encourage people to use Tobacco. This has caused the epidemic of smoking to continue and spread in underdeveloped countries to such an extent that it has become tough to control it. Smoking has become a custom and cause of several diseases. Even in the crowded public places, it is difficult not only to sit but also to stand, and it is torture, just by having smoker around. Passive smoking is much dangerous, as it means inhaling other people's Tobacco smoke. This not only produces headache, irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, but is also harmful on the equal level of active smoking.*

### **1. Discovery & uses of Tobacco:**

A learned scholar Muhammad al Jibaly has discussed how Tobacco was introduced, in his paper: [1]

*"Tobacco was discovered by the Spanish sailors on the American shores, about 1500 CE (900 AH). Since its invention, the epidemic of smoking has continued to spread all over the world. In our times, one seldom finds a house not afflicted by it. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the European countries realized the dangers of smoking and fought against it. Laws were designed in England, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, and other countries, prohibiting smoking and punishing violators. Nowadays, Western countries continue their attempts to protect their people from the harms of smoking. They employ many strategies such as media campaigns, ordain laws and regulations, and apply other methods to discourage people from smoking. Because of that, the rate of smokers has declined to a certain degree in those countries. 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”.

## **2. Injunctions of the Qur'an & the Sunnah:**

A damned thing like Tobacco is being used blindly, following the trends of western societies. Islam, the religion of peace, confers the lasting benefits to its followers. To save Humankind from the poison of Lucifer, Allah has bestowed the Shariah. The foundation of Shariah is upon the Fitr'ah. Shariah has clarified what is Halal and what is Har'am. Anything harmful which in any way is injurious, either physically or spiritually, has explicitly been declared as Har'am. How is it then possible that there would not be clear injunction for a thing like Tobacco which is severely harmful to human health? Tobacco users, justify their consumption by arguing that there is no clear injunction regarding Tobacco in the Qur'an. This lame excuse is not only an admission of ignorance with relation to Qur'an but also a declaration of revolt against this Comprehensive Code of Life. Today people offer a cigarette to their guests like food and beverages, and it has become a sign of hospitality. Some among those who teach and preach religion are the worst addicts of smoking, and they argue that it is not Har'am but Makruh (disliked). This is nothing but an argument void of sound logic and reasonable intellect.

Guidance from the Qur'an: [2]

“Each wet and dry thing is available in the Kit'ab.”

How is it possible that while science explains the side effects and harms of Tobacco, Shariah remains silent on the issue? Creator has declared Har'am the use of everything that is harmful to the health of Humankind. It is mentioned in Qur'an as follows: [3]

“For them (people) pious things have been made Halal and impious things declared Har'am.”

Therefore according to Islam, no impious thing till the advent of Qiyamat can be treated Halal. Tobacco involves the consumption of Khabisth, an evil substance. It has a foul smell, unpleasant taste, and is harmful to the body. This is sufficient to forbid it because Rasulullah (S) says: [4]

“Who will enjoin upon them the doing of what is right, forbid them the doing of what is wrong, make lawful to them the good things of life, prohibit for them the evil things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were (previously) upon them.”

This Hadith should draw the attention of those, who try to find a lame justification for the use of Tobacco. Rasulullah (S) bestowed the following principles on which we can examine what is Halal or Har'am: [5]

“Even a small quantity of that thing is also Har'am which produces severe intoxication.”

Another Hadith says: [6]

“Every intoxicating thing is Har'am and if it's excess use causes intoxication, its use even in a small quantity is Har'am.”

One more Hadith says: [7]

“All those things are Har'am which intoxicates.”

According to the Hadith Literature, Rasulullah (S) has clarified Khamar as Har'am. The word Khamar means not only alcoholic drinks but every intoxicating thing is included in the definition of Khamar, which is Har'am. This clarification is enough evidence for the class that wishes to understand. Mufti Abd al Rahman Muhaddis Mubarakpuri says: [8]

*"If anybody doubts that whether Tobacco is harmful or not, he may see what happens by eating Tobacco even equal to one fourth the quantity of a Dirham."*

*Those using Tobacco are habituated to it and continue to make an increase in its doze day by day, eventually affected seriously by it. Air and water are the two most important sources of survival, which should be immune from every kind of impurity and filth. This Hadith clears the matter, Rasulallah (S) asks:*[\[9\]](#)

*"Which companion is better out of two? The one from whom you get anything good or the one who harm you anyway?"*

*A virtuous companion is one who is a source of benefit, and he is like a trader of fragrance from whom you would enjoy pleasant smell freely. The other companion is like a blacksmith. If you sit with him at his place of job, you will gain nothing except hot air, heat, and soot. The example of a tobacco user is like the second person that provides you with nothing but the bad smell, sense of heat, and possible chances of catching fire-ashes. The second alarming point is the use of Tobacco is an open Is'raf against which Qur'an warns:* [\[10\]](#)

*"And do not waste (your resources) extravagantly. Indeed the squanderers are the brethren of the devils".*

*Rasulallah (S) said:* [\[11\]](#)

*"Allah hates for you three things: gossips, begging, and wasting money."*

*Smoking is veritably not only Is'raf, but it is Har'am and wastage of money. Rasulallah (S) says:* [\[12\]](#)

*"Allah dislikes three things in His creatures the most:*

- (1) To talk about Religious matters undeservedly.*
- (2) Wastage of money and property.*
- (3) Questioning frequently without any aim or objective".*

*Smoking is really Is'raf and wastage of money and to argue as a justification of its use is equivalent to irrelevant talk. Qur'an says:* [\[13\]](#)

*"Do not indulge in Is'raf. The Musrifeen (wasteful) are brothers of Shait'an".*

*In another Ayat, Qur'an guides:* [\[14\]](#)

*"Eat and drink, but do not be extravagant because Allah does not like the extravagant."*

*Furthermore, there are numerous cases of burnt carpets, furniture, and even complete houses and establishments that have resulted from this disastrous vice. Az'ab would inevitably fall on its user. It is essential, to prevent its users from entering Masjid because it's terrible odor is even worse than that of onion and garlic, whose users had been expelled from the Masjid by order of Rasulallah (S). A Hadith says:* [\[15\]](#)

*"One who believes in Allah and the Qiyamah should not cause any discomfort to those around him."*

*A Hadith says:* [\[16\]](#)

*"La Zararin Wala Zirarin" – Do not harm anybody nor let anyone harm you.*

*By smoking, not only the nearest and dearest are inconvenienced, but all people who come in touch are also discomforted. Unfortunately, non-smokers also inhale the smoke emitted by smokers. Is this not causing distress? Can those sitting beside a smoker remain safe from their dirty smoke? Rasulallah (S) says:* [\[17\]](#)

*"Jahannam is the abode of one who harms others on account of his desire."*

Smokers blow out smoke hither and thither and cause inconvenience and discomfort to others, unethically, they do not feel ashamed. Tibrani has quoted a Hadith on the authority of Sayedna Jabir bin Abdullah al Ansari (ra): [18]

“He who caused inconvenience to any Muslim, he caused inconvenience to me, and the one who inconvenience to me, has inconvenienced Allah and Jahannam is his abode.”

Who can deny that Tobacco isn't harmful to health? Who can say that its smoke does not cause inconvenience to others? Even smokers are well aware of the detrimental effects of this damned thing.

### **3. Lame Excuses by Addicts:**

Smoking is a precarious habit in which every class of society is indulging and blindly following the West. It is a matter of great sorrow that women are also addicted to this curse.

Rasulullah (S) says: [19]

“When you indulge in sins, conceal them.”

Smoking is not a sign of cultured but is an open sin, which destroys both the health as well as wealth. They are ideals for wicked not for good. The Qur'an guides us in this matter very clearly as follows: [20]

“For you, the Uswat (lifestyle) of Rasulallah is the best example.”

Smokers say that they have become addicted to smoking and cannot live without it. However, smokers remain quite normal during Ramadan, then why cannot they live without it? Nobody will die without smoking, but will, with the use of Tobacco. It is disclosed in the “New England Journal of Medicine” that Tobacco users have a three times higher risk of paralysis. According to the report of medical Journal, Doctors closely monitored seven thousand, eight hundred, and seventy-two people in person, who totally avoided the use of Tobacco, the risk factor of paralysis automatically reduced by fifty percent. One should know how to control themselves by suppressing one's desires. The seekers of “Peace” through cursed Tobacco, in grief, worry; anxiety, fatigue, and illness should instead turn to Allah and seek His help. In sha Allah, they would be blessed with Tawfiq. The principles of Islam are not confined to time or location, community, or vicinity, but its benefits are for all to come. The laws of Shariah cannot be changed, neither be reformed as Agents of Lucifer demand again and again. Qur'an guides on this point and says: [21]

“You would never find any change in Sunnatullah (divine strategy).”

Tobacco is such a cursed fire which burns not only the smokers but also kills slowly all those who are near. Smoking and eating Tobacco is an attempt of suicide, so it also leads to the burning fire of Jahannam. The Qur'an says: [22]

“Do not destroy yourselves by your own hands.”

Another Ayat says: [23]

“And do not kill yourselves; Allah is indeed Merciful to you.”

### **4. Conversion of minor sins into major:**

Those who do not consider smoking as a sin, are in fact people of less understanding, because if one persists in a minor sin, then the minor sin transforms itself into a major sin. Smokers are parallel to the inhabitants of the Jahannam, who eat toxic dirty plants: No food will be there for them but a poisonous plant, which will neither nourish them nor remove their hunger. Rasulallah (S) says: [24]

“There are five grounds for converting a minor sin into a major sin.

(1) Persistence in committing a minor sin converts it into a major sin.

- (2) *Minimization of the gravity of a minor sin converts it into a major sin.*
- (3) *Shamelessness over committing a sin converts a minor sin into a major one.*
- (4) *Boasting of committing a minor sin among the public converts it into a major one.*
- (5) *The committing of a minor sin by the learned converts it into a major”.*

*These are the reasons which convert a minor sin into a major one. Minimizing the gravity of a minor sin is a wicked act and not taking any heed of it is like burning straws, which are burnt before setting fire to bigger piles of wood so that they catch fire from them. Persistence in extravagance and evil acts, and committing sins openly among people with fanfare and enthusiasm is a cause of divine punishment. To wage war against every evil is a Talim of Islam. To do Jih’ad for this cause is the duty of every Muslim. The lowest form of Jih’ad is, one should express hatred against an evil act openly if he/she is unable to stop it. If one is unable to stop a heinous act, he should express hatred against it. From these examples, it must be quite clear that Tobacco is Har’am. It is not enough for the government to mention on cigarette boxes that "Smoking is injurious to Health." It is also incumbent on the government, religiously, legally and ethically, to prohibit the advertisements through all effective means of media and communication. If the exploiters (manufactures, distributors, and shopkeepers) stop this dirty business, society may move towards a healthy condition.*

#### **5. Curse of Tobacco:**

*A smoker emits his poisons in the face of his companions, wife, children, and the environment. It is a well-established fact that passive smoking is as dangerous as active smoking. Thus, whether one likes it or not, a smoker's associate is forced to inhale the smoke and indirectly become a smoker as well. In addition to the poisons typically carried in the smoke, if a smoker has a contagious disease, such as tuberculosis or influenza, his exhaled smoke and coughing brings the disease to those around him. Furthermore, a smoker irritates people by the foul smell and destructive nature of his smoking. If they suffer from asthma or allergies, they are forced to move away from the smoker's vicinity. A Hadith says: [25] "Anyone who believes in Allah and the Qiyamat should not hurt his neighbor." Thus, smoking constitutes a definite harm to other people; this is prohibited, it is a Right of all people to ask the smoker to stop smoking at public places or where people get together. There is no need to co-operate in this regard. The Qur’an guides: [26] "Co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not co-operate with one another in sinning and transgression. And fear Allah; verily, Allah is severe in punishment."*

#### **6. Health problems & cause of impotency:**

*Smoking is harmful to both the human mind and its ability to reason. A clear demonstration of this is that one who is addicted to it passes through periods of severe craving, making it hard for him to think, concentrate, solve a problem, or do any critical matter until he smokes. When one smokes, his muscles slacken, and he passes through a brief period of delirium that curtain his thought. His digestive system is also affected, causing him frequent nervousness and trembling of the hands. He passes through periods of excitability, irritation, and insomnia. Thus, instead of being a slave of Allah, a smoker becomes a slave to his desire, cigarette. He develops a weaker control of his sense and desires, while Qur’an says: [27]*



*“Allah wants to let you into His mercy, whereas those who follow the desires want you to drift far away (from the right path).”*

*An Indian expert of Tibb medicines, Hakim Sharif Khan (d. 1807) said: [28]*

*“Tobacco damages the senses and physical power, and it weakens the mind.”*

*As per Hindu Vaid, it weakens the body, slows the pace of breathtaking and impairs digestion. Tobacco gradually weakens the heart. Hakim Sharif Khan says: [29]*

*“One of the causes of impotency is due to the use of Tobacco and smoking besides general physical weakness, leads to a weak nervous system, cerebral debility and problems of liver and heart, it is also a major cause of impotency. Scientific Medical Research showed that smoking destroys sexual power; it is the main cause of impotency”.*

*According to the latest report of the Royal College of Physicians, the most significant cause of death among people is Cancer. The recorded cause of death among women firstly is breast Cancer and secondly is Lung Cancer, due to smoking. Smoking is a cause of barrenness in women. Smoking also brings menopause in women quite early. Chances of a failure in pregnancy are higher in women, who smoke. Smokers not only destroy their own health, but their habit is also a grave danger for the health of non-smokers. Healthy persons, who do not smoke, have to live in an unhealthy environment, where Tobacco smoke is spread, and the people who are over there also inhale the smoke. This state of smoking is called "Passive Smoking" because, in such circumstances, a person does inhale the smoke. This also causes Cancer, and diseases of the lungs and the heart.*

#### **7. Fatawa (Shariah rulings) on the prohibition of the use of Tobacco:**

*Following Fatawa are enough to explain the heinous value of Tobacco:*

**1).** *Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani has also waged war against Tobacco and smoking. He referred the matter of Tobacco to the Ayatullah al Uzma, Mirza Buzurg, Mirza Hasan Sherazi, in Samrah, Iraq. He issued an explicit Fatwa against Tobacco as follows: [30]*

*“From today the use of Tobacco in the form of Huqqah, Cigar, Cigarettes, and every other kind is a war against the Imam uz Zaman.”*

*Ayatullah Mirza Hasan Shirazi did his best to save the Muslim Ummah from the Lanat of Tobacco. He clearly said: [31]*

*“Tobacco is not only injurious for health, but it is Har’am.”*

**2).** *Fatwa of Imam of Kabah, Mufti Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz: [32]*

*“One who smokes or eats Tobacco commits a Har'am because it is included in vices.”*

**3).** *Fatwa of Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Karamuddin Salafi: [33]*

*“Tobacco produces intoxication; it is of bad smell and damages senses and intellect power. Its use is Har’am is proved by the Qur’an and the Sunnah and the research of physicians and common sense.”*

**4).** *Fatwa of Mufti Shaikh Ahmad Sanhori of Misar: [34]*

*“Tobacco is a Har' am practice”.*

**5).** *Fatwa of Mufti Shaikh Mustafa Hamami of Misar: [35]*

*“Tobacco is Har’am”.*

**6).** *Fatwa of Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmad Maliki: [36]*

*“It is not lawful to perform Salaat behind an Imam who utilizes Tobacco. When the harm of a Har’am thing has been proved, saying that its use is most common is no argument of making it Halal according to Shariah. In today's society, interest is very much common; every business is involved in it. Does this prove that interest is Halal ”?*

7). Mufti of the United Arab Emirates, Shaikh Saeed bin Khalifah al Kharusi, issued a Fatwa on Jumuah, the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1991: [37]  
"Smoking is Har'am in Islam."

8). This humble writer follows the Shariah ruling of Sayedi Abdulqadir Hakimuddin (1665-1730), a prince among the Awliya of Allah, at Burhanpur, India. Some three centuries ago he declared the usage of Tobacco Har'am: [38]

"Tobacco is an injurious and nasty plant of bad odor and bitter in taste. Eating, chewing, smoking, and smelling of Tobacco come under the category of Har'am, according to the principles of the Shariah. Therefore, its use even as Medicine is not Halal, because by affecting the brain, it greatly injures the nervous system".

9). It would be unjust to ignore the great efforts of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Al Dai al Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Mohammad Burhanuddin to eliminate the practice of the utilization of Tobacco in any form. Due to his efforts, thousands of people have left the habit of chewing or smoking Tobacco. War with weapons is easy, but through the pen and words is very difficult. It is the wish and will of the friends of Allah that they use every moment to bring people into the fold of Shariah. At every such step, pious people are needed to guide and show the way to the people as to how one should control one's mind and remain aloof from the evil acts. He further has drawn the attention of the Muslims through his sermons in different countries. He says: [39]

"People who are addicted should realize that the place from where we pronounce the name of Allah and His Rasul (S), we put a non-pious thing like Tobacco in it? Smoking leads far away from the path of righteousness. Therefore drawing attention towards this matter, all those persons who have been habituated to it, should try to leave it up as soon as possible. They should seek the help of Allah and pray for strength to abandon this habit".

10). It is a fact that in Pakistan, there is "Smoke-Free City." Yes! Hunza. In the northern area of Pakistan, where people neither sell cigarette nor use it. On the explicit instruction of their spiritual head, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, the natives of Hunza strictly follow the practice to eliminate the use of Tobacco. The "Order" and the "Obeying" make the valley an ideal place in the world. His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan said: [40]

"Do not think that by puffing smoke into the air you are behaving intelligently or in a healthy manner I strongly advise my spiritual children to stay away from cigarette smoking, pipe smoking, cigar smoking, all types of smoking. It is in your own interest, it is for your own health.....that this is a habit which can cause great unhappiness and great ill health, not only to you but in your families generally. This is a matter of importance...."

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