TOBACCO USE IS PROHIBITED (HARAM) IN ISLAM

Muhamad Hanafiah Juni

Health Services Management Unit, Department of Community Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, MALAYSIA

*Corresponding author: Associate Professor Dr Muhamad Hanafiah Juni
Email: hanafiah_juni@upm.edu.my

“Praise be to God, and blessings and peace be upon His Messenger”

ABSTRACT

Tobacco used through cigarette smoking, pipes or chewing is the most widespread example of drug dependence in worldwide and it is epidemic in Islamic countries. Researchers in medical field had showed that tobacco use especially cigarette smoking is a major factor in the development of many cases of cancer, heart diseases, chronic lung and respiratory diseases and other ailments. Smoking causes more illness and death than all other drugs. Cigarette smoking in pregnant women results in deleterious health effects on their new born. The aim of this paper is to review evidences from The Qur’an, Sunnah and Ijtihad to support the prohibition of tobacco use in Islam. The findings from the review showed that the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah clearly prohibit the use of tobacco by the Muslims. Jumhur Ulama had also made a stand that the use of tobacco by the Muslim is prohibited. Hence smoking and all other form of tobacco use are prohibited in Islam.

Keywords: Tobacco, Smoking, Prohibited, Haram, Islam

1.0 Introduction

Historically, tobacco has long been used by the Americans Native before the time of European settlers arrived at American Continent. European trades introduced the tobacco to Europe, where it became popular. In the Muslim world tobacco use was unknown until early in the eleventh century of hijrah\(^1\), when British and Portuguese used tobacco as part of their barter trade with African people. Tobacco smoking soon spread across the Niger River valley such as Morocco and Sudan where Islamic scholars did not object to its use (Khayat, 2000). Some older methods of tobacco consumption such as tobacco chewing and tobacco pipe were also popular among Muslim people. Tobacco use is becoming a common and widely accepted social habit in Muslim countries where smoking is the most common method.

\(^1\)hijrah: The emigration of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. The event is used as the starting point for the Islamic calendar.
of consuming tobacco through inhalation of fumes from burning tobacco encased in cigarettes, pipes and cigars. It is the most important cause of death, and currently estimated that five million deaths per year among adults worldwide were related with tobacco use. By year 2030, estimated that annual deaths resulting from tobacco use will rise to more than eight million per year, in which more than 80% of the world’s tobacco related deaths will be in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2008). It is forecasted that half of these deaths are from Muslim countries.

Adult smokers has reduced in Europe as a result of the non-smoker’s rights movement and public recognition of the serious health consequences of smoking (Fischer, 1987). In response to the reduced market in Europe, international tobacco companies shifted their strategies to third world, in particular Muslim countries. As stated by Joseph Cullman, Chairman of Philip-Morris in 1983, "We recognized early that ours is a global business and built markets around the world. Our future is particularly bright in developing areas, where income and population are growing”. Philip Morris (PM) draft planning document outlining how PM planned to influence tobacco-control activities in European and Middle Eastern countries. It reveals that: "Philip Morris and the industry are positively impacting the government decisions [on tobacco issues] of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE through the creative use of market specific studies, position papers, well briefed distributors who lobby, media owners and consultants...". Philip Morris was also concerned with smoking and Islam, because the Islamic religion apparently prohibits smoking. In response to this major impediment to sales, PM planned to: "Work to develop a system by which Philip Morris can measure trends on the issue of smoking and Islam as well as identify Islamic religious leaders who oppose interpretations of the Quran which would ban the use of tobacco and encourage support for these leaders." PM planned to "drive" the thinking of scientists on the health effects of second hand smoke. The plan by tobacco industry was to identify Islamic religious leaders who oppose interpretations of Qur’an which would ban the use of tobacco and encourage support for these leaders. The result of efforts in promoting tobacco consumption in Muslim countries by tobacco industry was reported by Fischer (1987);

1. In 1984, Saudi Arabia was the world's third leading importer of U.S. made cigarettes.

2. Turkey is the number one importer of unmanufactured tobacco in the world.

3. Cigarette production in Egypt increased by19% from 1982 to 1983.

4. Tobacco consumption in Ethiopia in the past ten years increased by 49%. This was the same period of time when this country suffered widespread death from starvation.

5. The head of the Malaysian Parliament retired in 1982 and went to work as chairman of Rothman's, Malaysia's largest cigarette manufacturer.

Cigarette consumption in most Muslim countries has risen and continues to rise in recent years. Nearly 80% of the world’s one billion smokers live in low and middle income countries, where the burden of tobacco-related illness is heaviest (WHO, 2014). Among Muslim countries the prevalence of smoking is vary; one half of the population of Turkey is considered to be smokers and in Nigeria more than a third of men and 40 percent of boys in
secondary schools in one big city were found to smoke (WHO, 2010). A survey conducted in four villages in Malaysia showed that 56 percent of men and 20 percent of women were regular smokers (Lim et al, 2013). The prevalence of smoking is higher in urban than in rural areas, where the habit has been traditionally confined to men. The proportion of women, who smoke is low in Muslim countries, however it is rising in recent years (Hanafiah, 2014).

Even though the cigarette consumption low in some Muslim countries, but other form of tobacco consumption is higher, such as; in some Middle East Countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt tradition consumption of tobacco known as hookah (also known as the water pipe, shisha, nargileh, arghileh or hubble-bubble) is higher than cigarette smoking. The hookah is often perceived as the “traditional” Arab way of consuming tobacco, often while socializing (Omar, 2007).

2.0 Tobacco use and health

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats and it is the most important cause of death. World Health Organization reported that tobacco use has killed nearly six million people a year of which more than five million are resulting from direct tobacco use while more than 600 000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed as second-hand smoke (WHO, 2014).

The immediate health effects of hookah smoking include: increased expired carbon monoxide, plasma nicotine and higher heart rate. Short-term health risks associated with spreading infection (if the hookah is shared) including tuberculosis, hepatitis and respiratory tract infections. Long-term health risks of hookah smoking include: nicotine dependence/addiction, cancer of the lung, trachea, bronchus and oral cavity, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease/emphysema/chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heavy metal poisoning from arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, chromium and lead. There are over 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke including more than 60 carcinogens (IARC, 2004). Smoking and chewing tobacco lead to 90% of lung cancer cases, 75% of atherosclerosis and 25% of heart diseases (FANAR, 2010).

Smoking is “probably the largest single preventable cause of ill-health in the world”. A number of diseases have been causally linked to smoking. The United State Surgeon General have identified a substantial number of diseases found to be caused by smoking, among the diseases are; 1) Malignant neoplasm’s of lung, bronchus, trachea, lip, oral cavity, pharynx, oesophagus, stomach, pancreas. 2) Cardiovascular diseases such as; ischemic heart diseases, stroke, atherosclerosis, aortic aneurysm, peripheral vascular disease, arterial embolism and thrombosis. 3) Respiratory diseases such as: Chronic bronchitis, emphysema and chronic airways obstruction. 4) Reproductive effects such as: low birth weight, respiratory distress syndrome of newborn, sudden Infant Death Syndrome and other respiratory conditions (US DHHS, 2004).

At present, diseases of infection and malnutrition are the main cause of death in Muslim countries and unless rapid action is taken to control smoking, diseases due to smoking will soon be added to the burden of those of infection and malnutrition. A review of smoking associated diseases in Muslim countries shows that these diseases are already becoming widespread (Ahmad Taha, 1989). Lung cancer rate has increased three-fold in the last 30
years, in Egypt. In a survey of 1,400 patients with heart diseases in Iran, 98 percent were smokers. Smokers in Muslim countries are probably at a higher risk compared to those in the Western countries. There is evidence that cigarettes sold in developing countries may contain twice as much tar and nicotine as the same named brands in Europe (Ahmad Taha, 1989). Tar and nicotine are the substances that cause lung cancer and heart diseases respectively. Smoking is harmful in all aspect for it is a waste of money, an unnecessary destruction of health and it can disturb the social balance of the family.

3.0 Tobacco use and Islam

The evidence relating tobacco use to disease appeared only about 30 years ago. There were no ruling on smoking found in the texts of the Islamic jurist (fuqaha’) before the tenth century A.H (Yusuf Al-Hajj, 2010). For these reason Muslim scholars in the past differed in opinion regarding tobacco use. One group considered it haram or unlawful, another group regarded it as makrooh or discouraged, and a third body of opinion felt it was haram only for those who knew by experience or have been told by a trustworthy doctor that smoking or any form of tobacco use is harmful to them.

Yusuf al-Qardawi a renowned Islamic scholar in his book The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam (1999) stated that as a general rule of the Islamic Shari’ah is that, it is haram for the Muslim to eat or drink anything which may cause his death, either quickly or gradually, such as poisons, or substances which are injurious to health or harmful to his body. It is also haram to eat or drink large quantities of a substance if large quantities of it cause illness. For the Muslim is not entirely his own master; he is also an asset to his religion and his ummah (the Muslim nation), and his life, health, wealth, and all that Allah has bestowed upon him are a trust with him which he is not permitted to diminish;

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “No one will be allowed to move from his position on the Day of Judgement until he has been asked how he spent his life, how he used his knowledge, how he earns and spent his money and in what pursuits he used his health” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi).

It is now evident by medical research beyond doubt that smoking is injurious to health. Tobacco use leads to harm affecting one’s body, mind and wealth. It causes cardio-vascular diseases such as heart disease, cancer such as lung cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and accumulation of toxicants in blood can affect fetal development in pregnant women. There are numerous verses in Qur’an that prohibiting the Muslim to harm themselves or others, examples are;

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says: “…And make not your own hands contribute to your destruction”(Qur’an; Al-Baqarah, 2:195).

In another verse, Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says: “…And do not kill yourselves; indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you” (Qur’an; An-Nisa, 4:29).

Smoking is nothing but a form of slow suicide. Suicide in any forms are prohibited in Islam,
Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says: “And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden...” (Qur’an; Al-Isra, 17: 33).

It is scientifically proven that the exhaled smoke from burning cigarette is hazardous to non-smoker around them, known as a secondary smoker. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said:

“Do not hurt yourselves and not injure others” (Narrated by al-Imam Malik and Ibnu Majah)

This means that causing any harm is prohibited, and it is prohibited also to try to remove one type of harm by causing or exposing harm to others. Therefore all harms must be prevented.

Islam views cleanliness very seriously. In Islam cleanliness and hygiene are emphasized to the extent that it has been considered a part of iman (faith). It is very well known that a smoker's mouth is unclean and foul smell. Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) dislikes unclean and bad personal hygiene,

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says: “He allows them as lawful At-Taiyyibat (all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khaba’ith (all evil and unlawful as regards things, deed, belief, persons and foods)” (Qu’ran; Al-A’raf, 7:157).

Foul smell of smokers or other form of tobacco use offends non-smokers, especially at congregational prayers or similar gathering. Muslims are advised to refrain from eating raw onions and garlic - simply as a courtesy to those around them because of their smell. The same goes even more so smell of cigarettes, which permeates everything around the smoker - hair, clothing, home, car, etc.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever eats garlic or onions let him stay away from us and from our mosque and let him stay at home” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “He who eats of this offensive plant (garlic or onion) must not approach our mosque, for the angels are offended by the same thing as men” (Narrated by Muslim).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever offends any Muslim has offended me, and whoever offends me has offended God” (Narrated by Al-Tabarani)

Tobacco use can causes intoxication as there are hundreds of poisonous and toxic ingredients in the cigarette itself that the smoker inhales straight into the lungs. Allah (SWT) prohibited a Muslim taking substances which cause intoxication,

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says: “O you have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, (sacrificing on) stone altars (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful” (Qur’an; Al-Ma’idah, 5:90).
In an authentic hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that,

“...Whom so ever drinks poison, there by killing himself, will sip this poison forever and ever in the fire of Hell” (Narrated by Muslim).

The word intoxication has three meanings:

1. To induce, especially the effect of ingested alcohol.
2. To stimulate or excite.
3. To poison.

Except the first meaning, smoking causes the second and third affects which also the effects of nicotine and caffeine. Among Muslim scholars who wrote about prohibition of smoking are Al-Laqani, Al-Qalyoobi, Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdul Kareem Al-Fakoon and Ibn ‘Allan (Yusuf Al-Hajj, 2010), they quote the following as evidence;

Smoking causes intoxication at first, quickly leading to complete fogginess of the mind. Then each time a person smokes that effect reduce gradually, until it no longer has an effect on him; rather, he feels a sense of elevation that he finds better than intoxication. Or what is meant by intoxication is that which befogs the mind even if it is not accompanied by a high. Undoubtedly this happen to the one who smokes for the first time, and it is for this reason that it is najis (impure), the one who consumes it should be given a hadd punishment and it is haram whether in small quantities or large.

- Adopted from Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad (2010)

Some people argue that tobacco use doesn’t cause intoxication; they said it only causes relaxation. This effect is like alcohol which causes high. To this, Muslim scholar referred to a hadith of Umm Salamah,

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her): “The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, forbade all intoxicants and relaxants” [Narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawood, and it is Saheeh, apart from the phrase “...and relaxants” which is dha’eef (weak)].

The Hadith of Umm Salamah is sufficient evidence and proof that tobacco smoking is prohibited in Islam (Yusof Al-Hajj, 2010).

Other aspects of tobacco use are it causes environmental pollution. Smokers give, off an unpleasant odour to the air and their smoke is an irritant to non-smokers as well. It is individual religious duty of every Muslim to protect creation of Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala),

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says, “…and do no mischief upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good” (Qur’an; Al-A’raf, 7:56).
In another verses Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) indicated severe punishment to whom causes mischief on earth,

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says, “…if anyone, after God’s favour has come to him, substitutes (the favour with something else) Allah is severe in His punishment” (Qur’an; Al-Baqarah, 2:211).

Non smoker present around the smoker force to inhale polluted air contained dangerous toxic substances. These secondary smokers are exposed to higher risk of disease causes by tobacco smoke, because secondary smoker inhaled all substances contained with cigarette smoke, while the smoker had filter with the cigarette. As mentioned above, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told all Muslims not hurt our self and expose others to any harm.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt his neighbour” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Chewing tobacco causes accumulation of saliva in the mouth, and people who chew tobacco are commonly associated with untidy habit. They like to spit everywhere regardless whether the place is dirty or unclean. As Muslims we are told never spit in dirty places such as in toilets or drain. Thus spit as understood in Islam by a hadith below,

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw some sputum in the direction of the Qibla of the mosque. He turns towards people and said, “How is it that someone amongst you stands before his Lord and the spits out in front of Him? Does any one of you like that he should be made to stand in front of someone and then spit at his face? So when any one of you spits, he must spit on his life side under his foot. But if he does not find (space to spit) he should do like this: Qasim (one of the narrators) spat in his cloth and then folded it (Narrated by Muslim).

Thus spitting everywhere is classified as an evil habit.

Financially the tobacco use such as smoking is considered as constitutes an excess and an act of squandering because it buy something that has no benefit for body or soul. This act is prohibited for Muslims,

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says, “And gives the relative his right, and (also) the poor and the traveller, and do not spent wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brother of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful” (Qur’an; Al-Isra’, 17: 26 – 27).

In an authentic hadith the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that;

“Allah hates for you three things: gossiping, begging, and wasting money.”
(Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Tobacco use also could cause hardship to the family. It wastes resources that could have been used for something more useful to the individual, family and community, and the money
spent on cigarette or other tobacco products deprives them of some essential requirements of life.

Tobacco use either by cigarette smoking or other forms of tobacco consumption was used as socio-political weapons to weaken Islam by encouraging its use in Muslim countries. Philip Morris cooperate document 1983 stated that “... PM was also concerned with smoking and Islam, because the Islamic religion apparently prohibits smoking. In response to this major impediment to sales, PM planned to: "Work to develop a system by which Philip Morris can measure trends on the issue of smoking and Islam and identify Islamic religious leaders who oppose interpretations of the Qur’an which would ban the use of tobacco and encourage support for these leaders." PM planned to "drive" the thinking of scientists on the health effects of second hand smoke. The plan by tobacco industry was to identify Islamic religious leaders who oppose interpretations of Qur’an which would ban the use of tobacco and encourage support for these leaders”.

Sheikh Aleesh (Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Aleesh) a Moroccan scholar (1299 AH) wrote in his manuscript,

“Some of those who interacted with the British told me that they did not bring tobacco to the Muslim world until after all doctors had agreed that they should avoid smoking and should limit it to a few occasions that would not cause harm. So they told them not to continue smoking, but they told them to sell to the Muslims so as to harm them”.

- Adopted from Yusof Al-Hajj Ahmad (2010)

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) already warned Muslims that,

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta’ala) says, “And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, “Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the (only) guidance”. If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper” (Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:120).

Certainly nothing more than this will motivate a Muslim to avoid tobacco use. A hadith from Sahih Bukhari and Muslim stated,

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain, and between the two of them there are doubtful matters about which not many people know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor, but he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, but all grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah’s sanctuary is His prohibitions. Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it is sound, all the body is sound and which, if it is corrupt, all of it will be corrupt. Truly it is the heart” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The key concerns regarding prohibition of tobacco use in Muslim countries not because of lacking of evidence from the Qur’an, the Sunnah and ijtihad of Muslim scholars, but rather lack of ruling prohibiting smoking from within Islamic own legal system of the Muslim
countries itself. Unwillingness of Muslim leaders to partaking in prohibiting such unlawful activity into country Islamic legal system and the Muslim scholars themselves maybe reluctant to pass ruling of prohibiting tobacco use if they are tobacco addicted themselves. An example, Malaysia had the ruling of prohibiting smoking passed by National Fatwa Council in 1993, but to date only 2 out of 14 states in Malaysia have recognized this ruling (Hanafiah, 2014).

4.0 Conclusion

It is clear clear that the use of tobacco in no matter which form or by which means, causes a great deal of damage sooner or later, to both health and wealth. Therefore, the tobacco use is unlawful (prohibited) or Haram in Islam. All smoking Muslims should give up this unhealthy and un-Islamic activity, and should stop all tobacco use completely. Religious ruling alone may not have much effect on tobacco use considering its addictive nature. However, religious ruling could help to ensure success of the strategy against tobacco use if incorporated into it. For the Muslims who sincerely practice Islam and who submit themselves to the Will of Allah, this should not be a difficult task. Insyallah.

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