

The Growing Threat

Smoking and
the Muslim
World

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Smoking & the Muslim World

Cigarette smoking is a major environmental cause of death in Western countries. At least 50,000 men and women in the United Kingdom die from its effects every year. Lung cancer and coronary heart attack are two of the most devastating consequences of smoking. In the United States death from lung cancer has increased fivefold between 1945 and 1975. Among women, the incidence of lung cancer is expected to increase for more than that of other forms of cancer in the next decade. In the United Kingdom about a quarter of the 40,000 deaths among men and women under 65 who die each year from heart attacks are believed to be due to cigarette smoking, and 90 percent of the 37,000 deaths from lung cancer each year can be attributed to cigarette smoking. In 1974 it was estimated that about £400 million was spent in the United Kingdom on the cost of sickness and the consequent loss in industrial production as a result of smoking-related diseases.

The risks of smoking are not confined to Western nations. Cigarette consumption is rapidly increasing in many Muslim countries, whose population is a target of promotional drives by cigarette manufacturers. Smoking threatens to become one of tomorrow's major health hazards. Hopefully, Muslim countries will study the consequences of cigarette smoking in the West and will act before these diseases press too heavily upon them and unnecessarily stretch their resources for health care.

Cigarette Consumption and Promotion

Smoking is becoming a common and widely accepted social habit in Muslim countries, especially among adolescents and even children. One half of the population of Turkey is considered to be smokers. In Nigeria more than a third of men and 40 percent of boys in secondary schools in one big city were found to smoke. A survey conducted in four villages in Malaysia showed that 56 percent of men and 20 percent of women were regular smokers. 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 now smoke, however, is rising, as in Egypt. In Senegal, 80 percent of urban men as against only 15 percent of rural men smoke cigarettes.

Cigarette consumption in most Muslim countries has risen steeply in recent years. In Egypt, the Eastern Tobacco Company's cigarette sales increased by 23 percent between 1976-78, and imported cigarette sales went up by 25 percent between 1977-78. Cigarette consumption in Libya doubled between 1967 and 1976. The world's largest airlift of cigarettes is operated from Britain to Sudan and Somalia. About 210 tons of cigarettes are carried every month to both countries.

Not only do individuals become dependent on cigarettes but so does the economy of a country either 'by expanding tobacco production or by relying on cigarette taxation for revenue. Several Muslim countries plan to use more land and resources for tobacco growing in order to supply their own needs and also for export purposes. Pakistan, Iran and Iraq are major producers. Altogether, in 1970 they produced 152,000 metric tons of tobacco (one metric ton makes one million cigarettes). In contrast, Egypt does not grow tobacco, but has one of the largest manufacturing industries in the world, using 100 percent imported tobacco. The volume of tobacco exported by Indonesia almost doubled between 1972 and 1977.

Cigarettes are heavily promoted in many Muslim countries. There is widespread and high-pressure advertising of cigarettes on posters, television, radio and newspapers. A study of cigarette marketing in Malaysia showed heavy tobacco advertising and high efficient distribution of cigarettes in all parts of the country including rural areas. In most Muslim countries advertisement is quite liberal and more aggressive than in the West, presenting smoking as a socially desirable habit and relating it to success in life. No health warning is carried on cigarette packs and in most Muslim countries health education about the effects of

smoking has hardly begun.

Cigarette Associated Diseases

Smoking is “probably the largest single preventable cause of ill-health in the world”. 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. 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. Tar and nicotine are the substances that cause lung cancer and heart diseases respectively.

This is a deliberate plan too hook Muslims as early as possible so they become dependant on nicotine dependency which usually leads to men committing crimes and women to prostitution to pay for cigarettes. Altogether helping to destroy the fabric of Muslim communities within society. The Governments that have been planted by the west in our Muslim lands encourage this.

Islam and Smoking

The evidence relating cigarette smoking to disease appeared nearly 30 years ago. For this reason Muslim scholars in the past differed in opinion regarding smoking., One group considered it *haram* or unlawful, another group regarded it as *makruh* or distasteful, and a third body of opinion felt it was *haram* only for those who know by experience or have been told by a trustworthy doctor that smoking is harmful to them. However, smoking can be considered *haram* for the following reasons:

1. It is now evident beyond doubt that smoking is injurious to health. And Allah says in the Qur'an:

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

“And make not your own hands contribute to your destruction.”
(2:195)

يَتَأْتِيهِمُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا
أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ ۖ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ
مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

‘Do not kill or destroy yourselves: for verily Allah has been to you most Merciful.’ (4:29)

The Prophet, peace be upon him, also said:

“Do not hurt yourselves not injure others.”

2. Smoking wastes **money** and Allah says:

وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾
إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ط وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾

“But squander not YOUR wealth senselessly. Squanderers are, indeed, of the ilk of the satans.” (17:26—27)

3. Smoking causes environmental pollution and is a particularly untidy habit. Smokers give, off an unpleasant odor and their smoke is an irritant to non-smokers as well. All this is enough to classify it as an evil habit.

Ai-Araf: 157

يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ

“He (the Apostle) forbids (those who follow him) from what’s bad and impure.” (7:157).

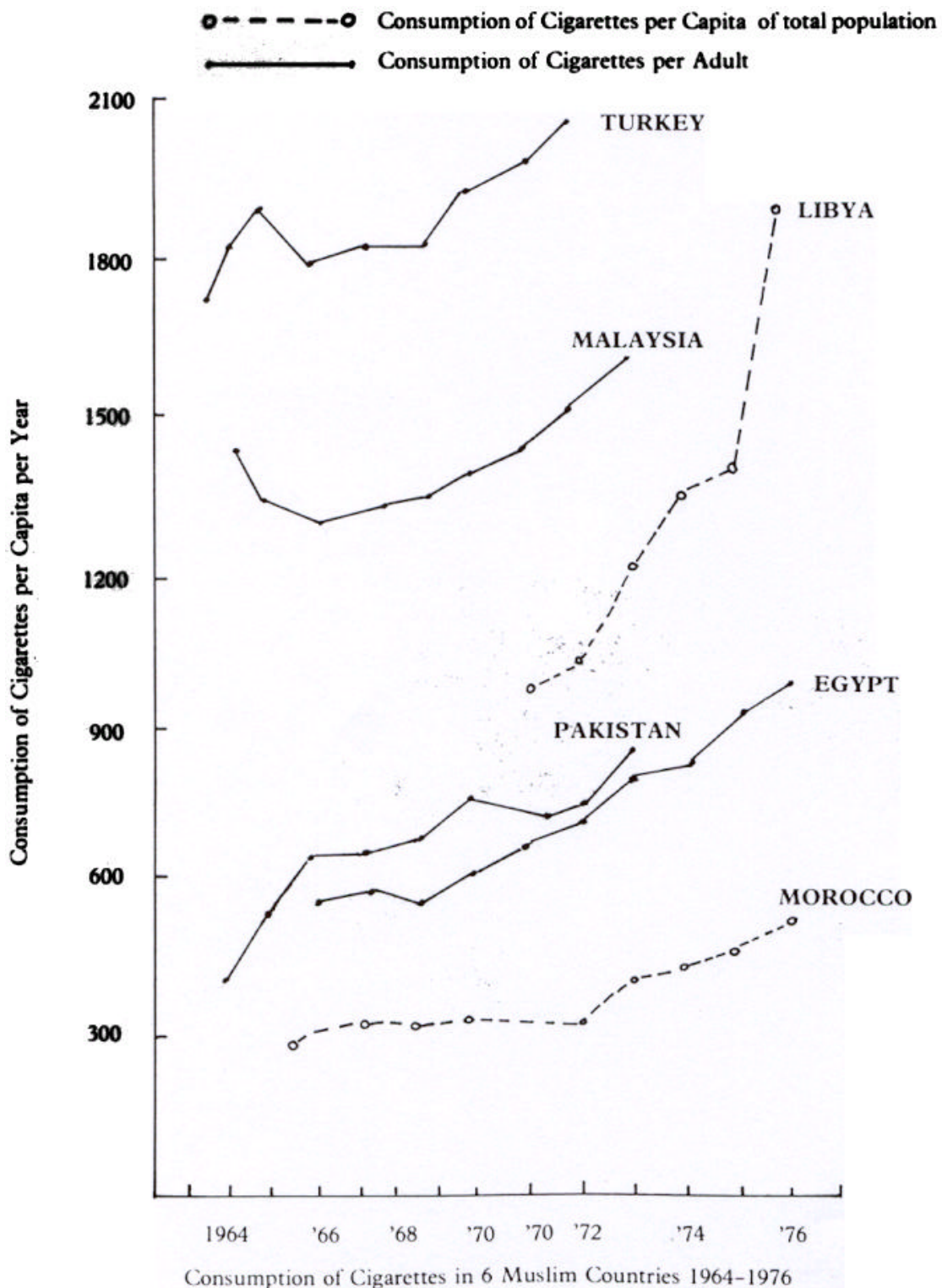
Control of Smoking in Muslim Countries

The control of smoking is now a major problem facing many countries. There needs to be a drastic change in public opinion on smoking. It is easy to show conclusively that the short-term economic benefits of tobacco are outweighed by the long-term disadvantages. Governments of Muslim countries as a first step and as a matter of priority need to avoid dependence on tobacco production, which will do little for long-term prosperity and can only lead to disaster. It would be much more beneficial to phase out tobacco growing and substitute food crops wherever possible. No-smoking should be vigorously promoted as the normal behavior in Muslim society which should make it easier for individuals to stop smoking. Muslim doctors have a special responsibility, by their own example, by the advice they give to others and by the collective advice they give their governments through their responsible medical bodies. They should refrain from smoking as an Islamic obligation:

*أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَبَّاءُونَ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

“Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people and forget to practice it yourselves.” (2:44)

They also have to urge their governments at least to introduce legislative measures to control smoking. These should include a ban on advertising and other forms of promotion, health warning in local languages on all cigarette packets, a ban on smoking in public places and restriction on the sale of cigarettes to children. Governments should also be urged to consider 'health education programs concerning smoking as a part of general education. Special attention should be given to children at primary and secondary schools where most smokers start the smoking habit. Preventive measures taken now could do much to improve the health of future Muslim generations.



How to stop Smoking

Doctors, by training and inclination, should be motivated to help their patients stop smoking. Helping a person to stop smoking requires care, patience and continued support. In order to convince a patient of the need to stop smoking, the doctor will have to put the facts clearly before him in terms he can understand. The doctor can reinforce this message by having pamphlets and posters on smoking and health in the clinic. They should recognize that more lives may be saved by stopping patients smoking than by many other measures. The following suggestions are addressed to any person wanting to 'kick' this expensive and dangerous habit.

The Plan

1. Take a calm look at the facts.
2. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of smoking.
3. How much do you spend on smoking each week, each year?
4. What is the total number of cigarettes you have smoked? 20 a day for 30 years is about 200,000; 30 a day for 45 years is about 500,000. The risk increases with the number smoked.
5. At what age did you start to smoke? Those who start smoking at 15 years of age are at greater risk than those who start at 20.
6. Remember smoking is *Haram* or forbidden according to Islamic criteria.
7. Make your own schedule for stopping smoking. Write it down and stick to it. Make a definite day for stopping two or three weeks hence. Many find a long weekend or holiday the best time. You may find it easier to stop during the month of Ramadan.
8. Make yourself aware of your smoking habits. Become conscious of every cigarette smoked. Keep a record card of your smoking. Give each cigarette a value of 1 to 10 for its importance to you. This will show you the time and places where you are most likely to smoke.
9. Put a rubber band around the pack. Do not keep your cigarette in your pocket, briefcase or hand-bag but in a draw or on a shelf. Cut out "the best cigarette" of the day such as the one with tea or coffee. Smoke your first cigarette one hour later each day. Carry a supply of low-calorie nibbles such as pieces of raw vegetables or pieces of dried fruit. Pray to Allah to grant you support and to strengthen your will. Find a friend who will encourage you. Discuss progress with him each day. Even if you do not succeed, it does not mean you have tried the wrong method. Make a graph of your cigarette consumption day by day. It will encourage you as you see the numbers falling. Ask your doctor for help. One visit to him now could save you many more visits in the future.
10. *Change your life style.* Smoking may have become part of your life. It may have helped you relax or stimulated you. It may have relieved your tension and given you something to handle. A change in your routine of life will help you. Take plenty of exercise] this will help you relieve tension and stop you putting on too much weight. Take plenty of fluids, especially fruit juices. Eat more fruit. Frequent visits to the mosques and find a new hobby. Take special care at the time of your favorite cigarette by being forewarned and finding alternative things to do.

11. *Quitting day.* From now on, never another cigarette. The break must be complete. Most successful quitters stop suddenly after a period of preparation. Those who try to stop gradually rarely succeed. Never again risk “just trying one”. Those who do so often slip back straight away to where they started.
12. *The months ahead.* How long does the craving last? It is quite variable. For some only a week or two, but for others a few weeks or months. Be on constant guard. Beware of special hazards such as times of stress, pressure of work, deadlines or gatherings. If you do have a set-back and smoke again, analyze carefully the reason for your failure. Some have several trials before the final break. If at first you don't succeed, try, and try again.

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Message to Muslims from ITG:

Asalamulakum,
Brothers & Sisters of Islam.

Please heed the warning that smoking is a weapon being aimed at Muslims worldwide to bring misery and death to the Muslim Ummah. If the best among you continue to smoke who will replace you when you are needed when we form a true Islamic Khilafah government? Inshallah! You are the future of the Muslim Ummah and must look above the conspiracies that the Kafir conjure up against us. Consider a cigarette as poison and refrain from inhaling it. Inform your friends and relatives of the dangers and provide them a copy of this document. The children that you love around you also inhale the smoke and in turn develop diseases. It's not too late, stop right away and ask Allah(swt) for forgiveness and the strength to overcome the urge to smoke. Be part of the **Islamic revival** not a **Kafir statistic!**

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