

"Shisha (water pipe) declared 'HARAM' for Muslims"

By Sarvat N. Hanif

Shisha declared 'haram' for Muslims

KUALA LUMPUR: Shisha or water-pipe smoking is 'haram' (forbidden) for Muslims, the Fatwa (Edicts) Committee of the National Council for Islamic Affairs declared Friday.

Committee Chairman Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin said Muslims were also prohibited from providing shisha-smoking services or any activity associated with shisha.

"After listening to the experts from the Health Ministry and scrutinising medical and scientific evidence from the country and abroad on the ill-effects of shisha, the committee decided to prohibit shisha (for Muslims)," he said in a statement.

Abdul Shukor explained that shisha would have a huge detrimental effect in terms of the health of the individual, national economic growth and shaping of the future generations.

The committee found that all scientific findings by way of comprehensive studies in the country and internationally proved that shisha had a most detrimental effect and its widespread use, particularly among youths and women, was most worrying.

"Shisha is clearly harmful to health; it is a wasteful activity that is categorised as a bad or despicable thing that all Muslims should avoid," said Abdul Shukor.

On another matter, he said the committee also expressed disappointment over the actions of certain people who raised issues on purpose to incite Muslims and, in doing so, undermined the multi-racial harmony in the country.

"It felt that these irresponsible people seemed to have planned to hurl these insults and more so during the Ramadan month which is holy for Muslims," he said. Abdul Shukor said their actions had exceeded the limits of patience of the Muslims.

"We do not want to see any more of these insults and uncivilised behaviour, by way of words or actions, brushed aside without stern action and maximum penalty in accordance with the law," he said.

Abdul Shukor said stern action must be taken immediately by the authorities to stop people from continuing to insult Islam and to serve as a lesson for all. He said it had become a sort of a game for certain quarters to incite Muslims and then apologise, and added that this should not be allowed to happen.

Abdul Shukor said the committee urged Muslims to be united in facing the malice of these irresponsible people for the sake of defending the sanctity of Islam and the dignity of Muslims in the country. - Bernama

to trace errant bosses

Bosses decide
to seek help

The popular pastime of smoking shisha or water-pipe smoking has finally been declared "haram" (forbidden) for Muslims. The National Council for Islamic Affairs in Malaysia issued the Fatwa (edicts) earlier in July declaring shisha haram and prohibiting Muslims from providing shisha-smoking services or any activity associated with it.

Justifying the Fatwa, the committee chairman Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin explained that the committee found that all scientific findings by way of comprehensive studies in the country and internationally had proved that shisha had a most detrimental effect and its widespread use, particularly among youths and women, was most worrying.

"After listening to experts from the Health Ministry and scrutinising medical and scientific evidence from the country and abroad on the ill-effects of shisha, the committee decided to prohibit shisha for Muslims," he said in a statement. "Shisha is clearly harmful to health; it is a wasteful activity that is categorised as a bad or despicable thing that all Muslims should avoid."

Shisha smoking, also called hookah, narghilem water pipe, or hubble bubble smoking, is a way of smoking tobacco, sometimes mixed with fruit or molasses sugar, through a bowl and a hose or tube. The tube ends in a mouthpiece from which the smoker inhales the smoke from the substances being burnt into their lungs.

Popular flavouring includes apple, plum, coconut, mango, mint, strawberry and cola. Wood, coal or charcoal is burned in the shisha pipe to heat the tobacco and create the smoke because the fruit syrup or sugar makes the tobacco damp.

The way shisha is prepared poses health danger. At the very top of a hookah, the bowl containing shisha is covered by an aluminium foil, upon which burning charcoal is placed to roast the tobacco. Toxic fumes are produced by the reaction between the burning charcoal and aluminium foil. The hookah's glass base, which acts as a chamber for the shisha smoke, is also filled with water. This water mixes with the toxic gases and increases the smoke's humidity, which causes the carcinogenic fumes to stay in the lungs longer.

Doctors and health campaigners have since long warned that the aromatic smell of shisha hides a serious health risk. The tobacco in one shisha is "equal to the poison of two and a half packs of cigarettes." A lung specialist said, that though young people especially were convinced that the fruit-flavoured shisha tobacco was less harmful than cigarettes, in fact it "contains 10 times more nicotine than a cigarette".

The increasing trend of water pipe smoking can be attributed to several misconceptions. These include the popular beliefs that the nicotine content in water pipes is lower as compared to cigarettes and that the water used in this form of tobacco intake filters out all the hazardous chemicals such as carbon monoxide, nicotine and tar. These common misconceptions lead the public to believe that water pipe smoking is not a significant health hazard.

Anything that contains tobacco increases the chance for cancer cells to develop. People think shisha is harmless, whereas they at least know cigarettes are bad for them. So shisha smokers have a higher risk of developing lung cancer because of the 'no-tobacco-content' misconception!" he said.

The Fatwa has left many shisha lovers bewildered and sometimes angry. They reject the comparison with cigarettes and argue that smoking a shisha over several hours is less harmful and more cultivated than having a quick cigarette.

As shisha smoking is a largely social activity, a nozzle used to inhale and exhale the flavoured smoke is usually shared between many people. The nozzle can play host to huge amounts of microbacteria and viral hepatitis such as tuberculosis and even Hepatitis A, which increases a shisha smoker's risk of contracting diseases.

As shisha sessions are considered a leisurely activity, smokers also tend to take deeper puffs over a longer period of time, which can cause a higher risk of developing oral and lung cancer due to prolonged absorption of toxins.

Shisha smoking is traditionally used by the people from Middle East or Asian community but it is becoming increasing popular UK and America. The flavoured tobacco is smoked by enthusiasts worldwide for its sweet smell and smooth taste. A study by the American Lung Association showed a worldwide increase in shisha use in recent years, mostly among youths and university students.

The amount of bars and cafes offering the exotic pipe have rocketed in recent years, with the number of people enjoying a smoking session increasing by 210 per cent in just half a decade. It is a very popular thing to attend a parlour and enjoy a pipe with friends while catching up with the latest news and gossip.

The sweet smell of the smoke is very appealing to a lot of people and this is a big factor in its rise in popularity. This kind of smoking is regarded as non addictive to be enjoyed as a social activity and a very good alternative to cigarettes and cigars. People who partake in this activity say that it is very relaxing and helps them get rid of the stresses of the day.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a 60-minute shisha session produces about 100 to 200 times more smoke than a regular cigarette, which translates into a heavier output of toxic fumes for both the smoker and the people around them. The estimated findings go on to show that, on average, a smoker will inhale half a litre of smoke per cigarette, while a shisha smoker can take in anything from just under a sixth of a litre to a litre of smoke per inhale.

Shisha smoking is not just limited to the male population. As in other parts of the world, in Pakistan also women and young girls are smoking shisha is the cool thing to be done today by the modern women. Many colleges and school going girls smoke shisha daily. According to a study conducted by Pakistan Medical Research Council (PMRC) in 71 educational institutions, 10.4% were of shisha smokers were females against 29.8% males.

For these young girls, shisha smoking is new style of spending their pastime or to relax. All these enjoyments are only for the mean time. In the long run, this circle of friends would need to live their own lives. They will eventually meet someone special and decided to marry and have their own families. Then here comes the time where they encounter some of the problems.

Women who smoke shisha during pregnancy have babies with an increased risk for respiratory diseases. Shisha smoking can increase women's risk of blood clots. Shisha smoking can also harm the unborn baby's development. The smoke from Shisha decreases the oxygen concentration in mother's body which ultimately results to the shortness of breath to the fetus which could lead the baby towards death.

Prevention is better than cure, so that for those people who are tempted to try to smoke Shisha, you still have a chance to consider the above results. You have always the choice to make a difference. For those people who are smoking Shisha for some time now, it is not too late to turn the wheel of your life. You have the option whether to smoke to you and your love ones destruction. Or make that choice to have a clean living and have a healthy, happy family in the future.