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Addiction Treatment in the Sunnah

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ABSTRACT

Addiction to alcohol is a general phenomenon that affects communities as a whole, and is one of the intractable problems that governments and institutions are trying to address. This study used analytical method based on qualitative data collection and analysis to examine the concept of addiction and alcohol, as well as the role of the *Sunnah* in the treatment of addiction to alcohol through Islamic laws that prevent Muslims from approaching intoxicants. The most interesting findings of this study are that differences in the names of alcohol do not negate its prohibition; the little of what intoxicates in large quantity is also forbidden. Islam has certainly established rules to prevent people from approaching alcohol. Islam did not begin to resolve the problem of alcohol addiction through punishment, but identified its causes and then addressed those causes in order to prevent Muslims from being addicted to alcohol.

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1. Introduction

Islamic law has some distinguishing features and qualities different from that of other legislations. It is a perfect legislation because it is established by the perfection of the Almighty Allah. Therefore, it has a status of sacredness, as it has been established by the Almighty Allah. Whoever looks at Islamic legislation will find it distinctive, as it is free from deficiency, shortcoming and imperfection. Hence it is complete with the perfection of the Almighty Allah who established it.

Islamic law does not leave any righteousness unless it encourages Muslims on going into it and accepting it. On the other hand, Islam does not leave any evil unless it warns and prevents Muslims from going into it. Islamic law established punishment for doing evils in order to distance Muslims from what will cause trouble to them.

One of the issues which Islamic law warns Muslims against is addiction to alcohol and drug abuse. Islam holds a judicious position regarding rulings for taking alcohol and involving in its business. Besides, Islamic law established punishment for those who take alcohol, identified its causes, addressed these causes and prevented its spread.

2. Research Problem

Islamic countries suffer from the spread of alcohol drinking among Muslims, and we know the negative effects of this scourge on individuals and the society, from religious, moral, economic and social aspects. Therefore, it becomes necessary to address those problems so that experts can determine its treatment on one hand, and on the other hand, Islamic governments can develop a strategic plan to stop the spread of this scourge of alcohol consumption and provide appropriate solutions. This will be based on the verses of the Noble Qur'an and clear explanation from the *Sunnah* (Tradition of the Prophet) regarding the means and methods through which this scourge can be eliminated and the spread can be restricted. Hence, the present study extrapolates from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet SAW) regarding the treatment of addiction to alcohol.

This study is of great importance to Islamic communities and the world at large, as it examines the means through which the Prophet SAW addressed the problem of addiction to alcohol and drug abuse.

3. Research Questions

The study aims to answer the questions of what is the concept of addiction and alcohol in Islamic jurisprudence and how did the Prophet Muhammad SAW addressed the problem of addiction to alcohol?

4. Definition of Addiction

The word addiction or *al-Idman* in Arabic literary means persistence or necessity (Ibn Faris, 1979). One is said to become addicted to alcohol drinking if he takes it as necessity, or such person is addicted to something, meaning he cannot abstain or refrain from it. So if one is said to become addicted to alcohol drinking, it means he drinks it regularly (Ibn Mandhur, 1414H).

However, the word *al-Idman* technically means abuse of any consumable item that can negatively affect people medically and socially using quantities or overdoses, and for a long period of time. It makes individual accustomed to it and controlled by its influence, and makes it difficult or impossible for him to refrain from it. This may be addiction to alcohol, intoxicants, drugs or even some medicines (http://majles.alukah.net /t40445).

5. Definition of Alcohol

The word alcohol or *al-Muskirat* in Arabic literary means indecision and intoxication from drinking. If we say *Sakira*, it means he drank too much alcohol, also *al-taskir* means confusion (Ibn Faris, 1979).

The word technically refers to anything that causes intoxication regardless of its form or nature between the form of schnapps or appearance, and without looking at the source of the material taken, whether from grapes, wheat, barley, liquid or solid, as well as the method taken, either drinking or eating (Al-Khauli, 1402H, p. 78).

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It has been reported in the Sunnah that *al-Muskir* refers to anything that can cause intoxication, regardless of names. Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "Every intoxicant is *khamr* and every intoxicant is unlawful." (Muslim, 2003, Hadith No. 1587).

6. Addiction Treatment in the Sunnah

From the beginning, we must point out that addiction to alcohol is an intractable problem in the present day. Many governments expressed concern over increase in report of cases regarding alcohol and drug abuse and the high rate of incidents resulting from that (Al-Tawil, 1987, p. 33).

It is well known that the Prophet SAW was sent at a time when people were addicted to alcohol and intoxicants, and the wine was one of the three pleasures of life for the youth; alcohol, gambling and women. If a boy is attributed to it, he becomes the best among his peers. So the youth are proud of combining these pleasures and boast about them. They used to commit sin and irregularities in order to get money to spend on these and other worldly pleasures (Ali, 2001).

It should also be noted that, when prohibition of alcohol drinking was revealed, the Muslims just heard and obeyed. Anas reported that: "I was the butler of the people in the house of Abu Talha, and in those days drinks were prepared from dates. Allah's Messenger ordered somebody to announce that alcoholic drinks had been prohibited. Abu Talha ordered me to go out and spill the wine. I went out and spilled it, and it flowed in the streets of Medina" (Bukhari, 1422H, Hadith No. 2464).

Apparently, Islam has turned those addicted to alcohol into active people in the society, and this is acknowledged even by non-Muslims amongst the Western scholars, James Baldwin says: "But the miracle has reached, those who are addicted to alcohol and drug abuse suddenly change when converted to Islam ... Islam has been able to achieve what the generations of social experts, committees, decrees, reports, housing projects and recreation centers failed to achieve; this is treatment and saving the drunks and vagrants" (Cited in al-Tawil, 1987, p. 103). The following clearly explain the role of the *Sunnah* in addiction treatment.

6.1 Legislations that Prevent Muslims from Approaching Intoxicants (Prevention)

The Prophetic guidance on dealing with issues that spread in the society is characterized by idealism and realism. Prophetic Legislation elevates the society and distances them from immorality, and encourages them to spread virtues; hence it is a perfect and idealistic legislation. Meanwhile, it is a realistic legislation that deals with the society, as human beings, members of the society have errors and freaks, but the Prophet SAW provided solutions to those freaks, he said "Every son of Adam sins, and the best of the sinners are the repentant" (Al-Tirmidhi, 1975, Hadith No. 2499).

And such legislation is divided into sections, which are:

- 1. Legislation relating to the addicted person: Many hadiths of the Prophet SAW were reported, explaining the penalty and punishment for drunks and drug abusers on the Day of Resurrection, these include:
- That alcohol is the mother of all evils; it can make people to violate the law. Uthman bin Affan narrated that the Prophet SAW said: "Avoid *khamr* for it is the mother of all evils. There was a man among those who came before you who was a devoted worshipper. An immoral woman fell in love with him. She sent her slave girl to him, saying: We are calling you to bear witness. So he set out with her slave girl, and every time he entered a door, she locked it behind him, until he

reached a beautiful woman who has with her a boy and a vessel of wine. She said: 'By Allah, I did not call you to bear witness, rather I called you to have intercourse with me, or to drink a cup of this wine, or to kill this boy.' He said: 'Pour me a cup of this wine.' So she poured him a cup. He said: 'Give me more.' And soon he had intercourse with her and killed the boy. So avoid *khamr*, for by Allah, faith and addiction to *khamr* cannot coexist but, one of them will soon expel the other" (Al-Nasa'i, 1986, Hadith No. 5666, authenticated by Albani).

- -The penalty of alcohol drinking and its addiction is denial of entrance into the heaven and enjoyment of its comfort. For the Prophet SAW said: "No one who reminds others of his favors, no one who is disobedient to his parents and no drunkard, will enter Paradise" (Al-Nasa'i, 1986, Hadith No. 5672).
- -The drinks for drunkard in the hereafter will be the dirtiest and worst kinds of drink, for the saying of the Prophet SAW: "Every intoxicant is forbidden. Verily Allah the Exalted and Majestic, made a covenant to those who drank intoxicants to make their drink *Tinat al-Khabal*. They said: Allah's Messenger, what is *Tinat al-Khabal*? He said: It is the sweat of the denizens of Hell or the discharge of the denizens of Hell' (Muslim, 2002, Hadith No. 1587).
- Alcohol drinking and its addiction is akin to worship of idols. For the Prophet SAW said: "The one who is addicted to wine is like one who worships idols" (Ibn Majah, Hadith No. 3375).
- Alcohol drinking results in non-acceptance of prayer. The prophet SAW said: "If a man among my Ummah drinks *khamr*, Allah will not accept his solah for forty days" (Al-Nasa'i, 1986, Hadith No. 5664).
- Also alcohol drinking results in non-acceptance of repentance. The Prophet SAW says "Whoever drinks wine once, his repentance will not be accepted for 40 days, then if he repents, Allah will accept his repentance. If he does it again, his repentance will not be accepted for 40 days, then if he repents, Allah will accept his repentance. If he does it again, his repentance will not be accepted for 40 days, then if he repents, Allah will accept his repentance. If he does it again (a fourth time), then it is a right upon Allah to make him drink from the mud of *Khibal* on the Day of Resurrection" (Al-Nasa'i, 1986, Hadith No. 5670).
- 2. Second, legislation relating to society; this refers to legislation relating to the generality of the community, and how to prevent the spread of this scourge. Indeed, the Prophet SAW clearly explained the punishment of those who participate in spreading this scourge in the society. In the hadith, the Jibril came to the prophet (peace be upon him) and said "O Muhammad, indeed Allah cursed the wine, its owner, its worker, its processor, its conveyer, its drinker, its seller, its buyer, its giver and its taker" (Ibn Hibban, 1988, hadith No: 5356). It is clear from the hadith that spreading this scourge has been prevented as it explained the punishment for all people involved in its spread in the society. The Almighty Allah caused the owner of wine, its processor, its conveyer, its seller, its buyer and its taker. The hadith reveled that everything that relates to wine is cursed, and there is no any punishment more severe than being expelled from the mercy of Allah, the Almighty.

The prohibition for alcohol trading based on strong social pressure, norms and firm law, as well as determination to fill any gap that could lead to intoxication are the most important factors that can prevent the spread of intoxicants (Badri, 1996, p. 109). Perhaps the most important measure to fight this

scourge is the promotion of virtues and prevention of vices. The prophet SAW said "By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! Either you command good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him, but He will not respond to you" (Al-Tirmidhi, 1975, hadith No: 2169). Therefore, it must be pointed out that some people say that, countries benefit from the taxes imposed on intoxicants, and this income is needed to fund national development projects. This is ambivalence; to use those revenues and taxes to build roads that will not be safe because of alcohol drinkers. It is also illogical to construct hospitals that will be cram-full of diseases resulting from alcohol drinking. Alcohol drinking results in 30% of hospital beds diseases. Also the income is spent for construction of prisons to accommodate approximately 50% of the prisoners as a result of alcohol drinking (Al-Tawil, 1987, p. 113).

Muslims must prevent and punish those who want to spread this scourge in the society because the spread is a means of destroying the whole society. This is evidenced by the saying of the Prophet SAW: "The example of the person abiding by Allah's order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe" (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, hadith No: 2493).

6.2 Legislation for Punishment of Alcohol Drinkers

After the Prophet SAW explained the punishment for alcohol drinking and addiction in the hereafter, he explained the punishment in this world as well. This is because some disobedient people overlook the eschatological punishment. Hence, they must be punished in this world to prevent them from taking intoxicants, so as to keep the society free from the spread of this scourge. It is found in hadith that the Prophet SAW punished people for alcohol drinking:

- Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him reported that: "The Prophet SAW beat a drunkard with palm-leaf stalks and shoes. And Abu Bakr gave (such a sinner) forty lashes" (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, Hadith No: 6773).
- An-Nu`man or the son of an-Nu`man was brought to the Prophet SAW on a charge of drunkenness. So the Prophet ordered all the men present in the house, to beat him. So all of them beat him, and I was also one of them who beat him with shoes (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, Hadith No. 6774).
- Anas bin Malik, said: "A drunkard came to the Messenger of Allah SAW. The Prophet ordered to beat him with shoes forty times. Then Abu Bakr came with a man who drank alcohol, and he was given the same punishment. Then Umar came with a man who drank alcohol, and consulted people on that, Abd al-Rahman bin Auf said: the lesser punishment is eighty lashes. Then Umar beat him eighty times" (Ibn Hibban, 1988, Hadith No. 4450).
- As-Sa'ib bin Yazid narrated: "We used to strike the drunks with our hands, shoes, and clothes (by twisting it into the shape of lashes) during the lifetime of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and the early part of Umar's caliphate. But during the last period of Umar's caliphate, he used to give the drunk forty lashes; and when drunks became mischievous and disobedient,

he used to scourge them eighty lashes" (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, Hadith No. 6779).

- The consensus of scholars has proven the punishment for alcohol drinking. The scholars agreed that there is no death punishment for alcohol drinking. However, the scholars hold different opinions regarding the forty or eighty lashes. Some of them opined that it is forty lashes, while others said it should be eighty lashes (Ibn Hajar, 1379H).

It should be stated that the aim of that punishment is not to heal the alcohol addiction or hurt the drunkard person, but the main aim is to prevent people from alcohol drinking. This is evident in the hadith of the Prophet SAW. Abu Huraira said: "A man who drank wine was brought to the Prophet. The Prophet SAW said, 'Beat him!" Abu Huraira added, "So some of us beat him with our hands, and some with their shoes, and some with their garments (by twisting it) like a lash, and then when we finished, someone said to him, 'May Allah disgrace you!' On that the Prophet SAW said, 'Do not say so, for you are helping Satan to overpower him" (Al-Bukhari, 1422H, Hadith No. 6777).

The reason for preventing insults from wine drinking, though being the perpetrator of the great sin, is because the Satan wants to cause the drunkard to disobey Allah to be disgraced. If the person is disgraced, then the Satan achieved his aim. It is said: do not say that upon him because if Allah disgraces him, the Satan will overcome him or if he hears it from you, he will indulge in sin and wrath of the main purpose, and the supplication will make him become seduced (Al-Qastalani, 1323H).

6.3 Examining the causes and treatment of addiction

First, it has to be stated that majority of those who involve in alcohol addiction are the youth. Studies have shown increasing prevalence of alcohol drinking in a manner detrimental among young people in many countries. It is noted that alcohol addiction starts at young age. Reports indicate that 14% of teenage girls and 18% of teenage boys of 13-15 years age group involve in drug abuse in developing countries. This phenomenon causes lack of self-control and increases risk behaviors. It is worth mentioning that alcohol drinking is one of the main causes of casualties (including injuries resulting from traffic accidents) and violence (especially domestic violence) and premature death (WHO: www.who.int). Therefore, the researchers focus on this category because it is the most targeted, and majority of the addicted people are from this category. The following are the main causes of the prevalence of alcoholism among the youth in Muslim nations, and their treatment is through the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him).

1. The first reason is that the youth have distanced themselves from the religion. This is the main reason why the Muslim community experiences a lot of atrocities. It is known that development of societies depends on the youth. The Prophet SAW knows the importance of youth and their role in nationbuilding. He took care of them and guided them rightly. He also urged them to abide by Sharia law, and linked them to landmarks of faith and piety, because faith is the solid foundation in preventing the youth from immorality and evils. This is evident in the hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them), who said: "I was behind the Prophet SAW one day when he said: 'O boy! I will teach you a statement: Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah, and when you seek aid, seek Allah's aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do

something to benefit you- you would never get any benefit except that Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you- you would never be harmed except that Allah had written for you. The pens are lifted and the pages are dried" (Al-Tirmidhi, 4/667, Hadith No. 2516). It should be noted that empirical studies confirm that faith factor has an extraordinary ability for addiction treatment, prevention and relieve of stress and anxiety. It is also effective in the treatment of psychosomatic disorders, such as high blood pressure, ulcers, asthma and some skin diseases (Badri, 1996, p. 92). Al-Wali (1410, p. 36) explained that the religious awareness on the effects of alcohol is in various ways:

- Through the mosque: This is by instilling virtue and fight against vices. It must be launched from a platform of advocating for a war against alcoholism to fortify the people religiously and psychologically.
- Through schools that prepare the citizens for the purpose of virtue and morality: The efforts of schools are complementary and significant for children not only in school, but also after school.
- Through the media of all types: It apparent that the media are effective in nation building, and enlightening the people against alcoholism.
- Centers, associations and institutions: They play a significant role in sensitization against alcoholism, and conducting research, publications, lectures and seminars that warns against the danger of alcoholism.
- 2. Many young people suffer from lack of what they can entertain themselves; instead, they resort to alcoholism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that the treatment is through taking advantage of their youth. He encouraged the youth to take advantage of their youth for what is beneficial to them. He said: "Take advantage of five things before five things: your youth before old age; your health before sickness; your wealth before poverty; your leisure before your commitment; and your life before your death" (Al-Hakim, 4/341, Hadith No. 7846).
- 3. Many young people suffer from lack of love, kindness and compassion. This makes them to search for what will replace those feelings, hence they involve in alcoholism. It was one of the approaches of the Noble Prophet (Peace be upon him) that he cultivated in the youth the virtue of love, which kept them attached to him, and they supported him with their lives and money. In this regard, "a man was with the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and a man passed by him and said: Messenger of Allah! I love this man. The Messenger of Allah SAW then asked: Have you informed him? He replied: No. He said: Inform him. He then went to him and said: I love you for Allah's sake. He replied: May He for Whose sake you love me love you! (Abu Dawood, 4/333, Hadith No. 5125,). The Prophet SAW used to tell his companions that he loves them. For the Messenger of Allah held the hands of Mu' adh bin Jabal and said, by Allah, I love you Mu'adh, by Allah, I love vou (Abu Dawood, 2/86, Hadith No. 1522).
- 4. Lack of guidance for the youth to prevent them from committing sins: Many of the young people do not have guidance, and this makes them to commit sins. It should be noted that some of those who try to guide the youth lack the proper method of dealing with them. If one of the young people does wrong, some of those who try to guide him will be cruel to him. The Prophet SAW used to guide the youth with wisdom and good advice. Abu Umamah narrated that a young boy came to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and said:

- "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to adultery. People turned to him and said *Mah Mah*. He said, "Let him come closer", then he came closer. He said "he sat down". He said, "would you like it for your mother? He said, by Allah! No. He said, "People also do not like it for their mothers". He said, "Would you like it for your daughter? He said by Allah! No. He said, "People also do not like it for their daughters". He said, would you like it for your sister? He said, by Allah! No. He said, "People also do not like it for their sisters". He said, "Would you like it for your aunt? He said, by Allah! No. He said, "People also do not like it for their aunties". He then put his hand on him and said: "O Allah! Forgive his sins and cleanse his heart, and fortify his reappearance". Then from that time, the boy did not incline to do any related issue" (Ahmad, Al-Musnad, 36/545, Hadith No. 22211).
- 5. Also the youth are not given a chance to show their abilities and creativity. Therefore, they distanced themselves from innovation and excellence; hence this opens the doors of addiction to alcohol. The Prophet SAW developed those capabilities of innovation and excellence for the youth. Abdullah bin Umar narrated that: "the Prophet SAW sent an army under the command of Usama bin Zaid. When some people criticized his leadership, the Prophet SAW said, "If you are criticizing Usama's leadership, you used to criticize his father's leadership before. By Allah! He was worthy of leadership and was one of the dearest persons to me, and (now) this (i.e. Usama) is one of the dearest to me after him (i.e. Zaid)" (Al-Bukhari, 5/23, Hadith No. 3730).
- 6. Finally, it is concluded with a very important issue (i.e. companionship). Most of those who drink alcohol started as a result of bad companionship. This is because companionship plays a significant role in building the human personality. The Prophet SAW attached great importance to it. He said: "A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend" (Abu Dawud, 4/259, Hadith No. 4833). Moreover,, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) warns against associating with bad people, and encourages associating with righteous people. He said: "The example of a good companion (who sits with you) in comparison with a bad one, is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof' (Al-Bukhari, 3/63, Hadith No. 2101).

7. Findings

- 1. Alcohol, regardless of its names or attributes, is prohibited. The names are not the issue, but what it causes.
- 2. The Prophet's approach in the fight against the spread of alcohol is based on prevention. Prevention is better than cure; and it is restraining from alcohol drinking. The Prophet explained the punishment of alcohol drinking in the hereafter and its effects on acts of worship and morality.
- 3. The Prophet's approach indicated the role of the Muslim community in the fight against this scourge, and prevention of its spread, and the responsibility of doing that.
- 4. The second step of the Prophet's approach in the fight against addiction to alcohol was imposing punishment on those who drink alcohol. Without punishment, the people might incline to alcohol drinking, but when there is punishment, it will deter people from spreading the scourge.
- 5. The third step in the Prophet's approach to the fight against addiction to alcohol is searching for reasons that may cause people to commit the sin. After identifying those reasons, he solved the problems based on these reasons. The Prophet's

approach closes door for the spread of this scourge, and he fights against it, so that the Muslim community will be pure and free from immorality.

8. Recommendations

- i. Governments should apply Islamic legal provisions; whoever disobeys the law should be arraigned. By applying the punishment, the society is more cohesive and committed.
- ii. The scourge can be prevented by organizing conferences and conducting research and publications that show the effect of addiction to alcohol from physical, religious, economic and social aspects.
- iii. Addiction to alcohol can be prevented through different media programs aimed at combating alcoholism, and the use of advocacy, doctors and specialists to demonstrate its negative effects.
- iv. Islamic governments should close all alcohol businesses, and impose sanctions on those who trade it and those who attempted to manufacture such intoxicants.
- v. Attention to the youth should be increased in particular, because most of those who accept to drink alcohol are young people. This can be done through guiding them, educating them, and preparing them to become useful to the society.

9. Conclusion

The study revealed that the issue of alcoholism is a phenomenon that spreads in Islamic nations in general and among the youth in particular. This category is the focus of this study as they play a significant role in building of the nation and its culture. It was found that the Prophet's treatment of the addiction to alcohol was so successful that even fairminded amongst the Western scientists acknowledged that. The leaders of Islamic countries should implement Islamic law, because a nation can only be better when its first phase is good. The man-made laws, by using force and imposing sanctions, cannot prevent this scourge no matter how they tried.

Without the existence of internal control, which is the basis of the fear of the Almighty Allah, we will not be able to minimize those problems. The Islamic approach is based on prevention first. The better method of treatment of addiction to alcohol is prevention first, then establishing punishment, and finally addressing the causes of its spread.

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