

Drugs, Alcohol, & Gambling (part 1 of 2)

Description: A two-part lesson clarifying the Islamic perspective on three widespread evils: drugs, alcohol, and gambling. Part 1: The evil consequences of drugs and alcohol and the Islamic perspective on their consumption.

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Objectives

- Recognize the effect of drinking alcohol on the human mind and body.
- Learn the verses of the Quran and hadith of Prophet Muhammad on alcohol and drugs.
- Learn the Islamic ruling on alcohol and drugs.

Arabic Terms

- *Hadith* - (plural - *ahadith*) is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- *Khamr* - Any drink, drug, or substance that causes intoxication.
- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.
- *Surah* - chapter of the Quran.

Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol is part of the Western culture—it is used in celebrations and socialization, and it enhances religious ceremonies. Most Americans recognize that drinking too much can lead to accidents and dependence. But that's only part of the story. In addition to these serious problems, alcohol abuse can damage organs, weaken the immune system, and contribute to cancers. Furthermore, drinking kills 1,400 college students each year in the US^[1] and contributes to 100,000 deaths annually, making it the third leading cause of mortality in the US, after tobacco and diet/activity.^[2]



During 2007 a total of 38,371 drug-induced deaths occurred in the US.[3]

As an example of what it does to the brain, The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism states,

“Difficulty walking, blurred vision, slurred speech, slowed reaction times, impaired memory: Clearly, alcohol affects the brain. Some of these impairments are detectable after only one or two drinks and quickly resolve when drinking stops. On the other hand, a person who drinks heavily over a long period of time may have brain deficits that persist well after he or she achieves sobriety. Exactly how alcohol affects the brain and the likelihood of reversing the impact of heavy drinking on the brain remain hot topics in alcohol research today.

We do know that heavy drinking may have extensive and far-reaching effects on the brain, ranging from simple “slips” in memory to permanent and debilitating conditions that require lifetime custodial care. And even moderate drinking leads to short-term impairment, as shown by extensive research on the impact of drinking on driving.”[4]

Drug and alcohol dependence often go hand in hand. Research shows that people who are dependent on alcohol are more likely to use drugs, and people with drug dependence are much more likely to drink alcohol.[5]

Progressive Effects of Alcohol[6]

| Blood Alcohol Concentration | Changes in Feelings and Personality | Physical and Mental Impairments |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 0.01 — 0.06 | Relaxation Sense of Well-being Loss of Inhibition Lowered Alertness Joyous | Thought Judgment Coordination Concentration |
| 0.06 — 0.10 | Blunted Feelings Disinhibition Extroversion Impaired Sexual Pleasure | Reflexes Impaired Reasoning Depth Perception Distance Acuity Peripheral Vision Glare Recovery |
| 0.11 — 0.20 | Over-Expression Emotional Swings Angry or Sad Boisterous | Reaction Time Gross Motor Control Staggering Slurred Speech |
| 0.21 — 0.29 | Stupor Lose Understanding Impaired Sensations | Severe Motor Impairment Loss of Consciousness Memory Blackout |

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| 0.30 — 0.39 | Severe Depression Unconsciousness Death Possible | Bladder Function Breathing Heart Rate |
| => 0.40 | Unconsciousness Death | Breathing Heart Rate |

Islam, our beautiful religion, provides us guidance about drugs and alcohol. Islam views drugs and alcohol in the category of prohibited and forbidden. Any amount of drugs or alcohol is forbidden to use. Taking even a little wine for social drinking is totally forbidden. Once developed, the habit of drinking in small amounts soon develops into an addiction.

Allah has forbidden drugs and drinks in the Quran:

O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist? (Quran 5:90-91)

When these verses were revealed to the Prophet, an announcement was made that those who have alcohol were forbidden to drink or sell it. All stocks were ordered to be destroyed. Thereafter, alcohol was drained in the streets of the city of Madina.

One person asked if alcohol can be used as medicine. The Prophet said, **“It is not a medicine, it is a disease.”**[\[7\]](#)

The Prophet prohibited alcohol in strong words. He said:

“Truly, Allah has cursed *khamr*, the one who produces it, the one for whom it is made, the one who consumes it, and the one who serves it, the one who carries it, the one for whom it is carried, the one who sells it, the one who earns from the sale of it, the one who buys it, and the one for whom it is bought.” (*Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah*)

The Arabs before Islam were fond of alcohol and drinking parties. They had one hundred names for alcohol in their language. To eradicate this evil, Allah adopted a step-wise approach to prohibit it.

In the first stage, Allah expressed disapproval of drinking and gambling (*Surah al-Baqarah* 2:219). The second phase forbade people from praying in state of drunkenness (*Surah an-Nisa* 4:43). In the third and final phase, the prohibition was absolute (*Surah al-Maidah* 5:90-91).

Any drink, drug, powder, or substance that intoxicates is forbidden. Allah’s Prophet said, “Every intoxicant is *khamr*, and every *khamr* is forbidden.” (*Saheeh Muslim*)

He also said, 'What intoxicates in a large quantity is forbidden even in a small quantity.' (*Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi*)

What this means is that a sip of any alcoholic drink or a small quantity of a drug is also forbidden.

Endnotes:

[1]

(http://articles.cnn.com/2002-04-09/health/college.drinking_1_college-students-binge-drinking-student-deaths?_s=PM:HEALTH)

[2] J McGinnis & W Foege, 'Actual Causes of Death in the United States,' *Journal of the American Medical Association {JAMA}*, Vol. 270, No. 18, 11/10/93, p.2208

[3] (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6001a12.htm#tab>)

[4] (<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa63/aa63.htm>)

[5] (<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA76/AA76.htm>)

[6] (<http://www.alcohol.vt.edu/students/alcholeffects/index.htm>)

[7] *Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood*

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