

## HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TOBACCO NOTICED IN HISTORY

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### ABSTRACT

According to medical investigations tobacco smoking causes cancer of lip, tongue, tonsil and other parts of the mouth. And also lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, coronary artery diseases and emphysema are caused by cigarette-smoking. Three contemporary rulers, emperor Jahangir of India, James I of England and Shah Abbas I of Persia noticed the harmful effects of tobacco and tried to stop this practice. Khalil Pasha issued a prohibitory decree against smoking tobacco and he announced that anybody caught smoking would have his lips cut and eyes taken out. In 1044 Hijri, Russia also passed certain regulations against smoking. In India Guru Govind Singh prohibited tobacco smoking for the members of the Sikh community. He said 'Wine is bad; Indian hemp (bhang) destroyth one generation; but tobacco destroyth all generations'.

One of the first published reports on the bad effects of tobacco on health, issued in 1859, showed that all of the 68 patients in a hospital at Montpellier, France, who had cancer of the lip, tongue, tonsil, or other parts of the mouth used tobacco (Briggs, 1989). Following world wars I & II when cigarette smoking became wide spread, health authorities reported that in the countries where cigarette smoking was popular, deaths from lung cancer and certain other diseases were climbing at an alarming rate. In January, 1964 a

special advisory committee appointed by the United States Surgeon General ended with a two year study by reporting that cigarette smoking was associated with the 70% increase in the lung cancer death rate for American males in 1950-60. The report found that cigarette smoking was associated with lung cancer, coronary artery disease, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The pipe smoking report added, is linked with lip cancer (Benton, 1974). We also learned from another authority that, among many causative factors of

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cancer, one is cigarette smoking (lung cancer). In recent years there has been concern over the harmful effect of nicotine, the tarry compounds and Carbon Monoxide in tobacco smoke (Briggs, 1989).

In India tobacco was introduced during the time of Emperor Akbar. But Jahangir like his contemporaries James I of England and Shah Abbas I of Persia, believed tobacco to be a noxious drug and forbade its use (Smith, 1990). It is interesting that, three monarchs who were contemporaries realised that, tobacco was harmful and tried to stop its use. James I, has been described as the most learned man ever occupied a British throne, wrote verses. His speeches and prose writings were vigorous and clever. His writings include a 'A counterblast to Tobacco' which is a violent attack upon the practice of smoking (Warner and Marten, 1930).

In King James I's counterblast to Tobacco, the most valuable lines are the following – 'A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of the pit that is bottom-less.....' so the bad effect of the tobacco both for brain and lungs were pointed out by James I (Wilson, 1911).

In Iran tobacco had reached from Hindustan and Portugal through traders. Shah Abbas I the king of Iran did not like the smoke of 'Hukka'. In 1026 Hijri, Jahangir sent his ambassador named Mirza Barkhordar Khan Alam to Shah Abbas I. The ambassador was addicted to smoking. In fact he was a habitual smoker. He had always a golden 'Chapak' with him. In 1028 Hijri, 27th of Rajab, he was staying with the Spanish ambassador, English ambassador and the ambassador of the Ottoman empire. Once, all of them sitting along with Shah Abbas I were smoking together in the house of Imam Quli Khan. The Indian ambassador smoked from the 'Chapak' and the black foul-smelling smoke went from his mouth towards the king and others. Shah Abbas I did not like this tobacco smell but he did not say anything out of courtesy. So he spoke in Turki to the Spanish ambassador so that the Indian ambassador would not understand what he said and he asked the Spanish ambassador whether in their country people liked to smoke tobacco. The latter said, 'In Spain, except the Red Americans and black-skinned Africans nobody likes tobacco'. Shah laughed at it and to avoid smoke and the Indian ambassador he left the place and he showed his disgust by lifting the turban of the host (Imam Quli) and throwing it away.



“Abbas I (right) seated with the Emperor Jahangir”  
(Courtesy: The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1981, Vol. 1 P.No. 4)

It is interesting to know that smoking of tobacco was so much popular in Iran and it was so much in fashion that high officials and nobles used to smoke even on horseback while they were on travel. Gradually this addiction crept into general public also and it was a fashion to offer 'Hukka' for the first time to the guests. Even in literary discussions, in meetings and even in colleges the students used to smoke and every student used to carry a 'hukka'. The people used to break their Ramzan fast with 'hukka'.

An interesting fact given in connection with the above details is the following. Khalil Pasha issued a prohibitory decree against smoking tobacco and he announced that

anybody caught smoking would have his lips cut and eyes taken out, because he found many soldiers addicted to smoking. And then one trader found smoking was burnt to death along with his bags of tobacco (Falsafi, 1332 Hijri). In 1044 Hijri, Russia also passed certain regulations against smoking (Falsafi, 1332 Hijri).

If we turn to India again we find the valuable observation of Guru Govind Singh regarding the pernicious effect of smoking. The Guru who required the members of the brotherhood to abjure tobacco which he detested said—"Wine is bad, Indian hepm (Bhang) destroyth one generation, but tobacco destroyth all generations" (Smith, A. 1990).

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एक पृथी नए होंगी है किन्तु समाज से अनेक परिधियां नए हो जाती है।”  
 के सदस्या के लिये धर्मपान का निर्वह किया था। उन्होंने कहा था “मदिरा एक बुरी वस्तु है, भाग से  
 में हम में भी धर्मपान निवृत्तक कुछ नियम बनाये गये थे। भारत में गुरुगोविन्दजी ने सिख समाज  
 करने वालों के अन्दर काट देने एवं अखि निकाल देने की आज्ञा की प्रविष्टान किया था। १०४४ दिवसी  
 दिव्य और इसके अन्त में लोभों को छुटकारा दिलाने के प्रयत्न किए। अखिल पाशा के समाप्त की अक्षय  
 इल्लह के शासक ज्ञान प्रथम तथा ईशान के शासक शान्द अंशम प्रथम, समाज के दुःखभाषी पर ध्यान  
 में जोष शीघ्र तथा हृदय-सन्तुष्टी धमनी रोग आदि भी उपश्व होंगे। उन्होंने गिर तथा इसके समकालीन  
 गुरुओं आदि मुख के विभिन्न अवयवों में केसर की उपलब्धि होती है और फुफुंस का केसर, स्वास-नली  
 आयुर्विज्ञानीय अनुसंधान से ज्ञात हुआ है कि धर्मपान के रूप में समाज सेवन से ओठ, जिह्वा,

— अथवा चर्चिप्राथम्य

इतिहास में उल्लिखित समाज के दुःखभाव

भारतीय