

Why Intoxicants are Forbidden in Islam?

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All Muslims believe that intoxication is forbidden in Islam and try to keep away from them. However, some people express their doubts about their being forbidden. They ask a tricky question by playing with the Arabic word "HARAM" which means FORBIDDEN. They challenge us to show a single verse-AYAH in the Qur'an which says that wine is Haram (forbidden) for the Muslims. They make this demand only after ascertaining and satisfying themselves that there is no verse in the Qur'an which forbids the use of liquor using the word "HARAM". They wrongly assume that to forbid Muslims from doing something, it is necessary to use the term "HARAM" expressly. They ignore the fact that anything can be forbidden by God by using the other words by simply ordering Muslims to "Give-up" or to "Keep-away" from something. Read the verses below and decide for yourself if God has forbidden the use of intoxicants:

"They ask thee about intoxicants and game of chance. Say: In both of them is a great sin and (some) advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage." (Al-Baqarah-219)

"O you, who believe, go not near prayer when you are intoxicated till you know what you say." (An-Nisa/43)

"O you, who believe, intoxicants and game of chance and (sacrificing) to stones set-up and (dividing by) arrows are only uncleanness, the Devils work; so shun it that you may succeed." (Al-Maida/90).

"The Devil desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of means of chance and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayers. Will you then keep back?" (Al-Maida/91).

Ahadith or Traditions:

1. Ibn Majah reported from Abu Hurairah^{RZ} that the Prophet^{SAS} of God said:
"An addict of intoxication is like a worshipper of an idol."
2. And the Prophet^{SAS} said:
"One who drinks intoxicants, the light of faith goes out from his inside."
3. Abu Da'ud, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah and Byhaqi narrated that the Prophet^{SAS} of God said that:
"Whatever intoxicates in large quantity, its small quantity too is HARAM". Note that the Prophet^{SAS} has used the word Haram- Forbidden here.
4. Ibn Majah and Tirmizi reported that it is narrated by Anas Ibn Malik^{RZ}:
"That the Messenger^{SAS} of God cursed ten persons in the chain – starting from those who extract the liquor and ending on those who consume liquor."
5. Muslim reports that when someone told the Prophet^{SAS} of Allah that the intoxicant (Wine) is a medicine, the Prophet^{SAS} replied:
"It is not a medicine, but indeed it is a disease."

Simply because the term "*Haram*" (Forbidden) has been used in the Verse (Ayah) forbidding Usury it cannot be insisted that it is necessary to use the same term for forbidding anything else. Whatever Allah ordains His subjects to Give-up, or to keep away from it is surely forbidden even without using the term "*Haram*" for it.

The use of "*Liquor*" (along with the intoxicants) was forbidden gradually. The Arabs in the times of the Prophet^{SAS} were traditionally addicted to Wine and it would have been very harsh on them to give-up their old habit all of a sudden. Allah, the Most Merciful, enlightened them first about the sin involved in the practice of consuming Wine. In the beginning, Allah, the Most Merciful, explains to them thus:

"They ask thee (O Prophet) about consuming the liquor and gambling. Tell them! There is great harm in both and some benefit for people, but their harm is greater than their benefits." (Al-Baqarah/219)

And it was reminded to them that:

"Off the fruits of Date-Palms and the Grapes you obtain drinks, and pure and wholesome food."
(Al- Nahl/67)

However, Muslims continued to consume Wine, thinking that it was Halal (Permissible) for them. In these circumstances Syeduna Omer^{RZ}, Ma'az Ibn Jabal^{RZ} and other companions submitted to the Prophet^{SAS}

"O Messenger of God, give us a ruling in the matter of using intoxicants because they take away our consciousness while causing loss of money."

Then, came the revelation as described in the verse of *Al-baqarah/219*, as noted above. Consequently some people gave it up and some others continued to drink. In these circumstances Abdul Rehman bin Auf^{RZ} arranged a party in which people consumed liquor and became intoxicated. When they offered Obligatory Prayer the Imam committed grave mistakes in reciting the Qur'an. Hence the following verse was revealed:

"O Ye, who believe, approach not the Prayer, when you are intoxicated, until you realize what you say." (An-Nisa/43)

As a result the number of people consuming liquor reduced considerably. A party was arranged by Osman bin Malik^{RZ} and other 'Ansars'. At the party the guests became highly intoxicated and therefore quarreled and beat each other. Then Syeduna Omer^{RZ} invoked:

"Our Lord reveal us your clear and satisfying command in the matter of intoxication."

There upon came the revelation:

"O ye, who believe, liquor, gambling, idol and dividing arrows are but abominations and satanic devices. So turn away wholly way from each one of them that you may prosper."

"Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred between you by means of liquor and gambling and keep you back from Zikrullah-Remembrance of Allah and Prayers. Will you then end it?"

"Obey Allah and obey Messenger and be ever on your guard; But if turn away then

remember the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey Our Message clearly.” (Al-Maidah/ 91-93)

In view of the above four verses of the Qur’an, intoxication and gambling etc. became very degrading sins in Islam. They have very grave consequences for the human society as a whole. Therefore the Law giver of Islam has firmly made it forbidden (Haram). There are some people who are in a delusion about these clear commands of Allah simply because the word “Haram” has not been used in the above Verses and some of them have taken an extreme position when they wrongly claim that the Liquor is not rendered “Haram” by the Qur’an.

Infact Qur’an has made it “*Haram*” the reasons are as follows:

1. Allah^{SWT} forbade it by the word “*Wajtanibuhu*” meaning keep away from it. This word is far reaching because it keeps the consumer away from liquor and makes him to guard himself against it and to fear it. This is more than calling it Haram, in meaning. Then Allah made it clear that the prosperity and success in this world and hereafter lies in keeping away from it by the words “*La alla kum Muflihoon.*” It has been indicated that it is harmful in this world on account of its being harmful for the economy besides being bad for the family and the society that Satan wants to create enmity amongst people by means of intoxication and gambling. In addition to this it keeps them away from Remembering Allah and the Prayers which is a grave loss in the life hereafter.

2. Allah has questioned the user of intoxication: “*Then, will you end it?*” Even if this phrase is in the form of interrogation, it is in fact forbidding in its meaning. Indeed it is a clear command to stop it for ever.

From the above verses we can make the following conclusions:

1. Intoxication has been grouped with gambling etc. and made prohibited along with them.
2. Intoxication has been termed by the Qur’an as “RIJZ”-meaning filthy, dirty thing or act, which again means that it is forbidden.
3. It has been counted as an act of Devil. It may be noted that when the Prophet Moses^{SAS} delivered a mighty punch on a Khibti- which instantly killed him, it was regarded by Moses^{SAS} himself as an act of devil. When he realized it and submitted to God: “*Haza Min Amalish Shaitan*” (This was an act of Devil). This shows the gravity of sin involved in intoxication.
4. God ordained believers to keep away from it. This makes it definitely “*Haram*”.
5. Success and prosperity of a believer in this world and hereafter has been made dependent on keeping away from it.
6. God has alerted the believers from the designs of Devil to sow the seeds of hatred and enmity amongst people by means of intoxication.
7. Devil designs to block the way of *Zikrullah* –remembrance of God.
8. Designs of Devils to keep away the believers from offering the timely *Salat*- Prayers.

The saying of the Prophet^{SAS} (Ahadith) throws ample light on the subject of intoxication. The Prophet^{SAS} said:

"Anything which intoxicates by consumption of its large quantity, consumption of its small quantity too is Haram."

Tirmizi has reported from Hazrat A'yeshah^{RZ} that:

"The Prophet^{SAS} of God said every drink which intoxicates is Haram."

This Hadith removes the doubts of some people who say that a small quantity of Liquor which does not intoxicate is Halal or permissible. Prophet^{SAS} has made even the small quantity Haram. The above Hadith is narrated by Abu Da'ud, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi. It may be noted here that whatever intoxicates has been made Haram. So it covers all kinds of intoxicants, Muslim has reported that as a person told the Prophet^{SAS} that Liquor is a medicine, the Prophet^{SAS} said:

"It is not a medicine but an ailment."

Tirmizi has reported from Abdullah bin Omer^{RZ} that:

The Prophet^{SAS} said:

'Whoever consumes Liquor for the first time, his Salat will not be accepted by God for forty days and if he repents, Allah accepts. If he consumes it for the second time, Allah will not accept his prayers for another forty days and if he repents Allah accepts his repentance. If he consumes it for the third time his prayer will not be accepted for another forty days and if he repents again Allah will accept his repentance again. But if he consumes it for the fourth time Allah will not accept his prayers for another forty days. If he repents again Allah will not accept his repentance. And the punishment will be that in the life hereafter Allah will make him consume filth from the drain in the Hell.'

The facts noted above from the *Qur'an* and the *Ahadith* should be enough to clear the doubts of those who believe that consumption of liquor in small quantity which does not intoxicate is permissible or Halal, is also wrong because the *Qur'an* has called it "RIJZ" or filthy. The filthiness mentioned in the *Qur'an* can be understood from a "Naql" Narration of the *Khalifatullah* - Caliph of God, *Hazrat Syed Muhammad Mahdi Al-Maud^{AS}* in which he compared the Wine with Urine.

May God make us obey His commands for our own good and for the good of our community, Ameen.