

Think about the future

It is clear that smoking affects our body, mind and the people around us. But the big problem with smoking is much deeper and affects us in way we may not think of at first. It is essentially the warning which the Sikh Guru has given humanity, which is that smoking affects our unborn children. For example, smoking may cause your children to be born with problems with their heart, central nervous system, digestive system and even their intelligence.

How does smoking affect future mums?

Dr Paula Rantakallio from Finland, found that diseases of the respiratory system which includes our lungs were found more in children born to mothers who smoked, followed by various diseases of the nervous system and the sense organs. Doctors Richard Naeye and Ellen Peters have also shown that smoking by a mum during pregnancy causes childhood hyperactivity and lower mental development. This was shown by the children getting lower scores on spelling and reading tests. Research has also found a 10% higher chance of crime being committed by the age of 22 years in the sons of mothers who smoked whilst pregnant.

How does smoking affect future dads?

Nicotine has been shown to have a mutagenic action on sperm, thereby resulting in severe limb deformities in the offspring.

How can you stop a smoking habit?

You will need to adopt the same six rules highlighted in the alcohol section shown earlier. A combination of meditation, yoga, prayer, exercise and good food will lead to a healthy mind, body and soul.

Adultery

Adultery and Faithfulness

When you get married you will make certain vows and one of them is that you will be faithful to your partner. You make this promise with God, so live up to it.

Sexual relationships before marriage

Sikhism prohibits a sexual relationship before marriage. The main reason for this is that the human

mind merges with the partner with whom you are having sex. So every sexual partner becomes part of your mind permanently. This means that every time they have a negative thought, you will have a negative thought, no matter where they are. It is a huge burden to carry through life. That is why monogamy for life is recommended, so that your mind can be functional to meditate on God.

Secondly, this is a safeguard to protect people from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's). Currently there is an increase of STD's among young people in Britain. So the health of an entire nation could be improved by just following this one simple rule!

How can you control lust?

Excess lust is a major problem for many people and is simply due to the obsession of society with sex, which misplaces our energies. Regular meditation, Kundalini Yoga, and listening to Jap Jee Sahib in the morning can be used to transform a person's creative energy to be more useful in the body. Also, we can change our perception of other people by considering other men and women as our own brothers and sisters.

Eating Meat

Sikhism promotes vegetarianism and indeed there are many reasons why people should become vegetarian, including protection of the environment, improving ones health, showing kindness to animals and spiritual advancement.

There are some Sikhs who believe that only eating Halal meat is forbidden within Sikhism. However, this is not the case. Please read 'Halal meat versus Jhatka meat' leaflet for more information.

Cutting hair

Long hair has spiritual, psychic, psychological and physical functions. The sacredness of long hair goes back to the beginning of human history. Please read the 'Five K's' leaflet for more information.



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The Four Noble Blessings

Sikhism

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Introduction

Every Sikh is advised, to follow the four noble blessings which include the avoidance of:

- Using intoxicants including alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Adultery and sex before marriage
- Eating meat
- Cutting hair

This essay explains why the avoidance of each one of these is considered a blessing. The spiritual function of hair has been covered in the 5K's leaflet and vegetarianism has also been discussed in other leaflets, so these topics are not discussed in great detail here.

Intoxicants

What is alcohol and alcoholism?

Alcohol is a depressant which acts on the control centres of the brain to depress them. Research done by the American Medical Association has shown that Alcoholism is a disease in which the drinking of alcohol becomes a need and produces various problems in a person.

Why do people drink alcohol?

People generally drink alcohol to be sociable. Some people also drink alcohol to get away from the stresses and strains of every day life.

How does alcohol affect the mind and body?

Its effects include confusion, disorientation and possible hallucinations. Regular drinking can lead to the development of organic diseases such as a fatty liver, hepatitis, cirrhosis, liver cancer and also cancer of the mouth, tongue and throat.

How does alcohol affect human behaviour?

2 out of 3 murders, 1 out of 3 rapes, 1 out of 3 suicides, 2 out of 5 assaults, and 3 out of 5 cases of child abuse are directly connected to the use of alcohol. In addition to that, one out of 2 deaths by fire and drowning are alcohol related, as are 2 out of 5 home accidents. Thousands of people die in car accidents due to alcohol. One out of 2 in-

patients in our city hospitals is there because of an alcohol related problem.

How does alcohol affect family life?

It can be draining on the families' income and it can also leave a bad impression on young children. Many cases of domestic violence especially within Asian communities are also a direct result of alcohol consumption.

Is alcohol in medicine acceptable?

This is the one exceptional case when alcohol may be consumed by a Sikh, because it is for medicinal purposes.

How can you stop a drink habit?

The key to achieving this is to build a healthy mind, body and soul. This can be assisted by adopting the following lifestyle.

1. Spend 10 - 15 minutes meditating every morning and every evening. Keep repeating, 'Wahe' as you breathe in through your nose and 'Guru' as you breathe out through your mouth. Focusing on the breath will help you to concentrate.
2. Read or listen to Jap Ji Sahib meditation every morning. Go to www.spiritvoyage.com
3. Try to do 30 minutes of exercise every day such as martial arts, weight training, football, running etc.
4. Ensure that you have a good, well balanced diet. Reduce your intake of junk/fried food like crisps, sweets, chips and replace it with fruits, vegetables, nuts, plenty of fresh water etc.
5. Wear a Kara on both wrists and whenever you have an urge to drink, look at your Kara and remember your commitment to God. This has worked for many people.
6. Try some Kundalini Yoga which is a gift from Guru Ram Das. It is a powerful yoga which can break the stranglehold of alcohol and drugs by rebuilding the nervous and glandular systems. Go to www.kundaliniyoga.org

The historical significance for the ban on smoking

The 10th Guru was riding his horse one day, when suddenly his horse stopped. The Guru's disciples asked why his horse refused to cross the field. The field actually contained tobacco plants and the Guru

replied, "Alcohol will destroy one generation, but tobacco will destroy many generations"

Is it not amazing that the Guru's horse knew the dangers of tobacco? The scientific accuracy of the Guru's words shall be highlighted shortly.

Why do people smoke?

Most people start smoking from a young age, because it is perceived to be a cool and trendy habit. The media also portrays smoking to be cool.

How does smoking affect the mind?

Its addictive nature causes irritability, worry, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbance, fatigue, headaches, dizziness, tremor and nausea. In general, smokers are more likely to see a doctor for an emotional or psychological complaint. Nicotine within some individuals can also cause symptomatic reactive hypoglycaemia. This is a condition responsible for causing many personality and psychological disorders, like panic attacks, schizophrenic episodes and criminal activity.

How does smoking affect the body?

In adults, smoking causes heart disease, lung cancer, asthma, vessel damage and many more diseases. Smoking also reduces the ability of the immune system to protect you from diseases and infections. It makes your teeth go yellow and causes your whole body including your clothes to smell of cigarette smoke. People who smoke also age quicker and this is shown visibly by wrinkles on the face and skin and dullness in eye colour. On average, someone who smokes a pack or more of cigarettes each day lives 7 years less than someone who never smoked.

How does smoking affect family life?

As with alcohol, smoking can be an expensive habit and a family unit could use that money elsewhere in e.g. going on holiday, buying educational books or even giving the money to a charity. Also cigarette smoke is 3 times more dangerous when smoked passively than it is when inhaled directly. So it will no doubt cause a detrimental effect on the health of every person living within the house.