

## **Yaqona, Kava, Grog Drinking is Prohibited in Islam**

### **(All Types of Intoxicants and All Narcotic Drugs are Also Prohibited to Muslims)**

This is a supplementing and clarifying article. The earlier article styled as “Why Are Muslims Prohibited Consumption of Alcohol” has elevated some pertinent questions from several Muslims of Fiji-origins, enquiring mainly whether *yaqona/kava/grog* is also prohibited.

This is a very valid question as the whole issue pivots on usage of the word “intoxicant.”

The pivotal confusion arises from certain other English translations of the Holy Qur’an, in which the translators used the word “alcohol” in its narrowness, meaning spirituous beverages, rather than the all-encompassing correct term “intoxicants” as used most ably and aptly by the late and illustrious luminary in Islam, Maulana Muhammad Ali of Pakistan.

In almost all countries where *yaqona/kava/grog* is widely consumed as common social drink, there are also common terminologies used for it, which also have common meanings.

It is also equally important to understand correctly, what causes "*grog dope*" or "*yaqona ke nasha*" as others call it in the local (Fiji) vernacular. This same point is being raised by many people, both in Fiji and those who have migrated away from Fiji.

Those readers with no direct links with Fiji may have some difficulty in understanding what this article is all about. Grog, also called *yaqona* or *kava*, is just as prohibited as it is an intoxicant without spirituous alcohol. *Yaqona/kava* is a non-spirituous plant (a shrub) extract but is nevertheless an intoxicant. More details are expanded upon in the paragraphs later.

It is a serious mistake to assume prohibition of alcohol but not *yaqona*. Both are intoxicants!

The prohibition in the Holy Qur'an reads collectively as "intoxicants" and not alcohol or prohibiting different types of alcohol beverages, listing them by all classification types and all brand names:

This prohibition is stated as an ordinance in the Holy Qur'an at 2:219, as “*They ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them is a great sin and (some) advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage. And they ask thee as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allah make clear to you the messages that you may ponder.*” The expression “men” denotes mankind in totality and that means that women and boys and girls are also included. There is no dispensation.

The root cause behind the prohibition above 2:219 is anything which intoxicates and all means of gambling. Intoxicant beverages includes beer, wine, must, vermouth, cider, perry, mead, gin, vodka, whisky, rum, brandy, cognac, etc and grog (aka *yaqona, kava*) and drugs and narcotics. The consumption and quantity limitation is not stated in the Holy Qur'an, which means that they are prohibited in any quantity for enjoyment; but allowed as ingredient in medicines (certain cough mixtures must have it, otherwise the medicine does not work).

What is *yaqona/kava, grog*?

The national State laws of some countries are silently accommodative in allowing consumption of *yaqona/kava*, grog. This is commonly the situation in many Pacific Islands countries where consumption of *yaqona/kava*, grog is woven into the very fabrics of their cultures, traditions and their societies. In some countries *yaqona/kava* are banned imports.

There are also variable restrictions on the trade and consumption of alcoholic beverages as intoxicants, in some other countries. However, almost every country in this world has completely banned other mind-altering intoxicants, such as narcotic drug types; and Islam also prohibits Muslims from consumption of these types of drugs, because they are all falling into the general broadness of being “intoxicants.” More of these are expanded in separate paragraphs below.

*Yaqona* is historically a native Fijian (*iTaukei*) word. Whereas *kava* is a native Tongan word and it is also referred to mean same thing in the Marqueses. Other Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian communities have variations in pronunciations and spellings, but mean exactly the same item. Grog is loosely-used word within the English language communities in many countries; and it refers broadly to all types of weaker alcoholic beverages. (Historically, the word “grog” started in the British Navy in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, in the days of sailing warships, which referred to a mixture of weak beer and weak rum added to water. It all started when this mix of beer and rum had to be added to drinking water kept in wooden casks, and especially after they developed algae and staleness, and giving out unpleasant odour. Sailors then drank this “grog” without much fussing.)

*Yaqona/ kava* or grog: - is an intoxicating drink made from the aromatic roots of the kava shrub. *Yaqona* has its botanical name *piper methysticum* (*piper* is Latin and it means peppers) and that name (*methysticum*) comes from the Greek language and which means "intoxicating." *Yaqona/kava* also has properties of being a sedative and an anaesthetic and accordingly takes control of the consumers' mind and senses. It alters the natural state equilibrium of the consumer's mind, and slowly but progressively into doped dullness.

From Fijian cultural records, *yaqona* was a special ceremonial drink set aside to be served to chiefs only and prepared by young virgins. The frequency of drinking this emulsion of *yaqona* and water was circumstantially ceremonial only; and the serving of it to the chief required very specific strict protocols, both before serving it and after serving it. Whilst much of the cultural protocol has been maintained, the purpose has changed from ceremonial drinking to binge drinking, leading to common societal problems.

The binge drinking currently practised was never the intentions and designs of the ancient Fijians. Many Christian Churches in Fiji are now discouraging binge drinking of *yaqona*.

What is an intoxicant? An intoxicant is any substance that alters the human mind, so that the person consuming the substance is no longer in full control of the senses. This also means that drugs and narcotics (e.g. marijuana, LSD, heroin) and glue sniffing (*pun pun*) are also prohibited in Islam.

Both Islam as a perfect religion and its Muslim practices, are not just plain religious practices but a complete way of life and with recommended lifestyles, intended to benefit humanity.

The Holy Qur'an is more than just scripture. It is a ready-reference manual for the betterment of humanity, and which separates God-fearing mankind from his otherwise instinctive and basic animal behaviour. Some examples of drugs are as:

### **Marijuana or Indian Hemp**

This covers a wide range and species of fibre-bearing plants and some types are narcotic. It is also known as *cannabis indica*, *bhung*, *hasheesh*, *charas*, *cannabis* and *hemp*. Marijuana is a psychoactive drug and the most widely used illicit substance in the world. Active and damaging ingredient is delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol. The consumption Marijuana causes reddening of the eyes, and decreased intra-ocular pressures. It also causes dryness in the mouth and throat. Marijuana also causes sensation of heat and cold on the skin. In addition it also causes increased heart rate and feeling of relaxation. Marijuana or Indian Hemp is an addictive mind-altering substance. Side-effects are memory loss, mood changes, anxiety, confusion; nervousness, rapid pounding heartbeat, depression, hallucinations, and abnormal tiredness after the effect of the drug wear off. It is classified as an intoxicant.

### **Cocaine**

Cocaine is derived from the leaves of the coca plant. The coca plant is grown in the Andean mountains of South America, in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. In order to transform coca plant leaf to Cocaine Hydrochloride, a refining process is required to be completed. Cocaine is an addictive intoxicant.

### **Ephedrine**

Ephedrine can be extracted from several species of the plant genus *Ephedra*; however it also is produced synthetically. It is used in medical preparations as a Bronchodilator and manufactures in countries such as Germany, Czech Republic, India, China and Japan. Ephedrine is an important precursor used in the clandestine synthesis of Methamphetamines. This is an addictive intoxicant.

### **LSD**

LSD (Lysergic acid-diethylamide) is a powerful semi-synthetic hallucinogen and psychedelic entheogen. It is synthesized from lysergic acid and is sensitive to oxygen, ultraviolet light and chlorine, especially in solution. LSD is produced in crystalline form and then mixed excipients or diluted as a liquid for production in ingestible forms. In pure form it is colourless, odourless and has a slightly bitter taste. LSD causes powerful intensification and alteration of senses, feelings, memories, and self-awareness for 6 to 12 hours. In addition LSD usually produces visual effects such as moving geometric patterns, "trails" behind moving objects, and brilliant colours. LSD usually does not produce hallucinations in the strict sense, but instead illusions and daydream like fantasies. At higher concentrations it can cause synaesthesia. The pharmacological effects can be followed by long lasting psychological shifts such as changed views and mindset. This is an addictive intoxicant.

### **Methamphetamines**

The most frequently used precursor for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamines in whatever form are Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine the primary reason being their easy availability. This is an addictive intoxicant.

### **Opium**

This is soft latex obtained from the opium poppy plant. They average 12-15% morphine. It is processed to obtain heroin concentrates for illicit drug trade. When taken into the human body, opium very quickly enters the blood stream and travels to the brain and hence becomes a mind-altering drug – intoxicant. This is an addictive intoxicant.

In order to strike a balanced equation between alcoholic intoxicants on one side, and other non-alcoholic intoxicants and substances on the other side, the above are some examples of

mind-altering substances, in open format, which also fall into the Holy Qur'an classification of prohibited "intoxicants."

There are many other drugs; however this is a religious article and it is not an academic paper on drugs of abuse.

In reiteration, *yaqona/kava/grog* is also prohibited and it is widely reconfirmed in the Hadith. Two examples are given below; but there are several other Hadith as well.

**Hadith:** (1) Bukhari 74:3 states Rasul-Allah (pbuh) as saying "*Every drink which intoxicates is prohibited.*"

(2) Abu Dawd 25:5 states Rasul Allah (pbuh) as saying "*Of whatever thing a large quantity intoxicates, a small quantity is also prohibited.*"

Allah loves His best of creations, we humans, so much so, that He made certain that His orders and restrictions must be heeded to, so that there is orderly and respectful behaviour amongst all mankind. It must also be respected that Allah the Best Knower, being the best proactive and projects Planner, knows all along the ill-effects of consumption of intoxicants. Apart from taking control of persons' minds and resulting in utterly disgusting behaviours, these intoxicants also take direct and permanently damaging effects on the consumer's body and general health.

The active ingredients of *yaqona/kava* roots are called *kavalactones*. The leaf of the *yaqona/kava* plant contains the alkaloid *pipermethystine*. *Pipermethystine* is known to cause hyper-toxicity in humans and is proven to lead to the liver (permanent) failure in people habitually consuming *yaqona/kava*.

Side-effects of *yaqona/kava* do not develop after a single drink or a few drinks but generally after habitual and binge drinking, which may vary from a few years to many years.

Other side-effects of *yaqona/kava* drinking leads to the following as given in the table below:

Malnutrition	Weight-loss
Liver damage	Liver cancer
Increased occurrences of high-density lipoprotein cholesterols	Skin disorder (in Fiji this is called <i>kani-kani</i> ) giving fish-scale type appearances,
Rashes	Kidney dysfunctions
Pulmonary hypertension	Macrocytosis of red cells
Lymphoctyopenia	Decreasing platelet volumes
Lethargy	Numbness and weakening taste buds
Eyes becoming sensitive to light after binge drinking of <i>yaqona/kava</i>	Addiction to <i>yaqona/kava</i>

None of these side-effects is of any benefit to humans but all are seriously damaging negative impacts.

Inasmuch as the growers, cultivators and commercial sellers of marijuana, opium and cocaine and various other agriculture-based drugs disagree, that their illicit products are harmful for

regular human consumption, the growers, cultivators and commercial sellers of *yaqona/kava* also disagree that *yaqona/kava* is harmful for regular human consumption. Notwithstanding their regular negativity, Allah the Best Knower, has warned humanity to take proactive and positive measures in preventing harm to humanity the best and pride of His creations. Yet there are little thanks that people will give to Allah.

The Holy Qur'an is more than just a scripture. It is the operations manual for perfect way of life for the entire humanity; a perfect blueprint for all good living, and not just for Muslims.

There are seven specific prohibitions on intoxicants in the Holy Qur'an; these are at 2:219, 4:43, 5:90, 5:91, 6:31 and 16:67. The Holy Qur'an makes certain and clarifies that intoxicants prevent people from going to prayer; and once a person is intoxicated, the effects persist for several hours, which means that the intoxicated person will miss out on five compulsory prayers daily. This is given in the Holy Qur'an opening clause at 4:43, as "*O you who believe, go not near prayer when you are intoxicated till you know what you say, nor after sexual intercourse — except you are merely passing by — until you have bathed.*"

The Holy Qur'an also warns humanity, that it is the devil taking control of peoples' minds when he entices people to participate in some nefarious activities, which will keep people away from prayers, and this is clearly demonstrated at 5:91, as "*The devil desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then keep back?*"

Please refer to the other article by the same author "Why Are Muslims Prohibited Consumption of Alcohol" and which should be circulated to all interested, as part of service to Islam and ensuring that Muslims are on the correct path. If however, after being warned and advised, Muslims do not heed and continue on the wrong path, then they have an account to settle with Allah on the Last Day.

The Holy Qur'an gives ample warning to those who do not want to heed to the Orders at 6:31, as "*They are losers indeed who reject the meeting with Allah, until when the hour comes upon them suddenly, they will say: O our grief for our neglecting it! And they bear their burdens on their backs. Now surely evil is that which they bear!*"

It is for all correct thinking Muslims to warn other Muslims; the Holy Qur'an has sanctioned that correct advice shall be given to those who need to be guided. This is given in the Holy Qur'an at 3:103, as "*And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful.*"

In conclusion, any substance of whatsoever description, which intoxicates a person, is prohibited to all Muslims, regardless of age, gender and financial standing in society, except insofar as a small quantity may be an essential ingredient in medicinal preparations.

**Fiji**