

## HALFWAY THERE

We are completing the first half and approaching the second of our annual spiritual journey of the blessed month of Ramadaan. During this blessed period characterised by fasting and increased piety through prayer and good deeds, we offer our congratulations to fellow travellers.

A special congratulation goes to Muslim smokers. In obeying the Divine command, they abstain not only from eating and drinking but also from a quick puff between dawn and dusk, the most crucial time of craving for a smoker. Observations have shown that even the heaviest of smokers will never compromise their fasting for the nicotine fix, even though pharmacologic and behavioural processes that determine tobacco addiction are similar to those that determine addiction to drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Nicotine is one of the most highly addictive substances known to man and is one of the hardest dependencies to break. Nicotine inhaled from a cigarette reaches the brain in 7-10 seconds, delivering the "nicotine hit" which makes smoking so addictive. It alters the brain chemistry, but clears quickly, so there is a need for continuous re-dosing.

There are over 5 million smokers in South Africa, and 44.000 related deaths each year.

Statistically, half of long-term smokers will die from tobacco. From a medical point of view, every cigarette smoked cuts at least five minutes of life on average – about the time taken to smoke it.

Smoking is the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death. It is a prime factor in heart disease, stroke and chronic lung disease. It can cause cancer of the lungs, larynx, oesophagus, mouth, and bladder, and contributes to cancer of the cervix, pancreas, and kidneys. More than 4,000 toxic or carcinogenic chemicals have been found in tobacco smoke.

Smoking kills more people every year than all drugs combined, alcohol and vehicle accidents.

This worldwide demonstration en masse is unique, in that the abstention is achieved without any assistance from specialized psychological programs, hypnosis, medication, and use of

nicotine patches, nicotine chewing gum and other therapies. It is purely in submission to the Divine Injunction of our Creator.

And if this has been achieved in one half of the day in this month of Ramadaan based on obedience to Allah, why disobey Him during the other half of Ramadaan and the rest of the year? Islam as the Final Revelation to mankind has condemned smoking and Muslim Jurists have ruled it to be either Makruh (detested and undesirable) or Haraam (forbidden) on the basis of causing harm to one's health (Qur'an 2:195 & 4:29), danger to your family's health and the environment (Qur'an 33:58), inconvenience, harm and discomfort to others (Hadith), waste of money (Qur'an 17:26-27) and possible ingestion of Haraam ingredients (Qur'an 7:157).

Here are some suggestions:-

Use this Mubarak month of Ramadan as your quitting point – do not delay by a single day.

Take a calm look at the facts on smoking, the costs and its harmful effects on your body. Consult this regularly to reaffirm your determination to quit.

(Click here for articles and cost calculator):

<http://www.sanha.org.za/flashnews/flashn37.html>

<http://www.sanha.org.za/flashnews/flashn38.html>

<http://www.sanha.org.za/flashnews/flashn41.html>

[Cigarette calculator](#)

If possible, rope in family and friends who also want to quit, so that you can support each other.

Do not hesitate to seek help from your Doctor or Imam who by training and inclination will support you.

Change your lifestyle with exercise, a new hobby and frequenting the Masjid daily.

**Quit today! Why be half-hearted when you're already halfway there.**