

Forward to the Epistle of Zulfaqar

(About Forbiddance of Opium Smoking)

Written by Haj Mulla Ali Nour Ali Shah Gonabadi

Introduction

In Irfan-e-Iran; a journal on mysticism, Vol. 8 (spring 2001), a book named Zulfaqar (About Forbiddance of Opium Smoking) written by His Holiness Haj Mullah Ali Nour Ali Shah Gonabadi was introduced. The book was recently (winter 2003) published for the 4th time, revised and typeset, and also a glossary was added. The new edition has had a foreword by His Holiness Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh and it has been published in that volume of Irfan-e-Iran because of its importance and also its relevance with the malignant growth of drug addiction in Iran's current condition.

Foreword

By Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

A problem with which all nations are dealing, and has distracted minds of both neglectful and thoughtful administrators is the addictive drugs. Addictive drugs weaken the mind and nervous system of the addicted; they have lots of effects especially on youths, preventing them from any kind of effort and mental activity. It is even said that some recent dictators pretended that they were against using stupefacient drugs, although they put no effort on forbidding them and did nothing about it. But today, due to the deteriorating condition, not only all the states have established some organizations to fight against drugs but also all the nations have paid attention to this issue in the United Nations, and this organization has acted against it along with the nations to help root it out as the states and nations are nowadays engaged in this matter.

Now, it is people's spiritual leaders' duty to prevent this corruption, otherwise, people's immoral habits cannot be avoided by using law enforcement; even for a democratic and just government, it seems impossible to hinder drug use. The ever-observer or inner watchful eye that is called "the conscience" of the people has to be called in for help. Even the moral conscience cannot be effective in this case as many of those who believe in ethics have habits in contrast to the ethical codes and they cannot have self-control although they admit their wrongdoings. In this area, the string of emotions and feelings that can be stronger than any other of the kind is the string of religious feelings, but unfortunately, many efforts have been recently put into

debilitating religion and religious feelings, and the point that this remaining amount of religious feelings can be used to eliminate the habit of stupeficient drugs has been ignored. Therefore, it is the spiritual and religious leaders' duty to pay attention to that point in the society. One of the jurists' duties (may God multiply them as many) is to not only take the necessities of everyday-life into consideration, but also, using their foresight, to block the dangers that currently seem unimportant but might become important if compromised with.

The late Haj Mullah Sultan Muhammad Baydokhti Gonabadi titled Sultan Ali Shah; a great mystic, philosopher, thinker, jurist, exegete and also a medicine took this subject matter into consideration.

Itimad-o-Saltanah; the author of the book *Almaather val athar* (The exploits and the effects) written during Nassir-id-din Shah's reign, about the news around the country writes: "In recent years, that the colonizing governments who have advertised and developed an stupeficient drug in India and have brought it into Iran and have started growing it in Kerman and are persuading people into using it. This product is called papaver and its stupeficient drug is called opium. Cautions need to be urged."

Those days, also, Haj Mullah Sultan Mohammad paid serious attention to this subject matter. Although this subject was so unimportant that it caught no one else's attention, His Holiness in *Bayan a-Sa'adah fi Maqamat Al-Ibadah* (Happiness in the stages of worshipping) referred to the Quran, in explaining the Surah of the Cow, verse 218: "**They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In both of them there are advantages and disadvantages for mankind, but their harms are greater than their benefits**"¹ and inferred that using opium, which was the only stupeficient drug by the time had to be banned and clearly verified its unrighteousness (*haram*). Later on, Haj Mullah Ali Noor Ali Shah, his son and also his successor wrote a book titled *Zulfaqar* about forbiddance of opium smoking which has been published three times by now and this 4th edition will also be published hopefully with some revisions.² It needs to be mentioned that this book forbids all other stupeficient drugs as well, since they are all emanated from opium which is the resin coming out of papaver plant. No doubt that when opium is basically forbidden, all other stupeficient drugs will accordingly be considered forbidden. As the above-mentioned verse, alongside banning intoxicants and gambling, points out to some advantages, this book also talks about few possible advantages.

After the forbiddance in *Bayan a-Sa'adah fi Maqamat Al-Ibadah*, His Holiness Sultan Ali Shah and all his successors, in their testaments, advised their children and followers not to be involved in stupeficient drugs. Even his grandson Haj Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Salih Ali Shah announced: "I will not be happy deep in my heart if my inheritance is spent on stupeficient drugs even for a bit, in fact, I am not reluctant to leave any inheritance to an addicted child." Therefore, we can fortunately claim that there are no or only a few addicts (if there is any) in His Holiness Sultan Ali Shah's generation.

¹ The Quran, Al-Baqara (the Cow), 218: يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِنَّهُمَا أَعْظَمُ مِنَ نُّفْعِهِمَا

² The whole book in this edition has been typeset and revised again. Technical vocabulary and Arabic expressions have been defined and translated in the footnote. References and List of Words have also been added to the end of the book.

It is the jurisprudents' duty to impose forbiddance on using drugs. By the time that *Zulfaqar* was being compiled, some jurisprudents were asked about this subject and their replies are printed at the end of the book. In fact, they warned against such a danger too. After that period, no succeeding jurisprudents paid attention to this subject matter until 1955 when the red alert of stupefacient drugs was triggered; Minister of Health presented a report to Ayatollah Haj Husain Borujerdi and asked him to announce if it were forbidden whether he agreed. He accordingly forbade it and the news was told in the press but since the government was putting effort to take away people's religious beliefs, Iran same as many other countries was unfortunately trapped in this disaster too. Fortunately, for the time being, almost every jurisprudent has forbidden the stupefacient drugs.

The solution that some of previous governments arrived at unwisely was to strictly forbid cultivating the papaver plant, therefore they legislated some laws. But, forbidding the cultivation of papaver flower seems like to cut some parts of human body in order to lower passional crimes and adultery, or to shut down all the factories that produce cyanogen just because it is extremely poisonous, while it is beneficial for some nervous diseases if taken with caution. However, forbidding caused a great damage to Iranian farmers and agriculture. In the previous times, before the World War II, the United Nations approved a bill for the first time to ban to grow the papaver plant except in those permitted places and they offered this bill to Iran to be approved. Seemingly, Ayatollah Modarris did not agree with and said that it would have been approved only if Iran had been among those countries where cultivating papaver plant is not forbidden. After the World War II, when English influence was replaced by American one, the US allowed Turkey and Afghanistan to cultivate opium plant to air an opinion that Iran does not need to produce opium, as she already owns oil resources. From there on, while producing opium was forbidden, it was imported from Afghanistan and Turkey much more than the amount that could possibly be produced in Iran. But, it would have been much more beneficial if they had devoted all those efforts of disabling production of opium to control this product, to keep out of reach of ordinary people and to provide morphine and drug manufacturers with this product. In addition, the quality of Iranian opium is so high that could be used for pharmaceutical consumption. However, the principle of unlawfulness of stupefacient drugs is of the fundamental mystical conducts and after that forbiddance, there has so far been a stronger emphasis on this forbiddance so that the addict is not admitted in the Sufism and mysticism circle. Therefore, the number of addicts among the followers of Nimatullahi Gonabdi Order is limited to those who became addicted under exceptional circumstances and there are extremely hard efforts to cure their addiction. These issues have been elaborated at length in the brilliant articles in the foreword of the previous editions of this book.

May God Almighty save the whole of mankind from this catastrophe, Amen!