
THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ADDICTION: CHALLENGES TO CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN EUROPE

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Abstract

The paper identifies the Islamic perspective of addiction to psychoactive substances in Europe. Islam in its teaching indicates the necessity of caring for physical and mental health. Muslims should avoid all substances that impair the clarity of perception, as well as those that can have a negative impact on health. Islam gives the status of haram to plants with addictive properties, which include: opium poppy, hashish, and qat. Islam speaks negatively about the consumption of beverages resulting from the fermentation of fruit - various wines and vodkas. The main research problem is to answer the question: why do Muslims succumb to addiction to psychoactive substances? The article shows the moral dilemmas of addicts and points to the problems of addicts in a religious environment. However, the problem remains tobacco, which smoking causes many diseases, but its use belongs to the important customs of the Muslim world. These practices have a negative impact on social relationships.

Keywords: Islam, plants, alcohol, drugs, addiction, Europe

1. Introduction

Addiction to psychoactive substances is undoubtedly one of the greatest social problems and the contemporary scourge of humanity. They affect people around the world equally, irrespective of their social, geographic, educational and environmental status. It can be said that addictions that are harmful to health are very democratic, with equal rights. The motives for using drugs are varied. Curiosity, entertainment, the will to experience quasi-mystical experiences, the desire to forget about the pain of existence [1]. The reasons can be enumerated endlessly, because each addict has his own path to addiction and persistence in it. Muslim scholars emphasize that Islam is a religious system that protects human life and exists in the world to benefit people both in temporal and eternal life. It is especially important to secure the five main human needs: religion, life, mind,

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property and offspring. In order to maintain these needs, a person must maintain a healthy, undisturbed mind. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate any factors that could adversely affect the ability to reason [1].

The classical teaching of Islam condemns all kinds of addiction, which is a state of mental and physical health disorder. A person addicted to a psychoactive substance loses control over his desires. The ability to take free actions that are often performed under duress, such as the need to take a dose of a drug, also fades. It should be noted that the current psychological knowledge explains the term addiction very broadly, not only limiting it to the use of chemical substances by humans. You can be addicted to the Internet, shopping, gambling and other activities over which a person has lost control. Islam is critical about alcohol, but it should be emphasized that intoxicants now include all substances that can cause dementia and intoxication. This group includes narcotic compounds, hallucinogenic plants and beverages. This is the position of most Muslim scholars. They believe that substances that cause any changes in human consciousness have haram status, and therefore are forbidden [2].

Psychoactive substances in the Islamic world have been present since ancient times, despite their strong condemnation of their use [3, p. 3]. Islam covers most continents, and thus various cultural regions, in which long before the advent of this religion, the use of narcotic substances was a ritual, and it is still the case today [3, p. 3]. The question about the relationship between religion and addiction becomes justified at this point. Of course, there are systems and religious movements where rituals are carried out with intoxicants. In recent years, Ayahuasca has been a popular substance that enables the religious experience of altered states of consciousness among Europeans. Ayahuasca, also known as yagé, natema, caapi and huaraca is a South American, pan-Amazonian psychoactive brew used both socially and as ceremonial spiritual medicine among the indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin. It is a psychedelic and entheogenic brew commonly made out of the *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine, the *Psychotria viridis* shrub or a substitute, and possibly other ingredients [4].

Vegetation in the Muslim tradition is of great importance. It refers to the symbolism of a garden that is extremely important in Islam. Garden, with *ar-janna*, is an allegory of a longed-for paradise, which contains all the elements for which man yearns and desires. For the tribal people living in the desert, it was above all a pleasant coolness, experienced in the shade of trees, colorful flowers and an environment of eye-friendly greenery. Plants are also used in Islamic decorative arts, which often use motifs of vines and various types of flowers.

2. Literature review

The issue of addiction has been the subject of numerous scientific research and the subject of numerous studies. However, there is almost no literature raising the issue of addictions in the relationship between Islam and human health. The subject of addiction was taken up by Mansur Ali [5], focusing his research on the theological perspective of Islam, based on the Qur'an science. And this is undoubtedly a phenomenon of great research interest, because it is where various

spheres of human life meet: health, social relations, religious and spiritual values, and thus those concerning the most intimate spheres of human existence [6]. The reason for this is that Islam prohibits the use of psychoactive substances by its adherents, and even in religious orthodoxy the ban is extended to all addictive substances, including coffee and tobacco.

The published studies concerned addiction to various substances among selected groups of Muslims. Noteworthy are those related to the motivation to quit smoking in the context of health policy [7].

This article identifies the health consequences for the addict and his family, as well as the ethical dimension of plunging into an addiction, contrary to the strict moral principles of Islam. An addicted person plunged into drug addiction experiences numerous moral dilemmas. The body demands more and more of this addictive substance, which leads to the destruction of the organism. At the same time, a religious person experiences moral dilemmas, because in times of sobriety, he knows that he is acting contrary to the principles of Islam. Such an emotional swing has an intense effect on the addicted person. It significantly influences his self-esteem and promotes depression. An additional blow to an addict is being thrown to the margins of society by family and friends. All these experiences become the basis of difficulties that, apart from being addicted, the addicted person has to cope with [8].

3. Materials and methods

However, plants are primarily a type of food from which drinks are also made. Certain plants, after appropriate preparation, have debilitating and addictive properties. The main research problem of this article is presented in the following question: what mechanisms induce adherents of Islam to addiction to psychoactive substances? The research problem formulated in this way requires specific questions, which are: 1. What are the addictive properties of plants? 2. Are narcotic substances obtained from plants immoral according to the teachings of Islam? 3. What are the challenges for the Muslim community in the face of the increasing popularity of drugs among the followers of Islam?

The method of qualitative research was used. Twelve structured interviews were conducted with people professing Islam: eight men and four women. All persons were over 18 years of age and under 40 years of age. They all graduated from high school, and five of them also graduated from university. Eight people work professionally. People were selected at random, through an advertisement on social media, asking them to answer a few questions about the causes and reasons for using psychoactive substances. The study concerned the delicate sphere of human life, which are the choices of the path of life, often contrary to the existing customs in the family and the immediate environment.

An important element of the study was the analysis of reports and documents of Muslim organizations dealing with the prevention of addictions among young people. The aim of the research was to show the growing problem of addiction to psychoactive substances in Muslim communities. These communities are ethnically, geographically and economically diverse.

This study is a novel approach to the complex problem of addiction to psychoactive substances in Muslim communities living in Europe, because it presents an innovative approach to the subject. The study conducted an in-depth analysis of the theological discourse on psychoactive substances. An extremely important element of the study was personal in-depth interviews with addicts and the opinion of religious leaders of various Muslim communities.

4. Wine and alcoholic drinks

The issue of alcohol in the Islamic tradition is very controversial and often ambiguous. Wine is an alcoholic drink with an alcohol content of between 8 and 18% [9], obtained by the fermentation of freshly squeezed grape juice. It should be emphasized that non-alcoholic wines are also produced nowadays. It is also possible to obtain wine from other fruits. During the Jahiliyya period, wine was a drink very widespread among the tribes living on the Arabian Peninsula. The first revelations of the Qur'an concerning wine, which is a drink that impairs human consciousness, did not condemn him, which can be learned from the following surah: "... eat of all fruits ... from their insides comes a drink of various colors, in which people find healing" (16,69) [10]. In this *ajata*, the juice of the fruit, which is wine, is shown as a form of healing. Only the later messages of God's revelation, contained in the following words: "They will ask you about wine and *majsir*. Say: there is great sin in them..." (2,219) [10] and "O you who believe! Wine, *majsir*, idols and fortuneteller's arrows are abominations resulting from the work of Satan. So avoid it! (...) Satan only wants to throw enmity and envy among you through wine and *majsir*, and turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer" (5,90-91) [10]. These *ajats* state that it is a *makruh* drink, and therefore forbidden, even the work of Satan, who gave it to man so that believers would turn away from the one and true God.

It was mentioned earlier that in pre-Muslim times the use of alcoholic beverages was allowed [11]. In Arabic, there are two terms that characterize alcohol: *hamr* and *nabīd*, therefore its types should be distinguished. The word *hamr* denotes alcoholic beverages, and *nabīd* means wine. Thus, *Hamr* was a strong drink with a high content of pure alcohol, and he was drunk with wine, a drink obtained from fruit. It is known from the history of the first *umma* that Muhammad and his companions drank drinking. The following event is recorded in the Hadith of *Aṭ-Ṭaḥṭāvi*: "The prophet, while staying near Al-Qa'aba, felt thirsty and asked for something to drink. The wine was served, Muhammad, after sniffing, found it too strong, added water from Zamzan and drank it" [12].

Therefore, at the beginning of the formation of the principles of Islam, there was no clear, unequivocal prohibition on the use of alcohol. It was an activity, a cultural custom of the area, and popular with both women and men. Nevertheless, alcohol use posed a threat to the stability of the young community of believers, as Muhammad knew. Probably for this reason he delivered the so-called 'Avoidance verse' also referred to as *iğtināb*. It recommended avoiding the use of alcohol. However, not everyone was able to implement this recommendation. The turning point, which resulted in the introduction of a complete ban on alcohol

consumption, were the events of the Battle of Uhud in 625. Then Muhammad's army got drunk with wine since dawn [12], for this reason many of the prophet's soldiers were killed, and the entire battle was lost. After these events, a verse of the Qur'an was revealed, forbidding drinking wine, because despite the benefits for man, it causes much more harm and evil, which is a great sin.

Another argument that forbids the use of alcohol by believers is the dullness of human acts by the action of alcohol, a toxin. A man drunk with alcohol is unable to rule his actions and cannot control his thoughts. A drunk person cannot consciously commence prayer and fulfill it. Also for this reason, the following Qur'anic verse was proclaimed: "Do not go near prayer when drunk until you know what you are saying" (4, 43) [10].

The Islamic tradition teaches that Muhammad has condemned and condemned the ten things and activities related to wine. These are: the people who squeeze the juice; people who induce it; wine drinker; delivering them; the one to whom the wine is brought; the one who pours, sellers; earning on it; the buyer and the one for whom it is purchased [12, p. 86-93].

Islamic law provides for punishments for drinking alcohol, although Muhammad himself did not take any consequences against people who used wine. He only warned his associates against punishment in eternal life. Thus, today's flogging punishment, used in some countries, for the consumption of alcohol is much later and is credited with its creation to the Caliph Umar [13].

The scholars of the Hanafi school allowed wine to be eaten and traded. They even believed that the income from the sale of this drink could be a handout. Moreover, members of this legal school allowed the possibility of ablution with the use of wine as a ritually clean fluid. With the development of the doctrine of Islam, new and often differing views on alcohol consumption emerged. The competing views of this problem, i.e. the lack of a clear and unequivocal prohibition on the part of Muhammad and firm statements against this drug by his successors, caused a discrepancy on this issue.

This problem has not been completely resolved to this day. Compliance with the use of alcohol depends on many factors. The dominant factor is the geographical factor and the location of alcohol in the Islamic tradition in a given area. In Saudi Arabia and Iran, the use of alcohol is prohibited and its possession is severely punished. In other parts of the world this view is different. There are theories that on non-Muslim soil, you can drink alcohol, similarly at night, because then Allah sleeps and does not see the behavior of his faithful [14, p. 22-23]. A common practice is to put the alcohol bottle in an opaque bag.

Such measures lead to the avoidance of customary law, are a sign of the times and one of the elements of the secularization of society in general. Increasingly, religious issues cease to be of significant importance in the modern world. Adjusting and even bending religious and customary law to human comfort is becoming more and more common, also in the circle of the Muslim tradition. The liberal approach to the issue of alcohol is an interesting and, at the same time, a very clear manifestation of this secularization of the Muslim lifestyle, especially in Europe [15]. The development of medical and biological and physical sciences concerning the functioning of the human body contributed to a more open view of

the place and use of alcohol in human life. It is known from the conducted research that certain, small amounts of dry red wine are good for human health, because wine contains substances supporting the natural defense mechanisms of human cells. Regular consumption of wine, especially red wine, has a pronounced healing effect on the circulatory system. This is confirmed by scientific research conducted until the 1970s. It was found that patients who consumed moderate amounts of red wine, grape-based, had a heart attack much less frequently than abstainers. According to the statistics of French scientists, the incidence of cardiovascular diseases among the populations of countries consuming more wine: France, Spain, Portugal, Italy is approx. 30% lower than in northern countries with higher consumption of dairy products: Great Britain, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark.

The healing effect of wine in the case of cardiovascular diseases is more complex and should be considered on several levels. The alcohol contained in the wine dilates blood vessels, increasing blood flow through the coronary and capillaries. It also has a direct impact on lowering the overall level of cholesterol, improving the ratio of lipoproteins to the benefit of useful EFAs (essential unsaturated fatty acids). A moderate dose of wine has no negative effect on the heart rate and blood pressure. The wine contains a whole range of so-called antioxidants, mainly from the group of bioflavonids (vitamin P), which have a stronger antioxidant effect than the antiatherosclerotic vitamin E. In addition to lipids, bioflavonids also inhibit the oxidation of adrenaline, which acts as a blood pressure regulator in capillaries. Thanks to the beneficial effects of antioxidants, wine prevents the increased accumulation of cholesterol on the walls of the coronary and cerebral vessels. Greater permeability and elasticity of blood vessel walls reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke. It also prevents the serious disease of old age, such as hardening of the arteries of the lower extremities [16]. This knowledge is often used by Muslim groups to explain their alcohol consumption.

It is not contrary to religious principles and the laws of Islam to take a drug made with or on the basis of alcohol, if it cannot be replaced with another drug. Because in the case of a disease, the most important thing is to control it and take care of the health and life of the sick person. This exception is also confirmed by the fact that the dose of alcohol contained in the drug does not impair human consciousness. Even after taking it, the person will remain sober.

5. Wine in Eternal Life

The reward for Muslims for sacrifices made in life on earth will be paradise - a heavenly garden known by the term *janna* - through which streams filled with wine flow: "This is the likeness of the Garden that has been promised to the godly: there will be (...) streams of wine in it - a delight for the drinkers" (47.15) [10]. Perhaps for this reason abstinence on earth is recommended in order to taste the heavenly drink in eternal life and be able to appreciate its qualities. The wine in *janna* will not make a person drunk: "Among them there are immortal youths, with bowls, jugs and goblets, filled with a drink from a flowing spring, from which they do not suffer from a headache or get drunk" (56, 18-19) [10]. Moreover,

Islam teaches that whoever on earth does not obey the ban on drinking alcohol will not be able to taste the drink of Paradise in the next life.

A Muslim in the 21st century is increasingly confronted with yet another problem with alcohol, namely the moral issue of working with alcohol. The factors condemned by Muhammad and related to working with alcohol were mentioned earlier, among them there are also those who make it possible to distribute and serve alcohol. However, nowadays, at a time when Muslims live, live and work almost all over the world, performing various professions, the following problem arises: can a follower of Islam work in distilleries, breweries, pubs, restaurants and other branches of the economy with capital ties? with alcohol producers? And from the above dilemma, another one is born - can a Muslim participate in ceremonies during which alcohol is served? These are particularly important problems for social reasons [17]. First of all, the beginning of the 21st century is a time of economic crisis and increased unemployment, and therefore work is a good. On the other hand, social contacts and acceptance of the environment is currently a very important factor integrating mutual relations between people. The social environment often determines the status of a given person. That is why the presence at ceremonies or more modest social gatherings is often a requirement and an obligation. The necessity to meet such requirements stands in opposition to personal beliefs. Muslims running a business in Europe, especially in the catering industry, are valued specialists in the culinary field, appropriate for their home countries. Europeans like oriental cuisine, but this popularity forces the owners of bars and restaurants to adapt their offer to the customer's needs. Hence, a common picture is a mutton kebab in combination with a cold beer served by a Muslim.

6. Drugs

Islam completely prohibits the use of narcotic drugs that affect the ability to perceive. Therefore, marijuana, cocaine and opium are not allowed, because they induce hallucinations, negatively affecting the thinking process and decision making. The use of psychoactive substances is perceived as an escape from the inner emotions of a person and external life, as well as religion, which should be strengthened even in difficult situations. Addiction affects not only a drug addict, weakening and, consequently, completely destroying his awareness and ability to function. The problem also affects the family and society as a whole [18].

Therefore, drugs belong to the group of prohibited products. However, the intensive development of Muslim countries and following the trends prevailing around the world made drugs present in the lives of the followers of Islam. This has undoubtedly been contributed to by global fashion, increasing globalization and increased mobility of the population. Research shows that in Arab countries, the number of people who die from drug overdoses is similar to the death toll in India [19]. The problem is big because the so-called weaker drugs, i.e. hashish and opiates. The societies that use the highest amount of psychoactive substances include: Lebanese, Kuwait, Syrians and Jordanians, as well as residents of Bahrain and Egypt [20]. It should be emphasized, however, that the Egyptians choose

hashish much more often. Nearly nine percent of the country's inhabitants are addicted to smoking, especially those who come from poor circles.

7. Medicinal poppy

Opium is made from dried juice obtained from cut, unripe poppy seeds. Taking the substance causes a strong euphoria and extremely intense sensual pleasure. After the use of opium, the person is in a state of joyful numbness and reaches a state of sleepy happiness [21]. Overall pleasure is felt and mysterious images are revealed. This blissful state has tragic consequences, as opium is a highly addictive substance, both physically and mentally. Narcotic craving caused by opiate deficiency causes real pain in the whole body and physical suffering. The leader of the world ranking of opium consumption is Iran, where it is estimated that 42% of the global resources of this drug are consumed [22]. In this way, the poppy-smoke-loving legacy of Persia is continued.

The use of opium in the Muslim world was a form of ritual. Until the beginning of the 19th century, richly equipped and, above all, very comfortable opium smoking rooms were a characteristic feature of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Smoking opium was a leisure activity known and used by both rulers and peasants [23].

In addition to the process of drug use and, consequently, treatment of addiction, the countries of the Middle East struggle with the problem of the production and smuggling of illegal substances. For many years, Afghanistan has remained the world's largest producer of opium, from which heroin is produced [24]. Poppy cultivation has been growing for many years to now reach 210,000 hectares of field surface. In 2014, the poppy harvest was seven and a half tons. Afghan opium is exported not only to neighboring countries, i.e. mainly to Iran and Pakistan, but also to remote regions of the world, mainly via Turkey, to Europe, Asia and Oceania, and also to West Africa [20]. The profits from the production of drugs remain under the control of the Taliban, who use them to fight the authorities in Kabul. Despite various attempts to combat the practice, including the payment of benefits to farmers to stop growing poppy, it does not bring the expected results. Afghanistan's drug addiction problem is growing steadily. According to government research, there are one million drug addicts in the country, 15% of whom are women and children [24].

8. Qāt

Yemen also has a problem with the growing drug addiction and addiction to psychoactive substances, where *Catha edulis* is one of the most important crops. Commonly known as qāt, a plant with narcotic properties. The cultivation of qāt is a kind of cultural symbol of Yemen, the cultivation of which contributes to the economic decline in agriculture [25]. It provides around 40% of all Yemen's crops. This plant was known in the ancient world, because it was the Egyptians who discovered its stimulating properties. Growing qāt is a source of income for 90% of Yemeni families. The use of the plant is manifold: fresh or dried leaves

are used for chewing or brewing. Everyone uses the plant in the country, no matter what the status of a person and their profession are. In the past, the plant was usually chewed 2-3 hours in the afternoon and usually on weekends, today this activity takes 7-8 hours a day for Yemenis. Interestingly, qāt is also used by women, and in the capital city of Sana'a, it is common for nursing mothers to use the plant. More and more often, the plant of a tree cursed by the Qur'an becomes a source of energy and the only pleasure of the inhabitants of Yemen. Nearly 50% of Yemen's population lives on 2 Euro a day, or 400 Yemeni rials, and 300 rials a day are spent on qāt. Chewing qātu reduces the feeling of hunger, but its bitter taste increases thirst, usually quenched with highly sweetened drinks, equally expensive. Yemen's lack of prospects for a better life makes them completely lose their willingness to fight against adversities. In the drug, seeing the only escape from problems. A few leaves of the plant help to pass the distance of several villages on foot. Students chew on it during the session. Interestingly, the defenders of the plant claim that qāt avoids problems with the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs, even though the effects of qāt are comparable to those of amphetamines. Its consumption causes potency disorders [26].

Politicians do not want to ban the cultivation of the plant, because they are aware of its strong market position. The income per hectare of qātu is \$ 1,000, while hectare of wheat is profitable of \$ 150. Apart from the destruction of the organism and, consequently, society, the risk is also water, which consumes 80% of the total resources allocated to agriculture in the production of plants. In addition, it is extremely profitable to trade the plant outside Yemen. The qāt leaves should be fresh because they lose their potency after three days. This is why a plane lands in London's Heathrow twice a week with a fresh supply of good-looking twigs wrapped in banana leaves. Plant prices: 1 kg in the UK costs \$25, in the US, Canada and many Arab and European countries where the plant is illegal, the price is \$400. Chewing qātu is part of Yemen's tradition and culture, but has many side effects [27].

9. Tobacco

The teachings of Islam are not unequivocal on the issue of smoking. It emphasized that people are harmed by what is immoral and the words of Muhammad are often recalled: "You must not harm yourself or other people" [28]. Currently, apart from religious guidelines, medical authorities are much more likely to be voiced on this matter. It has been proven that smoking is harmful to the health of people who are not only an active smoker, but also their environment. Smoking can lead to many diseases, including heart disease, digestive and respiratory systems, and lung cancer. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid smoking. Shisha is particularly popular in the Arab Middle East, also known by many other names depending on the country and region, the most popular being narjila and water pipe [29]. Two types of tobacco are used: pure tobacco and a mixture of tobacco and orange, apple or mint paste, similar to jam. The heart of the hookah is the water bottle that filters the smoke. A metal pipe for smoking is inserted into the shisha cup. The shisha should not be inhaled deeply, but only let

the smoke down the throat. Hookah is a characteristic way of relaxation among men.

Much more restrictive rules apply in the territory dominated by the so-called Islamic State, which believes that smoking, as well as the use of other intoxicants, is prohibited by Sharia. In accordance with the applicable rules, the following penalties are provided for trafficking in tobacco products and smoking: flogging, arrest with torture, and even death. In addition, the guilty party must pay a fine of \$600 [30]. In many Muslim countries, despite the official ban on smoking, authorities do not punish violators of this law, because smoking is a Middle Eastern ritual and is very popular.

10. Hashish

Hashish is an extremely popular drug in the Islamic world. It is made of cannabis resin, containing a psychoactive substance called tetrahydrocannabinol, popularly known as THC, which is soluble in alcohol and fats. Hashish is most often introduced into the body with tobacco in the form of hand-made cigarettes, called joints. The practice of using hashish by Arabs was known long before Islam. Restrictive religious law, however, failed to root out his presence in culture [31].

Afghanistan is a leader in the cultivation of cannabis, rich in the psychoactive substance tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), in the Middle East, as in the case of poppy seeds, because it obtains a much larger crop per hectare, according to estimates it is as much as 145 kg of hashish, while in Morocco it is only 40 kg. Lebanon is also famous for the significant cultivation of the cannabis plant from which the hash is prepared. Hashish is most often added to tobacco and smoked in the form of hand-made cigarettes, called joints [32].

11. Results

There are no detailed statistics on the number of Muslims addicted to psychoactive substances. This is because, according to the teachings of Qur'an, the use of intoxicants is prohibited. At the same time, belonging to a community professing Islam does not guarantee resistance to all the dangers of addiction. This problem affects uneducated people as well as those with higher education. Workers and the unemployed are also addicted, although the problem of unemployment is often a consequence of the abuse of psychoactive substances while still in employment. Systematic drug use is the beginning of problems with the performance of official duties, punctuality at work, and concentration. All these shortcomings often end up dismissing the addicted person from work.

All active drug addicts who agreed to answer the question why they take drugs unanimously responded: "I am experiencing an indescribable state of euphoria. Suddenly all worries disappear and I am happy." The answer to the question about the reasons and motives for taking drugs was not so unanimous. The most common answer given was plain human curiosity about the drug experience that has been heard or seen in movies. The second answer, the most

frequently given, was the fear of rejecting the peer group and obtaining the term 'saintly man' who is afraid of God. People addicted to psychoactive substances are often stigmatized in a religious environment. They become known as people who disobey God and the principles of religion. They also have to deal with the opinion of those who have brought disgrace to the family [33, p. 78-97].

Drug addiction in the Muslim community living in Europe is a huge problem. Much more powerful than in the Middle East. This is for many reasons. Of course, the basic one is less pressure from the surrounding environment and much easier access to drugs than in Muslim countries.

The Muslim community is not willing and open to support people addicted to drugs and alcohol. Officially, every believer can ask for help from the mosque, he can talk about his problems. However, the practice is not that friendly. 'Clean' people do not understand addiction problems, therefore they do not provide support to those in need [33].

Muslims use psychoactive substances for many reasons. Most often it is depression and various forms of anxiety. Addiction treatment therapists emphasize that until recently, among their patients, there were practically no people from the Muslim community, or such people did not reveal their religion. However, systematically over the last ten years this situation has changed. A growing group of Muslims who do not hide their religious beliefs turn to psychotherapists. Psychological help is provided by people with qualifications. This help is implemented on the foundations of the model of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). However, it happens that Muslims reject some of the therapy as incompatible with the principles of Islam. Malik Badri, a world-renowned Muslim psychologist, believes that some of the people using anti-addiction therapy do so for religious reasons [35].

Addiction therapists emphasize that the decision to treat drug addiction or alcoholism is the best that can be made by those struggling with addiction. Like any disease, it requires treatment by specialists who are qualified and experienced therapists. It is also important to support loved ones, family, friends and the religious community. Still, however, a drug addict or alcoholic in a Muslim family is a cause of shame and disgrace for the family, a kind of stigma that the environment has to face and live with.

12. Conclusions

A large diversity of social groups, representing different states and social strata, as well as coming from different geographic regions, significantly affects the argumentation of entering the path of addiction to psychoactive substances.

Youth from wealthy Muslim countries use drugs out of curiosity and willingness to experiment, and often also out of boredom. Such attitudes are much more often observed among the representatives of the Persian Gulf states and Lebanon, as well as among young people living permanently in Europe. The use of addictive substances is often an element of pressure from the peer group, the desire to gain popularity in the group and to prove that you can do anything if you have adequate financial resources. The feeling of having no moral barriers has a

destructive effect on a young person. Unfortunately, the conducted research has shown that despite the appropriate religious upbringing by their parents, descendants, in spite of the rules, do not apply moral norms in their own lives. On the other hand, people living in poor countries and regions plunged into political, economic and economic chaos perceive narcotic substances as anesthesia and a temporary escape from the overwhelming problems of everyday life. This is what is happening in Yemen and Afghanistan.

An important problem related to the progressive process of addiction to psychoactive substances among young Muslims is also the lack of proper preventive education. The prevailing belief in the Islamic tradition is that since there is a Qur'an ban on the use of substances that alter consciousness, education is not necessary. This attitude of parents, teachers and imams is inappropriate, especially now in the 21st century. Making the younger generation aware of the health risks and consequences for the entire life resulting from drug addiction and alcoholism should be the primary goal of education. Anyone can be affected by the problem of addiction, regardless of their religious background and commitment. However, ways of solving problems related to drug addiction and alcoholism are important. Mosques have an important role to play in this, as organizations not only of social trust, but also centers of spiritual support. Communication between people is the foundation. First, of course, in the family, and then also in the mosque, with an imam or people with similar experiences. The growing problem of addictions in the Muslim community should be an impulse for imams to educate believers about the dangers to human health and life caused by addictions. It is important to prevent addiction, not just to emphasize the prohibition of using stimulants. Collaboration is needed between the mosque and addiction therapists. Of course, an important element of counteracting drug addiction and alcoholism is building a strong faith and relationship with God.

Summing up the considerations on plant stimulants in the Muslim tradition, it should be stated that, as in any other culture, there are various views on the use of substances that may be harmful to health. Islam in its teaching quite clearly indicates the need to take care of health, both physical and mental. Therefore, the believer should avoid all substances that impair the clarity of perception and that may have a negative effect on health. For this reason, Islam distinguishes between plant substances that have haram status, and therefore are completely prohibited for use by believers. These include all narcotic drugs, such as opium and hashish. However, due to the cultural conditions of the Islamic world, smoking opium or chewing qat was, and often still is, a popular pastime in some areas. Alcohol is perceived somewhat differently, for which Islam has no justification, forbidding it completely. On the other hand, coffee and tea, despite their addictive properties, are currently not perceived as harmful substances.

The Muslim community faces a fundamental theological challenge resulting from the unequivocal prohibition of the use of intoxicating substances in Islamic doctrine. The Quran and Hadith categorically classify mind-altering substances as haram (forbidden), which creates a tension between the religious ideal and contemporary reality. Religious leaders must develop methods for addressing this tension that preserve the integrity of Islamic teachings on haram,

especially substances derived from plants. It is necessary to update the theological interpretation, taking into account contemporary medical knowledge about the nature of addiction as a disease. An empathetic and non-exclusive approach to people struggling with addiction is also extremely important.

Moreover, the European Muslim community faces a serious socio-cultural challenge, including the problem of stigmatization and tabooing the phenomenon of addiction to psychoactive substances. This is related to acculturation pressure and identity conflicts experienced by Muslims living in Europe. The reason for this approach is the insufficient recognition of the phenomenon of addiction among Muslims, for religious reasons. People deeply rooted in religion reject the possibility of addiction in their family members, which leads to hiding the problem from the family and, consequently, social isolation of people affected by addiction. Acculturation pressure and identity conflicts contribute to increased tension between traditional values supported by Islam and the norms of the host society. A sense of alienation and marginalization in a new environment encourages reaching for psychoactive substances. Finally, the increasing cultural dissonance, leading to the search for alternative forms of belonging to society, often leads to addiction.

Summing up, Muslim communities face complex challenges that require a multidimensional approach. An effective response to the problem of addiction requires integrating a religious perspective with modern medical knowledge, taking into account cultural specificity in therapeutic programs, and breaking stigma and taboos. It is also crucial to strengthen the institutional capacity of Muslim communities to address the problem of addiction while maintaining the integrity of their religious and cultural identity. There is an urgent need to develop research on the effectiveness of culturally adapted interventions and to create platforms for the exchange of good practices between Muslim communities in different national contexts. Success in addressing these challenges can contribute not only to improving public health but also to strengthening social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

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