



Selling Cigarettes in One's Newsagents Shop

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<QUESTION>

What does Islam say about selling cigarettes in one's newsagent? Is it totally Haram to sell cigarettes, and as a consequence, would the income generated be totally Haram and filthy?

<ANSWER>

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

The Shari'ah ruling concerning the sale of cigarettes follows the ruling (hukm) of smoking itself.

As explained in a previous answer on our website titled: "Smoking cigarettes, cigars and pipes" that the ruling of smoking is differed upon among contemporary scholars. Many major contemporary scholars from the Arab world as well as the Subcontinent, across the 4 Madhhabs, consider smoking to be unlawful (haram) and sinful because of its great individual and societal harm as proven by modern medical research. However, other major scholars from the Subcontinent are of the opinion that smoking is somewhat disliked (makruh tanzih) and not Haram unless one habitually smokes an amount from which grave harm is feared in one's specific case. This is a matter of scholarly difference.

As such, according to those who consider smoking to be absolutely Haram, the sale of cigarettes, and the income derived there from, is also Haram and filthy. It is not permitted to derive benefit from this income; rather, this wrongfully-acquired money must be given away in charity to the poor and needy without the intention of attaining a reward but merely ridding one's self of this impure money. (See: Radd al-Muhtar and Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyya)

However, according to those who consider smoking, in normal cases, to be merely Makruh Tanzihan, the sale of cigarettes, and the income derived there from, will not be deemed as absolutely prohibited and sinful.

My advice is that, although there is scope for acting upon the latter opinion, it is best to avoid selling cigarettes and tobacco in your newsagents (a small business that sells newspapers, stationary, snacks and often items of local interest). You may avail of the income that has been generated in the past, but it will be best to discontinue, even if gradually, selling cigarettes. This certainly is the more precautious form of action, and a means of earning the blessings of Allah (Baraka) in your business, Insha Allah.

And Allah Knows Best

Muhammad ibn Adam

Darul Iftaa

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