

Q: 35 – Title: Could you give us the ruling with regards to KAVA drinking.

Question

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Answer

**In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful**

**Assalaamu `alaykum waRahmatullahi Wabarakatuh**

Kava comes from the root of the pepper plant *Piper methysticum*. It is used in ***traditional ceremonies***

\*and for social occasions in many of the Pacific Islands. Kava is valued for its ***medicinal properties***\*

and is sold as an herbal preparation or medicine in many countries.

**\* TRADITIONAL PURPOSES OF KAVA CEREMONY**

Kava can be found in recreational and social gatherings. It has been used as a social drink for high-ran



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In Hawaii, kava is drank during divination ceremonies, naming of children aged one years old, the cons

It is drunk in kinship and chief ship rituals, for public atonement of misdeeds. Many people were pardon

Sharing a kava bowl allows for socialization and friendship to occur. Fears are allayed and friendships

On Wallis Island, official decisions are made during the kava ceremony, and enemies are reconciled an

Kava has a key role in social ceremonies. It is usually the only way to welcome honored visitors. Forme

But drinking kava is not the only way for relationships to be cemented. Sometimes, presenting others w



## **Some Important Functions of Kava in Fiji and Tonga**

In Fiji, kava allows participants to communicate with the supernatural.

Kava reaffirms hierarchical status of those present by leaving no doubts as to who has certain rights.

### **\* MEDICINAL PURPOSE**

Kava was used throughout Oceania to calm nerves, cause relaxation and sleep, fight fatigue. It was

In addition to drinking the pounded root, some people use kava leaves. Fumigation with the leaves

Macerated kava as well as external application of the masticated kava stump are other methods of



When kava is drunk, the active chemicals are absorbed through the stomach into the bloodstream and pass quickly to the brain, which ***acts as sedative and soporific (sleep inducing)***. [Alexander et al 1987:6].

### Short-term effects of drinking kava

In small to moderate amounts, kava causes:

- mild sleepiness
- relaxation of muscles
- feelings of happiness
- numbness of the mouth and throat
- possible loss of appetite

In larger amounts, kava causes:

- loss of muscle control
- sleepiness/stupor
- pupil dilation and redness of the eyes
- a sick feeling

Kava drinkers are thus sometimes recognizable by their bloodshot eyes and ulcerous skin lesions called *Kani Kani* (Lebot et al 1992:60). A second side effect of heavy kava consumption is an occasional state of apathy that reportedly affects some drinkers preventing them from eating adequately and much more complication (ataxia, photophobia, schizophrenia...) [Lebot et al 1992:60]. Half a coconut shell (approximately 100-150ml) of certain varieties of kava is strong enough to put a drinker into a deep, dreamless sleep within 30 minutes. The next day the drinker awakens having fully recovered normal physical and mental capabilities [Lebot et al 1992:59].

### Social effects



Communities have been particularly concerned about the social effects of drinking kava. Some people have spent large amounts of time drinking kava and neglecting family and community duties. Some people have spent large amounts of money to buy kava, leaving no money for food and other essential items. Communities are concerned that the health and nutritional status of infants and children are affected.

From the aforementioned explanation we conclude that the drinking of kava will be **Makruh Tahreemi** for the reason that:

1- It causes a lapse to the mind.

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Umm Salma (Radhiyallaahu ‘anha) reports that Nabi (Sallallaahu ‘alayhi Wassalam) prohibited from every intoxicant and anything which causes a lapse to the mind.

[Recorded in Abu Dawood-Umm Salma Radhiyallahu ‘anha, 2/163 Saeed]

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2- Its drunk with leisure, amusement, warbling and gleefulness.

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Allama Ibn Abidin (Rahmatullahi ‘alayhi) writes under the meaning of [consuming this alcohol] without intending amusement or play, “Play refers to the light-heartedness which overcomes a person out of extreme joy or sadness. The author of Durar writes, ‘This condition is not limited only to these types of alcohol but it will apply even to water and other permissible substances which are consumed for the purposes of amusement or play in the way of transgressors. It will be impermissible to consume water and other permissible substances in this way.” [Raddul Muhtar 5:292]

Allamah Lukhnowi (Rahmatullahi ‘alayhi) writes, “There are two types of amusement and fun. One is that type which is permissible when there is no sin involved or there is nothing which leads to sin. The other type is that which Makruh (reprehensible) is when it involves sin or that which leads to sin or it is a means of leading to sin. The second type is meant here and not the first.” [Umdat Ar-Riwayah 4:66]

However kava can be consummated for the purpose medicine in times of dire necessity. Dire necessity will be when an experienced doctor believes that most probably the sick person will be cured by drinking that medicine and he will not be cured by using any other medicine. In this situation, there is leeway for a person to drink kava as medicine. He will only be allowed to consume that amount of this medicine which will cure him and not more than that.

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Mufti Rashid Ahmad (Rahmatullahi 'alayhi) writes: "It is permissible to drink such an amount of grape juice and raisin juice which cannot intoxicate a person in order to facilitate digestion of food or for medical purposes or to strengthen the body for the worship of Allah. It is not permissible to consume it for amusement. The amount of this juice which can intoxicate is impermissible to consume according to the majority of scholars." [Fatawa Hindiyyah 5:412].

The above-passages establish the following:

1. It is permissible to use amounts of alcohol which is not derived from dates or grapes internally for the purpose of strengthening one's body or facilitating digestion. In today's times, indigestion and diseases of the stomach are widespread. For this reason, substances which aid in digestion and treat the stomach have become amongst the necessities of eating food.
2. It is not unconditionally prohibited for a person to eat or drink for amusement and fun. The impermissible factor lies in doing so in the way of transgressors. This ruling is not exclusive to any particular drink or food, but it applies to all food and drink.
3. All types of amusement and fun are not impermissible, but they are impermissible if they involve some sort of sin or they lead to some sort of sin. 2 and 3 mean almost the same thing.

**And Allah Ta'ala Knows Best**

**Wassalamu Alaykum**

**MI. Mohammad Ashhad bin Said**



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