152586 - Does Snus Break Fast?

the question

My father suffers from anxiety, tension and depression, and he has been using a remedy for 10 years. From the beginning of Ramadan this year he experienced increased anxiety and could not sleep until 10 a.m. For a long time he has been using smokeless tobacco (which is a form of tobacco that is placed inside the mouth, under the lower lip -- sometimes known as “dipping tobacco” or “moist snuff”). He has been using it for twenty-five years and he used it in Ramadan this year. He also used it last year during the fast because, according to what he says, it reduces the pain and anxiety he is suffering from. What does he have to do with regard to those days when he broke the fast (if it is regarded as breaking the fast)? It was approximately 13 days this year and 5 days in Ramadan last year. Should he also feed the poor?

Summary of answer

Yes, snus breaks the fast because when it is placed in the mouth it dissolves and some particles of it enter the stomach with the saliva.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to give you and your father, and all the Muslims, well-being, for He is most generous and kind.

What Is Snus?

“Smokeless tobacco” is a type of tobacco that is not burned and may be mixed with other substances; it is used by some people who place it in their mouths. The ruling on this substance is no different from the ruling on cigarettes .

Islamic Ruling on Tobacco Use

Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is no doubt that cigarettes, nargilah (shisha), smokeless tobacco and the like are prohibited, because they are all evil and unlawful. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{He allows them as lawful At-Tayyibat (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khaba'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods).} [Al-A `raf 7:157]

And because they damage people's health and cause serious diseases that may lead to death, and Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And do not kill yourselves.} [An-Nisa' 4:29]

{and do not throw yourselves into destruction.} [Al-Baqarah 2:195]

And because it is extravagance and a waste of money on something that is of no benefit, and the spendthrifts are the brothers of the devils (cf. 17:27).

We advise anyone who is tested with any of these things to repent and give it up immediately, and to resolve not to go back to it, and to seek the help of Allah in quitting it, and to be patient for a few days until he is able to give it up completely and put an end to the pain that it causes him. And Allah is the Healer. (End quote from Fatawa Islamiyyah, 3/446)

Does Snus Break the Fast?

Smokeless tobacco breaks the fast, because when it is placed in the mouth it dissolves and some particles of it enter the stomach with the saliva.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

What is the ruling on using smokeless tobacco in general, and what is the ruling on using it during the day in Ramadan in particular? Does it break the fast if someone uses it during the day in Ramadan? Please note that some of the people of Tihamah Qahtan use smokeless tobacco during the day in Ramadan and claim that it does not break the fast.

They replied:

Smokeless tobacco is an evil substance because it is composed of an evil, prohibited substance. If it is used by one who is fasting, in addition to it being sinful, it also breaks his fast, the same as any other substance that breaks the fast.

And Allah is the source of strength. May Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and his Family and Companions. (End quote. Shaykh `Abd Al-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Al Ash-Shaykh, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Ghadyan, Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan, Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah, vol. 1, 22/142)

What to Do If You Used Snus While Fasting?

Based on this, your father has to make up for the days that he broke the fast by using smokeless tobacco during last Ramadan and the one before. But if your father did not know that smokeless tobacco breaks the fast, then his fast is valid, because the one who fasts is excused for ignorance of what breaks the fast .

You should try to advise your father to give up this evil substance. Tell him that it is of no benefit in treating insomnia and anxiety; rather it causes more insomnia and anxiety. We ask Allah to guide your father and accept his repentance.

For more information on dealing with stress and anxiety, please see the answer to questions no. 106614 and 21515.

And Allah knows best.