

"SEX, VIAGRA, AND ISLAM"

By Dr. Shahid Athar

Sex to most Muslims is a dirty word.

A word that they don't even want to talk about. On the other extreme, many Muslims' are obsessed with sex. This I can say from the questions about sex that I receive on E-mail from the Islam-USA Web-page.

The desire to have a better sexual performance for men is again, not a new preoccupation. Muslim Hakims (traditional physicians') have been working on medications for over one thousand years trying to achieve a magic love pill. Now that this "love pill" seemingly has arrived, wealthy Muslims' are ecstatic. Viagra which is sold around \$10 per pill in the U.S.A., is being sold at \$100 per pill on the black market in Saudi Arabia. Kuwait recently had allowed the sale at about \$49 per pill officially. The grand religious scholar of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Baaz has allowed it to be used by men if it does not cause any harm to the body.

Recently a visitor from Pakistan wanted to get some samples of Viagra, and I asked him why. He stated " that he wanted to give them as a gift to his boss". Obviously, he did not get the gift.

Sexual desire is a gift from God, just like all other desires that He has built in us. It is not our fault that we get aroused at sexual thoughts.

These are built in physiology. In order to have a legitimate outlet for this built in desire, God has created mates for us.

Quran says, "He that created you mates from among yourselves that you can dwell in them in tranquility". (30:21)

Sex outside of marriage is not permitted in Islam.

Impotency is a disease and should be dealt with as any disease. To seek a cure for a disease is advised by Prophet Mohammed (P) who said that "God has created no disease unless he created a cure for it as well, except old age". Thus, before we physicians' start a new treatment, we either must find out the cause for impotency which could be vascular, neurogenic, infection, diabetes, or hormonal deficiency.

To treat all the causes with one type of treatment would be wrong, and that is why many patients' on Viagra do not respond because they have not been screened properly to see if they would be good candidates.

In addition, if the mental stimulation is not present before, then Viagra alone will not achieve the desired results as the brain is the most important sex organ.

The appropriate way for a man to deal with this is to see his physician for a thorough evaluation, hormone testing, and psychological testing. There is some suggestion that patient's who may have underlying coronary artery disease, who have not been actively involved in sex, should be screened first for coronary artery disease before using Viagra. About 20 men have died after sex while taking Viagra. It is not clear that any of these deaths were directly related to Viagra.

I see several social problems in the use of Viagra indiscriminately. It may lead to more sexual promiscuity and infidelity. Recently an old man in New York who used Viagra, left his wife and then went for a much younger lady. His wife sued the company. It is also being called "the party drug", or the "love pill", and it is being distributed by some of the night clubs. What is the difference between getting high on marijuana and cocaine, or on Viagra? Many women are also complaining that they are being subject to Viagra attacks by their husbands' and boyfriends even if they are not in a mood.

Sex is an expression and extension of love. In the absence of love, sex becomes a boring routine. Forced sex even in marriage is rape. Instead of trying to achieve potency, men should try to achieve love and respect for and from their wives. Prophet Mohammed (P), who was ahead of his time, had encouraged foreplay before intercourse saying "Do not attack your women like a wild beast, but send a message before". He also was known to have said, "Do not leave her before she is satisfied". Thus Islamic sexuality is based on nature and not attempting to achieve a quick result.

The human body is a wonderful creation of God, but not a sex machine. It will not run better on a high octane oil or any potency drug.