

People are social beings who live in society. It is a system of the higher level that exists subject to certain social laws. We may not do whatever we want as our behavior influences the society in which we live. As soon as people are not always able to develop so necessary sense of self-control the outer norms shall exist which are set by more rational people and are enforced by the state. Nevertheless, in practice such social norms and laws may be subject to the limited knowledge, groundless stereotypes and hidden corporative interests. Hence, laws shall not turn into permanent dogmas but shall be revised in view of the intellectual and moral development of the society. One of the related issues is the legalization of marijuana (cannabis).

Marijuana has been prohibited in the majority of the states as it is a drug. Drugs cause physical addiction that in turn leads to moral disintegration. Hence, we have a simple logic: marijuana is a drug and drugs are bad so marijuana is bad. Nevertheless, this verbal magic is based on the general definition of drugs. In reality, drugs are different and not all products and not under all circumstances may be doubtlessly considered to be bad.

Avicenna explained that a great quantity of a substance may be poisonous while little quantity of the same substance may cure. Thus, we may see that “good” or “bad” do not relate to the substance but to the consequences caused by the way the substance has been used. The same logic is just for marijuana. It possesses a relaxing effect that allows forgetting for a while about existing problems as well as pain. Cannabis is a natural alleviant which possesses less adverse affects as compared to medicines synthesized in laboratories. It is also cheaper than patented drugs. Thus, marijuana is the only way out for people who constantly suffer from pain. It is people with chronic diseases, migraines, people who have experienced difficult surgical operation or are dying. It is obvious that in such cases the positive effect of marijuana smoking overweighs any negative consequences. The state of mind influences on our bodies. Consequently, if a patient is calm he or she has more chances for a faster recovery. Besides, though sometimes no medicines may help dying patient marijuana frees him from pain and allows spending last days of the life among the loved ones. That is the best gift for such people.

Returning to our everyday life there are a lot of problems we think about. We may be constantly busy having no time to sit and calm down. In such situations we understand that relax is necessary. We shall forget about all problems but very often it is physically impossible. Thoughts are flying in the head and you cannot get rid of them. Meditation is a good remedy but not all people are so patient to learn it. Some quick solution is required. People often drink alcohol or smoke tobacco for this purpose but these substances have numerous adverse effects. People often have terrible headache the next morning after drinking. In addition, drunken person may become aggressive and commit offense. Moreover, people who regularly drink alcohol become alcoholics. At last, regular drinking and smoking cause severe illnesses. It is interesting to admit in this regard that tobacco and alcohol fully fall under the scope of drugs definition but despite of it they are legalized. Cannabis does not lead to some of the above mentioned consequences. It makes people less aggressive and they are unlikely to behave offensively. Marijuana smoking is also not connected with hangover. Thus, marijuana is a better choice than alcohol or tobacco for the purpose of relaxing but there are also some negative sides.

As long as smoking of marijuana is prohibited the state does not control the quality of the marijuana that people smoke and they do really smoke it. Marijuana is often mixed with other possibly toxic greenish substances that are cheaper. Besides, it also consists of pitch that may directly get to our lungs and cause diseases. Tobacco cigarettes are subject to severe quality control so that a greater part of dangerous toxic substances are eliminated. Hence, simple legalization of marijuana without

implementation of the requirement of quality control may negatively affect the health of the Americans.

One more controversial issue is related to the possible addiction. It is still not known for sure whether marijuana causes physical dependence but psychological dependence is real. Unlike physical addiction, psychological dependence does not make brain dependent on a certain substance. An individual is only obsessed by the emotional state which he or she had during marijuana smoking. In case of absence of the drug an individual becomes disturbed, annoyed and may consume other substances that cause similar effects.

It is the main possible effect of marijuana legalization that threatens our society. An individual who often smokes marijuana is likely to taste other drugs for the purpose of achieving of similar relaxing emotional state. These drugs may be more dangerous as compared to marijuana, alcohol or tobacco and cause physical dependence after several times of consuming. Consequently, marijuana may be a bridge from light to heavy drugs.

Nevertheless, we shall mention that people who are predisposed for drug addiction may find drugs irrespectively of whether they are legalized or not. In the absence of alternatives they often become alcoholics but alcohol or tobacco are nor forbidden on the grounds that some people may not control themselves. Such argumentation may be also applied to marijuana smoking. Age limits and education may decrease the problem.

Legalization of marijuana will allow not only application of the quality control but increase tax incomes from sales. Bartlett explains that historically, efforts to abolish smoking and drinking ended in large part because they prevented governments from taxing those activities and imposed additional costs in the form of law enforcement and incarceration? (2010). In addition, tax upon marijuana may be imposed. These additional funds may be directed for the treatment of dependent people and prevention of heavy drugs usage. In general, possible taxation of drugs similarly to alcohol and tobacco would increase tax revenues by \$46.7 billion annually (\$25.7 billion for state and local governments and \$15.6 billion for the federal government). Besides, \$41.3 billion will be saved due to less enforcement costs (Bartlett, 2010).

Moreover, if for instance only California legalizes marijuana then people from other states will come here to smoke cannabis and will leave their money in California. Consequently, it will create additional working places and will increase tax incomes that are so important taking into account the latest economical downturn.

The necessity of the decriminalization of marijuana smoking may be argued in several ways. First, despite prohibition and liability for marijuana smoking people in America still use it. At least 15% of students are current marijuana users (NIDA). Thus, if we cannot eliminate it let's at least control this process because in case of failure to control people will suffer from diseases caused by low quality substances. Second, criminalization of marijuana leads to higher criminality rate. People who have committed such offenses as marijuana smoking may be negatively treated by other people at school, college or work. They may have problems with education or employment and, thus, have more chances to violate law in future. It is claimed that our penitentiary system brutalizes offenders as they communicate more with criminals and become involved in the criminal sphere.

It seems to me that punishment shall be adequate, equal and proportional to the conducted violation. If we again remind that cannabis is less dangerous than alcohol and tobacco then the question arose:

while consuming of alcohol and tobacco is not punished while smoking of marijuana is punished? It is obvious that the principle of punishment-offense equality is absent in this situation.

Hence, the issue of marijuana legalization shall be considered with regard to all arguments. Nevertheless, taking into account the information found by me marijuana may be legalized subject to certain quality and age restrictions as it will cause more positive than negative consequences.