

Quotations from the Quran regarding Halal

The Quran is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the Qur`an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind, and consider the original Arabic text to be the final revelation of God¹. The next primary source Muslim jurists and scholars refer to base their fatwa (legal rulings) on are the Ahadith (plural for hadith, Prophetic Traditions). Halal (meaning lawful or legal) designates any object or action permissible to use or engage in, according to Shari`ah (Islamic law). It is the opposite of haram (unlawful). Listed below are a few verses from the Quran and some Ahadith with regards to halal matters pertaining to:

Food and Drinks

It is wajib (obligatory) upon each Muslim individual to recognize and differentiate a halal food item from a haram one as this matter is deemed important in Islam. From the Al-Quran it states:

"[And Allah] makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful" (7:157)²

"You who believe, eat the good things We have provided for you and be grateful to God, if it is Him that you worship. He has only forbidden you carrion, blood, pig's meat, and animals over which any name other than God's has been invoked. But if anyone is forced to eat such things by hunger, rather than desire or excess, he commits no sin: God is Most Merciful and Forgiving." (2:172-173)³

And again in (5:3)⁴:

"You are forbidden to eat carrion; blood; pig's meat; any animal over which any name other than God's has been invoked; any animal strangled, or victim of a violent blow or fall, or gored or savaged by a beast of prey, unless you still slaughter it [in the correct manner]; or anything sacrificed on idolatrous altars."

These verses serve as guidelines of which Muslim scholars have based their rulings of halal food to be that which is beneficial and not detrimental to a Muslim, and any type of food which is not deemed as haram within the boundaries of the Shari`ah. Haram meat includes that which comes from land animals that have fangs, are wild, able to pounce on its prey and do not have genes from either dogs or pigs⁵. All insects⁶ and birds which have sharp claws, stoop or strike its prey and devour food or its prey with its feet⁷. Hence, all other land animals which do not fall under these characteristics are halal; provided it is also slaughtered according to Shari`ah.

In (5:96)⁸ it states, *"It is permitted for you to catch and eat seafood - an enjoyment for you and the traveller"* and in the hadith *"And the (sea) water is pure and its catch is*

*halal*⁹ unless the catch is detrimental to health as it contains poisonous substances or the catch is both cold and warm blooded.

As for drinks, it states in the Quran in (2:219)¹⁰:

“They ask you [Prophet] about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘There is a great sin in both, and some benefit for people: the sin is greater than the benefit.’”

And again in (5:90)¹¹:

“You who believe, intoxicants and gambling, idolatrous practices, and [divining with] arrows are repugnant acts - Satan’s doing - shun them so that you may prosper.”

These verses highlight that the nature of a beverage or perishable object cannot intoxicate, that is, to make a man lose all or even a part of his sanity or capability to execute correct judgments. Hence, intoxicants such as alcohol and drugs such as cosmetic drugs are haram. What is halal are alcohol mixed with other substances that provides cure for illnesses, or alcohol mixed with other substances such as that in perfumes and drugs which have medicinal properties. However, excessive consumption or addiction to such substances is deemed as haram since it is hazardous to one’s health.

Slaughter

It is haram for a Muslim to eat the carcass of animals. This means that the animals which are halal to be eaten must be slaughtered in the halal way. Dhabihah is the prescribed method of ritual slaughter of all animals excluding fish and most sea-life per Shari’ah. This method of slaughtering animals consists of a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck, cutting the jugular veins and carotid arteries of both sides but leaving the spinal cord intact. One of ‘the necessary condition[s] for slaughtering any animal which is within one’s capacity to slaughter is to cut both the windpipe and the gullet. [Failure to] cut the windpipe or the gullet and the animal dies, it is considered an unslaughtered dead animal’¹², which is haram to be eaten.

From (5:5)¹³:

“Today all good things have been made lawful for you. The food of the Ahlul Kitab is lawful for you as your food is lawful for them.”

According to Sheykh Omar Al-Khatib, one of the necessary conditions for slaughtering any animal is that the slaughterer must be a Muslim, generally speaking. He also states that ‘machines used in the slaughtering process should have the necessary condition that a Muslim switches on the switch’¹⁴ and the method of the slaughtering process fulfills the conditions of the Shari’ah.

1 Nasr, Sayyed Hossein. Qur’an. in the Britannica Encyclopedia Online, Retrieved 05-02-2010

2 Abdel Haleem, M.A.S. The Qur’an - A New Translation. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004, pg 105

3 Ibid, pg 19

4 Ibid, pg 67

- 5 translated from: Sheykh Omar Al-Khatib. Arranged by M. Salleh bin A. Hamid. Panduan Ilmu Fiqh Bab Korban, Aqiqah, Makanan & Perubatan (A Guide to the Jurisprudence on the Chapters of Kurban, Aqiqah, Food & Medicine). Sah Publications, Singapore. 2006. pg 73
- 6 Ibid, pg 74
- 7 Ibid, pg 75
- 8 8 Abdel Haleem, M.A.S. The Qur'an - A New Translation. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004, pg 77
- 9 Abu Daud, Tirmidzi, Nasai, Ibn Majah & Abi Hurairah (refer to Footnote 6, pg 77)
- 10 Abdel Haleem, M.A.S. The Qur'an - A New Translation. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004, pg 24
- 11 Ibid, pg 76
- 12 Al-Misri, Ahmad ibn Naqib. Translated by Keller, Nuh Ha Mim. Reliance of The Traveller A Classic Manual of the Islamic Sacred Law. Amana Publications. Maryland (USA). 1990. pg 364
- 13 Abdel Haleem, M.A.S. The Qur'an - A New Translation. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004, pg
- 14 translated from: Sheykh Omar Al-Khatib. Arranged by M. Salleh bin A. Hamid. Panduan Ilmu Fiqh Bab Korban, Aqiqah, Makanan & Perubatan (A Guide to the Jurisprudence on the Chapters of Kurban, Aqiqah, Food & Medicine). Sah Publications, Singapore. 2006. pg 54