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## Rules for prohibition and permissibility of edibles and drinks as per Islam and Hinduism

**ABSTRACT:** An elaborate endeavor in studying world religions would glaringly uncover the fact that most of the religions have enacted rules to follow, pertinent to daily livelihood. Such are the set of rules that the followers of the religion must follow. These rules very much include the rules about edibles. The food is something upon which not only human sustenance rests but it also keeps the human soul alive. For the same very reason we find religious and scientific prohibitions on things that are harmful for humans and if consumed evil takes the better of man's heart, bringing upon him moral redundancy and sinister way of life. Such people are deprived of peace and piety. They ultimately not only suffer unbearable individual loss but also become a burden onto the society, country and nation.

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As regards to purity and impurity, Allah says in Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ۝ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمُ  
بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ<sup>i</sup>

***“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about Allah what you do not know.”***

While elaborating the meanings of this verse, renowned scholar Molana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani noted that one must eat whatever is produced on the earth provided its halal and pure, meaning whereby that it must be pure in true sense while not being from a dead animal or pork and must be slaughtered in the name of Allah, neither it is to be an obtain of any other sort of illegal means like theft, forceful snatching or offered as bribe or usury. One is to refrain from all such evils.<sup>ii</sup>

In the light of above let's analyse the edibles and drinks being halal (pure) or haram (impure) as per the guides of Islam and Hindu religions.

Consumption of flesh being permissible or not in Hindu religion has always been a complicated issue for researchers. Few practices from Vedak era and sacred Hindu scriptures not only give an inkling of flesh consumption but also elaborates permissible and impermissible animals. Here, what is important to be noted is that there exists a difference of opinion among Hindu clergymen (Shivs) with regards to the purity of animals. In other words, an animal permissible in the views of one clergy leader might be impermissible as per the other.<sup>iii</sup>

It would be appropriate to mention here is that in Hinduism, no clear rules exist with regards to permissible or impermissible animals, basing on which religious leaders could clearly declare an animal being permissible or otherwise. For example, pork is permissible as per mahabharat but Dr. Gustawli Baan notes in “Tamadun E Hind” that pork is highly impure.<sup>iv</sup> The study of these scriptures and other Hindu sacred publications, reveals that certain items that are permissible in other religions are not only impermissible in Hinduism but their consumption would render the person liable to punitive severity. Renowned Muslim scientist Abu Rayhan Al Bayruni (Al-Beruni) described the concept of pure and impure as per Hindu defines in his publication “Kitab ul Hind” in these words:-

*“Permitted land animals include goat, sheep, deer, buffalo and rhinoceros (with nose horn). Whilst animals upon whom clear religious permissibility exists are cow, horse, mule, donkey, camel, elephant, full grown chicken and all kind of eggs.”<sup>v</sup>*

Also mentions in Manusamriti is:-

*“Be it known that the land where black deer breed naturally are allowed for sacrifice”.<sup>vi</sup>*

Similarly, another argument in mahabharat elaborates the evidence of certain animals being halal in Hinduism like:

*“Yudhsbthr said: O! greatest of the resourceful, what is that which I must sacrifice to the soul of my ancestors and which would never end? Bheesham replied: be known! O Yudhsbthr! If you sacrifice fish, your ancestors’ soul would cherish for two months, sheep sacrifice would satisfy them for three months, rabbit would soothe them for four months, goat five months, pig six months, birds seven months, deer (preshata) and gavaya (wild ox) ten months, whilst cow sacrifice would keep them in peace for eleven months. Its also said that a cow offered in shraddha (sacrifice) would bless them for one year. Mix large amount of ghee (cooking oil) with the sacrifice flesh so that your ancestors’ souls remain happy for full twelve months”.<sup>vii</sup>*

At another place in mahabharat it is also mentioned:

*“When the house of rule of Pandus was completed, Raja Hisbthar fed ten thousand barahmans with ghee (semi liquid cooking oil), honey, milk, vegetable and meet dishes including pork and hunter”.<sup>viii</sup>*

Srimad Bhagvatam mentions a clear argument on cow being halal:

*“You must slaughter cows and worship gorodhan hill, this is my advice, accept it.”<sup>ix</sup>*

Muhammad Shariq in his book “Hindumat Tafseeli Mutalia” notes with reference to ancient Hindu art of healing:-

*“Anyone with heart ailment would find relief by consuming flesh, whilst madhvek vine would cure tuberculosis. Cow flesh is also a relief for respiratory ailments, ozena, ague (malaria), dry cough and fatigue.”<sup>x</sup>*

Manusamarti mentions about haram animals:

*“Animals that cannot be killed (whose killing is not allowed as per sacred scripture), still if someone kills them just for fun, is just like a walking dead (means he would never achieve happiness on his life)”.<sup>xi</sup>*

Since Brahmans are considered a superior cast, so few halal items have been declared unconditionally haram for them. For instance, in fifth chapter of manusamrati, Manu’s son, Dharmatma Bhargo, while answering a question of the men of high esteem said, “be known, of the sins, whose consequence reduces the life span of Barahmans:

*“As per Brahman teachings, lethargy, deviation from laid down rules of life, irregularity in offering mandatory prayers and consumption of prohibited food items are few practices which result in reduction of life span of Brahmans. Onion, garlic, mushrooms and all plants nurturing at impure places are not suitable for Brahmans. Sparrow, hamsa, partridge, rooster, crane, rajudal, hoopoe, parrot and mayna are not allowed either. They must also refrain from consuming pelican and other fish eating birds, crow, pet pigs and fish. Although while offering sacrifice to gods and their sons, fish (only pachin and robut kinds) can be consumed, if available.”<sup>xii</sup>*

Besides, if a Brahman consumes any of the prohibited item or comes in closeproximity, the ritual to purify themselves as mentioned in mahabharat is:

*“All those who consume dog, rooster, sheep and donkey are being accounted for. All these are prohibited. Any Brahman who smells anyone consuming, must consume hot water, hot milk and air for three days each, only then would he stand purified.”<sup>xiii</sup>*

Above mentioned facts, on one hand enlighten us about the clarity of halal and haram in Hinduism while on the other we also learn about stringent ruling on prohibited animals. Consumption of prohibited brings upon punishments or holds liable to some sort of laid down compensation. Like, as per one of the shlok of manusamrati, “killing one of a cat, roller bird, frog, dog, owl or crow would render someone liable to pay same amount of compensation as for killing a shudra (secluded cast).”<sup>xiv</sup>

It is worth noting that in this religion, halal and haram divide hasn’t been constituted due to some liability. Instead, either few animals have been endowed the status of gods and goddesses and as a result their killing or uncomfoting has been prohibited and penalties imposed or they have been taken as birds of prosperity and marked sacred. In Gustawli ban Indian culture, monkeys are held sacred due to which uncomfoting them is strictly prohibited. Similarly Nepalese Hindus worship crow on the occasion of “Tahar”. As per the Hindu shivs, keeping parrot, mayna, pigeon, garhasti as domestic pets brings prosperity to homes.”<sup>xv</sup>

## Haram and halal status of edibles and drinks as per Islam

Knowledge of history clearly reveals that the practice of flesh consumption dates back to ancient times. Before the advent of Islam, animal flesh was consumed in a number of ways, without any prohibition. Apart from eating the flesh of dead animals, chopping off and eating of alive animals' limbs was also practiced. At times animals were killed by arrow or staff blows before being consumed. Islam is the only religion that enacted clear cut rules on consumption of edibles and drinks, specified halal from haram as well as prohibited consuming flesh of dead animals which is detrimental to both human body and human soul. Therefore consuming all such animals are prohibited which effect human morality, like pig, dog, cat, other beasts etc. Likewise, halal and non-prohibited animals have also been specified. Bottom line is that Islam did not leave it onto the man to choose what animal is halal and what is not.<sup>xvi</sup> In the first place, we can find a clear definition of halal and haram animals in Quran, followed by instruction through Sunnah about the permissibility of certain other animals. With regards to animals not specified in Quran or Sunnah, clear rulings have been given by Islamic religious experts after thorough research in the light of Islamic teachings.

### Halal and haram as per Quran:

While reading Quran we can clearly find the names of permitted or non-permitted animals, while some names could be permissible or non-permissible under certain conditions or rules. Few Quranic verses would specify that. Allah says in holy Quran:

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاشْكُرُوا بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كُنتُمْ لِرِيبَةٍ تَابِعُونَ ( ) إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَيْزِرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لُغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَتَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*“Then eat of what Allah has provided for you [which is] lawful and good. And be grateful for the favor of Allah, if it is [indeed] Him that you worship. He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”<sup>xvii</sup>*

*Above mentioned Quranic verses clearly tell us three things:*

1. *All refined and pure foods are permissible for the consumption of believers.*
2. *Impurities like dead meet, blood and pork is haram*

3. Bare essential quantity of impure stuff can be consumed under desperate life and death situation.

Allah said in Quran:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لغيرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْحَرِقَةُ وَالْمَوْفُودَةُ وَالْمُرْتَدِيَةُ وَالطَّيْحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ  
السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ<sup>xviii</sup>

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death].”

A thorough study these verses reveals that edibles which are bad for human body and soul are regarded as harmful which later lead the humans to other ills. Consumption of pork is harmful for health medically as well as religiously. Pork consumption leads to immorality, as a result. While medically speaking it causes ailments like mental instability, trichinosis and tenia solium etc. Although consumption of bare essential quantity of pork is permissible under life and death situation.

There are circumstances under which prohibited items are declared prohibited. Let's discuss those circumstances so that prohibition and non-prohibition of food items could be understood with ease.

- **Askaar (intoxicants)**

All those items are included askaar which leave a person intoxicated, be it alcohol or drugs. Allah said in holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ<sup>xix</sup>

“O, you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

- **Zarrar (Harm)**

If there exists some harm in a person's mental or physical health then all such things whose consumption could aggravate his health would be disallowed. Since toxic items like pork and blood are mentally and physically harmful for human consumption therefore they are prohibited. Allah said in holy Quran:

وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ<sup>xx</sup>

*“And do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.”*

- Khabais o najasat (filth and impurity)

Allah said in Quran:

وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ<sup>xxi</sup>

*“Makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil”*

All impure things are filthy. Even if a pure thing becomes impure, it would be rendered haram for consumption. For the same very reason, Prophet, Muhammed (SWS) said about a rat who jumped into ghee (semi solid cooking oil) and died there, “If the ghee is viscous or solidified, scratch off the ghee around the dead rat and use the remaining ghee. If the ghee is in liquid state, discard and wash away the whole ghee.” Had such ghee be permissible, the Prophet (SWS) would have never said to discard it. As for the rules and implementation of rules relating to impurity there exists a difference of opinion between Islamic jurists, nevertheless majority of jurists have agreed in principal and declared insects as haram. Although locust is an exemption as per hadith.<sup>xxii</sup>

### Concept of haram and halal as per Sunnah

In Islamic school of thought, Sunnah is considered as the second biggest source of authenticity. Quranic teachings are further elaborated by Sunnah. This is the reason that permissibility or impermissibility of edibles and drinks has been profusely elaborated by Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SWS). Allah’s apostle said, as narrated by Muslim:

«بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ كُلِّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ، وَعَنْ كُلِّ ذِي مَخْلَبٍ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ»<sup>xxiii</sup>

*Allah’s apostle (SWS) has prohibited to consume animals that possess canine teeth and animals that possess talons.*

Islamic jurists agree to the point that all animals that possess canine teeth are haram, like lion, tiger, wolf, jaguar and dog. Similarly animals possessing talons like hawk, eagle, falcon and vulture etc are also haram.<sup>xxiv</sup>

In the same way dog, domestic donkey and mule are also haram because dog is among filthy and impure beings.

The Prophet (SWS) said, as reported in Hakim Mustadarik by Ibn Abbas:

«تَمَنُّ الْكَلْبِ حَيْثُ وَهُوَ أَحْبَبُ مِنْهُ»<sup>xxv</sup>

*“Dog is impure, equally impure is dog’s money”*

The Prophet (SWS) also said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يَنْهَيَانِكُمْ عَنْ لُحُومِ الْحَمِيرِ الْأَهْلِيَّةِ»<sup>xxvi</sup>

*“No doubt, the Prophet (SWS) prohibited you from consuming flesh of donkey.”*

### **Difference of opinion among Islamic Jurisprudents on Haram and halal status of edibles and drinks:**

Islamic jurisprudents have divergent opinion upon the status of certain animals. Malkia believes that starting from ant till elephant all animals are halal except human flesh and pork. Malkia also believed that slaughtering and eating insects like scorpion, Gabriella (insect that lives in cow dung), a particular specie of locust, slaughtered snake whose poison is removed, can be consumed.<sup>xxvii</sup>

No animal stands halal unless its slaughtered in Allah’s name, except locust and fish. The Prophet (SWS) said, as reported by Abdullah Bin Umer:

رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " أَجِلَّتْ لَنَا مَيْتَتَانِ: الْخُوْثُ، وَالْجِرَادُ " <sup>xxviii</sup>

*“The Prophet (SWS) we are allowed to consume two dead animals, fish and locust.”*

According to Imam Abu Hanifa, among the sea animals only fish is allowed, except dead fish, floating on the sea surface<sup>xxix</sup> because Allah’s apostle said, “

«مَا أَلْقَى الْبَحْرُ، أَوْ جَزَرَ عَنْهُ فَكُلُوهُ، وَمَا مَاتَ فِيهِ وَطَفَا، فَلَا تَأْكُلُوهُ»<sup>xxx</sup>

*“Whatever the sea drops out, consume it but whatever comes to the surface and is dead, don’t eat that.”*

There is also a disagreement among the four Imams, upon prawn fish being halal or haram. The Imams who consider prawn as a kind of fish consider it halal but Imams who don’t believe it being a fish, consider it haram.<sup>xxxip</sup> This is because of varying definition of prawn.



According to Shafia, Hanabla and Sahibeen all species of horse are halal because on the day of Khyber, the Prophet (SWS) allowed consumption of horse.

فَلَمَّا كَانَ يَوْمَ خَيْبَرَ وَقَعْنَا فِي الْحُمُرِ الْأَهْلِيَّةِ

Whereas Imam Abu Hanifa believed that consuming horse flesh is immoral. Malkia also believed that horse is haram.

Consuming field crow is unanimously considered ok for consumption. This crow is also called kozraah or Kabuli crow. It's a small black coloured bird with beak and red legs. Although local crow or black crow (mountain crow) are considered haram beyond doubt. The Prophet (SWS) said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: " حَمْسٌ قَوَاسِقُ، يُقْتَلْنَ فِي الْجَلِّ وَالْحَرَمِ: الْحَيَّةُ، وَالْغُرَابُ الْأَيْتَعُ، وَالْفَأْرَةُ، وَالْكَلْبُ الْعُغُورُ، وَالْحَدْيَا "

“Reported by Ayesha, five animals, snake, crow, rat, mad dog and eagle are impure and can be killed inside the haram (grand mosque where Ka’aba is located) <sup>xxxii</sup>

Black crow is also mentioned in Sunan Al Nisai<sup>xxxiii</sup>, Sahi ibn Haban<sup>xxxiv</sup>, Masnad Ahmed<sup>xxxv</sup>, Sunan Al Kubri Al Beehqi<sup>xxxvi</sup> and Mustakhraj Abi Awana<sup>xxxvii</sup> etc

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