

Prohibited Foods in Islam at All Times, with Reasoning

Islam is the only religion in world history, which was Divinely Certified by Allah.

The Divine Certificate of Authentication from Allah, and that Allah has completed His special favour to humanity, and further that Islam is the correct religion directly from Allah, is given as revelation in the Holy Qur'an at 5:3, as *"Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal), and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall, and that killed by goring with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten — except what you slaughter; and that which is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols), and that you seek to divide by arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. But whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."* (Underlining is by author).

In the opening phrases of Holy Qur'an at 5:3 above, Islam has been decreed in the Holy Qur'an as a complete way of life, and largely as the most important beneficial gain for all Muslims. The rest of humanity is expected to learn from Muslims.

That was decreed nearly 1,500 years ago; and the Holy Qur'an became the complete operations manual of correct and compliant living for human beings, and this Book was authored by the Maker of Humanity; inasmuch as any complex machinery or any equipment has its operations and maintenance manuals and authored by its maker. The Holy Qur'an is the only known Scripture, since creation, which has come with this seal of Divine Certificate of Authentication direct from Allah, as authoritative revelation in the above verse: *"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion."*

In order to set the records straight, that the words in above verse are not just some poetical stanza, but the Holy Qur'an openly informs humanity, that Islam is the true religion, which all should follow; and a warning to those who spite

out of jealousy after being warned so; this is given most succinctly at 3:19, as *“Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam. And those who were given the Book differed only after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the messages of Allah — Allah indeed is Quick at reckoning.”*(Underlining is by author).

Inasmuch as any maker of machinery or equipment would make a statement of warning to others in favouring its product, Allah the Maker of Humanity has made a similar statement of warning favouring His product (Islam) at 3:85, as *“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.”*

True in its magnificent compactness, as an operations manual for betterment of humanity, the Holy Qur’an details throughout its texts the basics of “do things” and “don’t do things” as seen in most operations manuals. There is prohibition in consumption of flesh of any creature, which had died other than correct halal slaughter, and of course prohibition in consumption of flesh of swine (pigs) and consumption of intoxicating beverages. The purpose and scope of this article is to validate with reasons, those “do things” and “don’t do things” as Orders decreed in the Holy Qur’an, for readers’ clarity and completeness.

The first prohibition in the Holy Qur’an at 5: 3 (above) is consumption of any living thing that dies of itself, and blood, and the flesh of swine. Animals and birds that die by themselves are collectively referred to as carrion.

Carrion begins to decay the moment of the animal's death, and it will increasingly attract insects and breed bacteria. Not long after the animal has died, its body will begin to exude a foul odour caused by the presence of bacteria and the emission of cadaverine and putrescine. Carrion is not completely bled, and in some cases not bled at all; complete bleeding is required under both Hebrew Kosher slaughtering and Muslim Halal slaughtering; and the presence of blood in the decaying carrion makes that carrion lethal for human consumption.

Eating carrion not only endangers lives of human beings but relegates those human beings socially to the lowest status of carrion-eating animals, better known as scavengers, such as vultures, hyenas, komodo-dragons and certain

types of beetles, all of which have within them their natural system of digesting carrion without any ill-effects on their health. These birds/animals/reptiles as scavengers have unbelievable strong sense of smell in detecting carrion, which goes along with their very strong natural immune system within them, to fight bacteria found in decaying carcasses. Carrion eating animals and birds have been purposefully designed by Allah for that purpose, and so help in eradicating dead animals and prevent the presence of bacteria and the emission of cadaverine and putrescine. Flies and similar insects would then carry bacteria and diseases to human beings within reasonable radius of that vicinity.

Human beings do not have that bacteria fighting natural immune system and would most likely first get very seriously ill, and then potentially death will follow. It should be noted that Allah wants to protect the best of His creatures (we human beings) all along.

Even when Prophet Noah (as) was ordered to construct his massive ark, he was told to make the ark of a certain large specification, so that he would take on board pairs of all food animals and slaughter them when needed, but not eat carrion left behind when the flood waters receded. There would have been thousands of carrion carcasses strewn all around the devastated countryside after the great flood.

Similarly, when other communities kill animals by simple cutting off the head of the animal completely, there is neurological disconnect from the brain, then the heart instantly stops and is no longer pumping blood; the body of that animal, which has not been bled and retains much of its blood, becomes potentially dangerous. Congealed blood stalled inside the dead animal also retains all the bacteria and diseases that were circulating in its bloodstream. Hence, Allah has decreed that animals must always be slaughtered under Muslim prescription, which requires fast and deep cutting of the jugular veins, but not cutting off the neurological connection, and which allows the animal to completely bleed to death very quickly.

Praise Allah! He is the Best Knower!

In case of consumption of dead animals, consumption of flesh of pigs, and consumption of idol-worshipped offerings, the injunction is quite clear at

Chapter 2:173, Surah Al-Baqarah as: *“173 He has forbidden you only what dies of itself, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked. Then whoever is driven by necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin is upon him. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”* (Underlining is by author).

Pigs (swine) of all species were created as “Nature’s garbage processors with full independent mobility on four feet” and they were most certainly not created as food for human beings.

Before Allah created human beings, He had already created pigs as foraging garbage processors, together with creation of numerous other land-based animals. Human beings were created last in the sequence – so as to rule on earth and with all other animals and resources fully provided-for and also becoming subservient to human beings.

Prior to modern motorised system of municipal garbage collecting services, all household garbage and kitchen waste (as rubbish) was dumped at certain locations, and then the communities waited for pigs to forage and consume the rubbish. Dumped rubbish attracted rodents, developed maggots, bacteria and diseases. It is common knowledge that pigs will by instinct, smell, locate and start foraging all kinds of rubbish, which is edible to that animal. With exceptions of metal cans and plastic bottles, pigs will eat just about any heap of rubbish to this day.

Pigs’ bodies are biological factories, which generate many diseases. Pigs are always manifestly unclean. There is no such thing as a “clean pig!”

The flesh constitution and particularly the tissue compatibility of a pig is so similar to human flesh, and all sicknesses and diseases are inter-communicable between pigs and human beings through process of biological mutation. The recent global epidemic of swine flu (H1N1) is one of several classical examples. Since the flesh and blood constitutions of pigs (their tissue compatibility) are so similar to humans, pig organ parts and pig organs (as complete) have been transplanted in thousands of cases of medical procedures, to keep some ailing human beings alive. Of course the pig has to be killed to remove its organs, although the reverse is not yet tested: no human beings were purposefully killed and their organs were transplanted to keep pigs alive!

In the digestive system of pigs, its anatomy and physiology are similar to humans. It takes pigs on average 4 hours from eating to excretion, whereas a cow or ox takes 24 hours, which includes chewing the cud, from eating to excretion.

The much shorter time it takes pigs to digest food means that various types of impurities in pig feed and garbage consumed are not fully digested, and the impurities are converted into fat storage. This fat storage is a thick layer of fat between the outer skin and the body flesh of all pigs.

The cow or ox fully digests all the grass or fodder in two stages of digestion and it does not store impurities into body fats as a pig does.

As earlier stated, the pig is a purpose-designed animal, specifically designed to eat up and process all garbage as quickly as it can, and reduce potential spread of bacteria, virus and other diseases within that surrounding. Pigs are not food!

The only reason there are so many pigs around the world is because of their accelerated and forced commercial reproduction, so that those selling pigs can get rich quickly.

The body and flesh of pigs (all forms of pork) are scientifically known to be storing around 57 different types of parasitic, germs-caused and virus-caused diseases transmitted to humans. As examples, some of these are: *trichina worms, pork tape worm, pork round worm, hook worms, schistosoma japonicum, paragomines westermanni, paciolepis buski, clonorchis sinensis, metastrongylus apri, giganthorinchus gigas, balatitidium coli, tuberculosis, salmonella cholera, swine erysipelas, small pox, swine flu, etc.*

When human beings consume meats of animals, especially designed as food, such as beef, the digestive process is slow and takes around 9 hours before all the nutrients in meat are fully extracted and the meat is fully digested.

That means the human digestive system has safely and fully utilised those meat fibres before the nutrients start entering the human bloodstream.

Pig flesh (pork) takes less than 4 hours, which means much of the impurities contained in the flesh of all types of pigs, enter the human bloodstream much sooner and potentially unhealthy.

Gout (*Hyperuricemia*) occurs when the blood contains raised levels of uric acid sustained over long periods. The kidneys process uric acid and excrete this through urine. When uric acid levels become raised, the kidneys are unable to eliminate uric acid efficiently. Uric acid forms when the body breaks down chemicals in the cells known as purines. Most common areas of the human body affected are lower limbs, especially toe areas. Recent global studies show most affected age groups suffering from gout are 30-60 years. Almost all of them are regular consumers of ham, bacon and other forms of pig flesh and they are also regular consumers of intoxicants, such as beer and spirits.

All of these are prohibited to Muslims and are key contributing factors of gout – a most painful sickness. Yeast (in beer), spirits and pork have one of the highest contributions of purines.

All Israelite prophets preached to their communities of their era, explaining that pigs are unclean, to keep away from pigs and never to consume the flesh of swine (pork). Some of the Israelite prophets who descended from lineage of Adam include: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Eber, Saleh, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Shu'ayb, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, John the Baptist and Jesus. (*The Arabic name spellings and pronunciations differ slightly from what is in the Bible*).

The main Scripture-delivering Israelite prophets were Moses (as), David (as) and Jesus (as). None of them are on Scripture record of ever having consumed flesh of swine (pork). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was of course an Ishmaelite prophet.

Allah, the best Knower and the best Maker, never designed pigs as food item for humans, but rather designed them as natural garbage processing utility animal, to move and forage about, to eat and rid all garbage, so that virus, bacteria and diseases emanating from the decaying garbage will not harm humans beings, who are the best and the pride of Allah' creations.

Praise Allah! He is the Best Knower!

Islam is one of the three Semitic religions and hence similar prohibition also reigns within the Law of Moses in the Bible. These are at Leviticus 17:15, "*And every soul that eateth that which died [of itself], or that which was torn [with beasts, whether it be] one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even:*

then shall he be clean.” Leviticus 7:26 “Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, [whether it be] of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings.”

Leviticus 11:7 *“And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he [is] unclean to you.”* These verses are also dealing on issues against consumption of flesh of animals killed by other animals and carrion; against consumption of blood of birds or animals and against consumption of pig flesh. Islam, being the religion of humanity, prescriptively cares for Muslims, ensuring that they do not consume certain types of food, which are harmful to people.

There are several other injunctions in the Qur’an. Intoxicating beverages are prohibited in the Holy Qur’an at 2: 219, and also at 5: 90-91, respectively as:

“219 They ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them is a great sin and (some) advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage. And they ask thee as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allah make clear to you the messages that you may ponder.” (Underlining is by author).

“90 O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil’s work; so shun it that you may succeed.” (Underlining is by author).

“91 The devil desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then keep back?” (Underlining is by author).

Intoxicating beverages and gambling are mentioned together in both places, and one of the reasons for their prohibition is that they are an aid to creating mischief and enmity between members of the same society. They not only promote habits of indolence, but also reduce some members of society to destitution, while others may aspire to prosper at the expense of those under influence of intoxicating beverages.

The title to this article deals only with prohibited foods with reasons; hence the author will not be discussing about gambling and games of chance.

High levels of alcohol consumption has an increased risk of developing alcoholism, cardiovascular disease, malabsorption, chronic pancreatitis, alcoholic liver disease, and cancer.

Long-term use of alcohol in excessive quantities is capable of damaging nearly every organ and system in the body. The developing adolescent brain is particularly vulnerable to the toxic effects of alcohol.

The psychiatric disorders which are associated with alcoholism include major depression, dysthymia, mania, hypomania, panic disorder, phobias, generalized anxiety disorder, personality disorders, schizophrenia, suicide, neurologic deficits (e.g. impairments of working memory, emotions, executive functions, visuospatial abilities and gait and balance) and permanent brain damage to brain cells.

Allah knew all along the ill-effects of intoxicants and prohibited Muslims from consumption of intoxicants.

Praise Allah! He is the Best Knower!

Food that has been offered up as sacrifice ritual to idols is also prohibited to Muslims. This is given in the Holy Qur'an at 5:3, as *"Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal), and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall, and that killed by goring with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten — except what you slaughter; and that which is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols), and that you seek to divide by arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. But whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."* (Underlining is by author).

It is also important to understand why Muslims are forbidden from eating any food item, which was used as offerings to idols and generally offered later to all other people as part of idol-worshipping rituals. All Israelite prophets also

forbade their followers from eating any food item that was offered directly in idol-worshipping.

Muslims are compelled by Orders in the Holy Qur'an to worship Allah alone, as the only focus of spiritual meditation. Allah does not have a spouse or even has the need for one. The foundation principle stands, that Allah is not composed of material and does not need any form of material partner of any form or description. Allah has no beginning, is always and will always be. Whilst the Holy Qur'an Has many verses prohibiting the practice of idol-worshipping, this verse at 2:165 also explains the outcome of idol-worshipping, as *"Yet there are some men who take for themselves objects of worship besides Allah, whom they love as they should love Allah. And those who believe are stronger in (their) love for Allah. And O that the wrongdoers had seen, when they see the chastisement, that power is wholly Allah's, and that Allah is Severe in chastising!"*

Idol-worshipping is effectively instituting a barrier between human beings and those human beings' compliant focus of adoration of Allah only.

From history since creation, different forms of idol-worshipping were practised by many communities; those communities which totally disregarded the pleas from over 124,000 prophets, that people must worship Allah only, and that no other focus must come into their consideration.

Some examples of ancient idol-worshipping included making offerings of human blood (of first-born male child) to blood of animals; offerings of first agricultural harvest; offerings of food, etc to the idols, purposefully as materially gifting to those idols. In some cases special stones were set up (as altar) where such offerings were made.

Any idol can never be substituted for Allah.

For Muslims, they are prohibited from consumption of any form of offerings of whatsoever description, made to any form of idol of whatsoever description.

There is however, a saving clause to the prohibition. That if a person were to be driven into situations of compelled hunger; and the prohibited food was the only food available to that person, then that person is allowed to consume just barely to overcome his hunger, but he must not wilfully consume prohibited

foods as matter of social enjoyment. This Order with mitigation is given in the Holy Qur'an at 5:3, as *"But whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."* (Underlining is by author).

An important point to note is that the universality of Islam covers people of all races and whichever language they speak and whichever cultures they practise. Their common denominator is their spiritual Faith in One God - Allah.

From historical perception, Islam also takes into consideration variables in the changes in technology and civilisation, which directly impact the wider society. The common denominator remains, that all Muslims are required to practice the Muslim culture, which in many cases sets them apart from others. In most cases this aspect is visibly distinguishable.

There are over 2.2 billion Muslims throughout the world and found in almost every country. The Muslims are required both by Holy Qur'an and Tradition to obey the good governance of each country where they live.

The contents of this article should be circulated widely to all other Muslims, as required by the Holy Qur'an at 3:103, as *"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful."*

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