

Prohibited Food and Drinks

The magnanimous Islāmic legislation had paid great attention to what is eaten and drunk by mankind. It allowed for them every thing which is good and beneficial for their bodies, intellects and character and has prohibited ever thing which is filthy and harmful for their bodies, intellects and character. And that is only because of the concern of the blessed legislation for the well-being of the human body, the preservation of its character and uprightness of its manners. Indeed good food has a tremendous effect on the character of mankind and their manners, whereas bad food does the opposite of that.

And from what the Islāmic legislation has come with its prohibition, from food and drink, is what follows:

1- **Dead animals**, and they are every land animal which the soul has left it without slaughtering it in the legislated manner. What is meant by the 'legislate manner' is that you slaughter an animal that you are capable of catching by cutting the throat, esophagus and the two jugular veins and what is similar to that. That is done by cutting at the lower part of the neck and uppermost part of the chest like the manner of slaughtering a camel. Or it may be done by piercing it when you are not able to catch it and that is by piercing it in any part of its body by any action that causes the soul to part. And without doubt, that should be done by a Muslim or someone from the People of the Book (i.e. Jews and Christians). Or it may take place by sending a piercing animal or bird that knows how to hunt.

But if it died from other than that, be it by strangling, drowning, hit with a stone or stick or what is similar to that, then it is a dead animal which eating is prohibited due to the statement of Allāh ﷻ the Honorable and Mighty:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ

which means, "**Prohibited for you are dead animals.**"¹ As for dead animals of the sea, then they are permissible due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the ocean:

هُوَ الطَّهْرُ مَاؤُهُ الْحِلُّ مَيْتَتُهُ

*"Its water is pure and its dead are permissible."*²

2- **Spilled Blood** is prohibited, due to that statement of Allāh ﷻ:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ

which means, "**Prohibited to you are dead animals and blood,**"³ and His statement:

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا

¹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 3

² Narrated by Aḥmad

³ Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 3

which means, “Say: I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled.”⁴ As for blood which is not spilled, that which remains in the veins of the meat then that is permissible. There are two exceptions from the blood: the liver and the spleen; due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

□ أَحَلَّتْ لَنَا مَيْتَاتٍ وَدَمَانَ، فَأَمَّا الْمَيْتَاتَانِ فَالْحَوْتُ وَالْجِرَادُ. وَأَمَّا الدَّمَانُ فَالْكَبِدُ وَالطِّحَالُ

“Two dead animals and two bloods are permissible for us. As for the dead animals, they are the animals of the sea and locusts. As for the two bloods, they are the liver and the spleen.”⁵

3- **Swine**, they are prohibited by the consensus of the Scholars due to the Noble Āyah:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ

which means, “Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood and the meat of swine.”⁶ It is well-known that this animal is filthy and lives off filth and impure things; rather it is the most covetous of its food. Because of that, its meat carries many diseases as modern medicine has confirmed, added to what it carries of deadly tape worms.

4- **Every predatory animal that has fangs**, such as lions, wolves, cheetahs, tigers, dogs, bears, monkeys and what is similar to that: consumption of them is prohibited due to the ḥadīth of Abū Ḥurayrah ؓ who said, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

□ كُلُّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ فَأَكُلُهُ حَرَامٌ

“Every predatory animal that possesses fangs, eating it is prohibited.”⁷

5- **Every bird that possesses claws**, such as falcons, eagles, hawks, vultures, crows and what is similar to that, consumption of them is prohibited due to the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ who said,

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ق عَنْ كُلِّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ وَعَنْ كُلِّ ذِي مِخْلَبٍ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ

“The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibited us from every predatory animal that possesses fangs and from every bird that possesses claws.”⁸

6- **The meat of domesticated donkeys**, consuming it is prohibited due to the ḥadīth of Abū Tha’labah al-Khushanī ؓ who said,

حَرَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لُحُومَ الْحُمُرِ الْأَهْلِيَّةِ

⁴ Sūrah al-An’ām: 145

⁵ Narrated by Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah

⁶ Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 3

⁷ Narrated by Muslim

⁸ Narrated by Muslim

“The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibited the meat of domesticated donkeys.”⁹ Likewise, it is prohibited to eat the meat of animals produced from between a permissible animal and an impermissible one, such as the mule. That is because one of its parents is prohibited so it is given its ruling.

7- Insects, snakes, scorpions, mice, cockroaches and whatever is similar to them, consumption of them is prohibited because they are deemed filthy and they are harmful and dangerous for the health and safety of mankind. Allāh ﷻ said:

وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ

which means, “And He allows for them all good things and He prohibits for them all filthy things.”¹⁰

8- Everything that the Legislator rules as impure, such as urine, feces, vomit and what is similar to that, consumption of that is prohibited because it is filthy and harmful. Allāh ﷻ said:

وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ

which means, “And He prohibits for them all filthy things.”¹¹

9- Alcohol, Drugs, intoxicants, and things that cause sluggishness¹² and what is similar to that from what takes away a person’s intellect and makes him oblivious to everything. Allāh ﷻ said:

إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ

which means, “Alcohol, gambling and throwing arrows for seeking luck are an abomination of Shaytān’s handiwork, So strictly avoid all of that in order that you may be successful.”¹³ And the Prophet ﷺ said:

□ كُلُّ مُسْكِرٍ حَرَامٌ وَكُلُّ مُسْكِرٍ خَمْرٌ

“Everything which intoxicates is prohibited and every intoxicant is (to be treated like) alcohol.”¹⁴

10- There are exceptions to what has been previously mentioned if the extreme necessity calls for its consumption. So it is permissible due to the necessity, such as if one was near death and there wasn’t anything to eat except these prohibited foods. It becomes permissible for him at that time to eat from it the amount necessary to push away death and destruction.

⁹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

¹⁰ Sūrah al-A’rāf: 157

¹¹ Sūrah al-A’rāf: 157

¹² Translator’s note: such as qat

¹³ Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 90

¹⁴ Narrated by an-Nasā’i

II- All types of poisons, consumption of them is prohibited due to their harms and because they lead mankind to perdition. Allāh ﷻ said:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

which means, “Do not kill yourselves.”¹⁵ And He ﷻ said:

وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

which means, “And do not throw yourselves into destruction.”¹⁶ And the Prophet ﷺ said:

□ وَمَنْ شَرِبَ سُمًّا فَقَتَلَ نَفْسَهُ فَهُوَ يَتَحَسَاهُ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا مُخَلَّدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا

“Whoever drinks poison and kills himself with it, he will drink it in the fire of Hell forever, dwelling therein forever.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Sūrah an-Nisā: 29

¹⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah: 195

¹⁷ Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim