

HARAAM / HALAAL FOOD AND DRINK

INTRODUCTION

Piety is a very important tool concerning our food habits. Our food, or nutrition, is like the seed of plants. The type of food one takes nourishes good or evil tendency in a person. If the seed is evil, then the body acquires evil tendencies. If a *Haram* morsel goes down the throat, then the control over the body will come into the hands of Satan. Till the time that morsel remains in the body, Satan too will occupy it.

Our tongues too are influenced by these foods that we utter falsehoods and abusive language. Backbiting becomes our habit. All our limbs and organs are exposed to the effects of *Haram* and unsavory (*makrūh*) foods. The body has therefore become insensitive to the instinct of remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.).

It is mentioned in the traditions that eating one *Haram* morsel/of food, the effects will remain in the body for forty days and, during this period, the prayers of the person may not be answered.

LEVEL OF DOUBTS IN FIQH RELATING TO FOOD AND DRINK

There are several degrees of doubts in Fiqh. They are:

1) ***WAHM* (Delusion):**

That is when you are approximately 25% sure of something but 75% sure that it is not so. *Wahm* has no weight in Islam and no judgment can be based on it.

- 2) **SHAK (Doubt):**
When you are approx. 50% sure of something and 50% sure it is not so.
Shak is disregarded in Islam.
- 3) **DHAN (Most likely/probable):**
When you are more sure that something is true but less sure that it is not so. Say 70% sure but 30% not sure.
Dhan is regarded as a basis of a judgment.
- 4) **ITMINAN (Certitude):**
When you are so sure of something that you are confident it is true. However, there is a small chance it is not true.
Itminan is a solid basis for a judgment.
- 5) **YAQEEN (Certainty):**
When you are 100% sure of something.
Yaqeen is an indisputable basis for judgment.

Based on the above, if you have *shak* or *wahm* [about the presence of a *haram* ingredient], then you do not have to read the ingredients.

However, if you have *dhan* then you should read the ingredients.

But if you have *Itminan* or *yaqeen*, then it is haram for you to eat the product unless you read the ingredients and find out that it does not contain any *haram* ingredients.

SIMPLIFIED FOOD GUIDE

	VEGETABLES FRUITS & GRAINS	LAND CREATURES		AIR CREATURES	SEA CREATURES		
					FISH		NON-FISH
		DOMESTIC ANIMALS	WILD ANIMALS		SCALES FISH	SKIN FISH	
					SHRIMPS		
					PRAWN		
STATUS	ALL HALAL	ALL HARAM EXCEPT		ALL HALAL EXCEPT	ALL HALAL	ALL HARAM	ALL HARAM
		COWS	BUFFALO	Predatory Birds			
		SHEEP	MOUNTAIN SHEEP	Birds that glide more than flap their wings when flying			
		GOATS	WILD ASS	Eggs of Halal Birds are Halal			
		CAMELS	GAZELLE	Eggs of Haram Birds are Haram			
		MAKRUH	DEER	If in doubt - Eggs that are equal in circumference are Haram			
		HORSES					
		MULES					
		DONKEY					

GENERAL RULES

Here below is presented some general religious laws about food and drink that students of Madressa should know:

Note: The prohibition on eating a kafir's food has nothing to do with his/her physical state of uncleanliness. Rather, it is connected with his/her spiritual state. What we eat makes a difference to our own spiritual state and our character formation. Therefore, we are required to eat pure food for the sake of the well being of our own spiritual states. Purity in the spiritual realm is dependent on consuming that which is spiritually pure. By the way, this is not unique to Islam - Yogis, some Hindus share a similar view. Therefore the najasat is connected to the spiritual state of a kafir.

There is no doubt that we still have to treat them humanely. Talking about the cleanliness of a kafir is very misleading since people assume it is connected to their physical state, Using the term spiritual well-being or spiritual state is more befitting.

- ❖ It is permissible to eat food with the exception of meat, fat and their extracts from the Ahlul-Kitab (people of the book - the Jews and the Christians) irrespectively whether they touched it with their wet hand or not so long as we do not know or are not sure that it consists of what is forbidden to us, i.e. intoxicating drinks.
- ❖ It is permissible to eat the food with the exception of meat, fat and their extracts prepared by a non-Muslim who is not from Ahlul Kitab provided we do not know or are not sure that the non-Muslim touched the food with wetness; and also provided we do not know or we are not sure that the food consists of what is forbidden to us, i.e. intoxicating drinks.

- ❖ It is permissible to eat food with the exception of meat, fat and their extracts made by a person about whose faith and religion is known to us, no matter whether that person touched it with wetness.
- ❖ All kinds of packed food with the exception of meat, fat and their extracts are permissible.
- ❖ It is permissible to buy all kinds of *Halal* meat from a Muslim shopkeeper.
- ❖ If you know and are sure that the meat you intend to buy from a Muslim shopkeeper is from an animal which is permissible to eat, i.e. cow, sheep, chicken but that it is not slaughtered in accordance with the Islamic laws prescribed, you cannot eat that meat.

SEAFOOD

In order for fish to become permissible to eat, it must have the following two conditions:

1. The fish must have scales on it. It does not matter whether their body is fully covered with scales or just a little of it is covered with scales. (It should not be a skin fish).
2. You should be certain or satisfied that the fish has come out of the water alive or that it died while it was in the fishing net after it had already been caught.

It is not necessary for the fisherman to be a Muslim or to utter the name of Allah for the fish to become *Halal*. So if a non-Muslim catches a fish and brings it alive from the water or it dies after getting caught in his fishing net or fishing line, and it has scales on it, it is permissible to eat.

You can ascertain the first condition by examining the fish if it is being displayed or by observing its name whether it is a skin fish or a scale fish.

Note: A list of scale fish with pictures are given at the end of the book "A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West".

The second condition is fulfilled in almost all the countries, as they say, because the universal method in fishing ensures that the fish comes out of the water alive or they die after coming into the fishing net.

Therefore, it is permissible to eat the fish that you get from a Muslim or non-Muslim, no matter whether it is canned or not canned provided it belongs to the category of scale fish.

Note:

- It is permissible to eat shrimp (prawns) if it is brought of the water alive.
- It is forbidden to eat frogs, lobsters, turtles, snails, crayfish and every amphibious (living on land and in water) animals.
- The eggs of a *Halal* fish are permissible to eat while eggs of a *Haram* fish are forbidden to eat. The same is true for fish oil.

INTOXICATING DRINKS

It is forbidden to drink wine, beer, and everything that causes intoxication or drunkenness in solid or liquid form.

Serving alcoholic beverages to others is prohibited even if they consider lawful in their religion. The same goes for washing dishes if they serve the purpose of drinking alcoholic beverages in them.

Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) has said: Allah (s.w.t.) has accursed alcohol, its growers, those who squeeze it (from the grapes), its drinkers, its servers, its buyers, its sellers, those who live on its income, its transporter, and the one to whom it is transported.

Note: It is *Haraam* to eat at the table on which alcohol or any other intoxicants are being consumed. Based on obligatory precaution, it is *Haraam* to even sit at such a table. There is no problem though, in sitting at a table near the table on which wine is being consumed.

GELATIN

Gelatin is derived from vegetable or animal source. If it is from vegetable source, there is no problem. But if it is from animal that was not slaughtered Islamically, it is *halaal* in the view of the late Sayyid Khoei based on the chemical change (*istahala*) that it goes through. According to the view of Ayatullah Al-Seestani Dama-Dhilluhu is NOT *halaal* because he believes that in chemical change the original components should be completely eliminated.

In the West gelatin is used in a number of drinks and food items.

The problem is:

In ingredients, it is simply mentioned "Gelatin" without specifying the source. Hence we do not know if the gelatin used has been extracted from vegetable or animal source?

If the source of the gelatin is not known whether it is from vegetable or animal source, then one has the benefit of doubt in assuming it to be from *pak* source.

RENNET

Rennet or renin is *tahir* (*pak*) and *halal* even if it is obtained from the stomach of an animal which has not been slaughtered Islamically.

An animal not slaughtered Islamically is known as *maytah*. *Maytah* is one of the *`ayn najis* (inherently unclean) things, so how can rennet extracted from a *maytah* be considered *tahir*? It is true that *maytah* is considered *`ayn najis*, but our mujtahids unanimously have declared that certain parts of the *maytah* are exempted from the *najasat* and are to be considered *tahir*. One of such parts of a *maytah* is rennet, known in Arabic as *anfaha* or *minfaha*. Not only is the *anfaha* considered *tahir*, it is also considered *halal*.

PEPSIN

Pepsin comes from enzymes usually extracted from pig stomachs and obviously *haram*, unless it is chemically transformed into another substance.

WHEY

Whey (in all forms) comes from milk and is used as binder and flavoring agent. It is *halal*.

CHOCOLATE LIQUOR

Chocolate Liquor is a sweet liquid made from chocolate and used for its aroma. It is not intoxicating or alcoholic drink known as "liquor". Therefore, there is no problem in using it.

TABLE MANNER

There are certain etiquettes to be observed at the dining table. Some of them are listed below.

Note: The first and the most important thing is to ensure that the food you intend to partake is *Halal* and *Tahir*.

- Starting with the name of Allah
- Taking a pinch of salt at the beginning and the end of meal.
- Eating with the right hand
- Making small morsels
- Sitting longer at the table
- Chewing the food well
- Thanking Allah after the food
- Washing the fruits and vegetables before eating
- Not eating after satisfying the appetite
- Not over eating
- Not looking at the faces of others while eating
- Not taking away the food from others who are sitting at the table

