

THE ANIMALS THAT ARE UNLAWFUL TO EAT

Al-Maidah, ayah 3

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ
وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى
النُّصَبِ

Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maytah (the dead animals), blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than Allah, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone altars).

(Al-Quran 5:3)

Introduction and virtues of Al-Maidah

Al-Maidah was revealed in Al-Madinah

At-Tirmidhi recorded that `Abdullah bin `Amr said, "The last Surahs to be revealed were Surat Al-Ma'idah and Surat Al-Fath (chapter 48)."

It was also recorded that Ibn `Abbas said that the last Surah to be revealed was,

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

(When there comes the help of Allah and the Conquest)

Al-Hakim narrated that Jubayr bin Nufayr said, "I performed Hajj once and visited `A'ishah and she said to me, `O Jubayr! Do you read (or memorize) Al-Ma'idah ' I answered `Yes.' She said, `It was the last Surah to be revealed. Therefore, whatever permissible matters you find in it, then consider (treat) them permissible. And whatever impermissible matters you find in it, then consider (treat) them impermissible."

TAFSIR OF THE AYAH

Allah informs His servants that He forbids consuming the mentioned types of foods:

The Maytah (الْمَيْتَةُ): the animal that dies before being properly slaughtered or hunted.

Allah forbids this type of food due to the harm it causes, because of the blood that becomes clogged in the veins of the dead animal. Therefore, the Maytah is harmful, religiously and physically, and this is why Allah has prohibited it. The two exceptions to this ruling are the fish and the locusts.

Fish is allowed, even when dead, by slaughtering or otherwise.

Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked about seawater. He said, 'Its water is pure and its dead are permissible.'

(Malik, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban)

The Blood (وَالدَّمَ): The flowing blood

According to Ibn 'Abbas and Sa'id bin Jubayr, **الدَّم** refers to flowing blood and it is similar to Allah's other statement,

دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا

(Blood poured forth)

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Ibn 'Abbas was asked about the spleen and he said, "Eat it." They said, "It is blood." He said, "You are only prohibited blood that was poured forth."

Abu 'Abdullah, Muhammad bin Idris Ash-Shafi'i recorded that Ibn 'Umar said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "We were allowed two dead animals and two (kinds of) blood. As for the two dead animals, they are fish and locust. As for the two bloods, they are liver and spleen."

The flesh of swine (وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ): domesticated and wild swine

It refers to the whole animal, including its fat, for this is what the Arabs mean by Lahm or 'flesh'. Muslim recorded that Buraydah bin Al-Husayb Al-Aslami said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "He who plays Nardshir (a game with dice that involves gambling) is just like the one who puts his hand in the flesh and blood of swine." If this is the case with merely touching the flesh and blood of swine, so what about eating and feeding on it.

It is recorded in the Two Sahihs that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Allah made the trade of alcohol, dead animals, pigs and idols illegal." The people asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! What about the fat of dead animals, for it was used for greasing the boats and the hides; and people use it for lanterns" He said, "No, it is illegal."

And that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than Allah (وَمَا أَهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ)

The animals on which a name other than Allah was mentioned upon slaughtering, is impermissible, because Allah made it necessary to mention His Glorious Name upon slaughtering the animals, which He created. Whoever does not do so, mentioning other than Allah's Name, such as the name of an idol, a false deity or a monument, when slaughtering, he makes this meat unlawful, according to the consensus.

And that which has been killed by strangling (وَالْمُنْحَنِقَةُ)

Whether the animal has been killed by strangling intentionally or by mistake, such as when an animal moves while restrained and dies by strangulation because of its struggling, this animal is also unlawful to eat.

Or by a violent blow (وَالْمَوْقُودَةُ)

This refers to the animal that is hit with a heavy object until it dies. Ibn 'Abbas and several others said it is the animal that is hit with a staff until it dies. Qatadah said, "The people of Jahiliyyah used to strike the animal with sticks and when it died, they would eat it."

It is recorded in the Sahih that 'Adi bin Hatim said, "I asked, 'O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! I use the Mi'rad for hunting and catch game with it.' He (ﷺ) replied, "If the game is hit by its sharp edge, eat it. But, if it is hit by its broad side, do not eat it, for it has been beaten to death."

Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) made a distinction between killing the animal with the sharp edge of an arrow or a hunting stick, and rendered it lawful, and what is killed by the broad side of an object, and rendered it unlawful because it was beaten to death.

Or by a headlong fall (وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَّةُ)

As for the animal that falls headlong from a high place and dies as a result, it is also prohibited.

Or by the goring of horns (وَالنَّطِيحَةُ)

As for the animal that dies by being gorged by another animal, it is also prohibited, even if the horn opens a flesh wound and it bleeds to death from its neck.

And that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal (وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ)

This refers to the animal that was attacked by a lion, leopard, tiger, wolf or dog, then the wild beast eats a part of it and it dies because of that. This type is also prohibited, even if the animal bled to death from its neck.

Unless you are able to slaughter it (إِلَّا مَا ذَكَيْتُمْ)

This part of the Ayah is connected to "and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal".

If the animal is slaughtered, before it dies, due to the causes mentioned above, then it is lawful/permissible to eat.

'Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn 'Abbas commented on Allah's statement,

إِلَّا مَا ذَكَيْتُمْ

"Unless you are able to slaughter the animal in the cases mentioned in the Ayah while it is still alive, then eat it, for it was properly slaughtered."

The Two Sahihs recorded that Rafi' bin Khadij said, "I asked, 'O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! We fear that we may meet our enemy tomorrow and we have no knives, could we slaughter the animals with reeds?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "You can use what makes blood flow and you can eat what is slaughtered with the Name of Allah. But do not use teeth or claws (in slaughtering). I will tell you why, as for teeth, they are bones, and claws are used by Ethiopians for slaughtering."

And that which is sacrificed on An-Nusub (وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النَّصْبِ)

Nusub were stone altars that were erected around the Ka'bah, as Mujahid and Ibn Jurayj stated. Ibn Jurayj said, "There were three hundred and sixty Nusub around the Ka'bah that the Arabs used to slaughter in front of, during the time of Jahiliyyah. They used to sprinkle the animals that came to the Ka'bah with the blood of slaughtered animals, whose meat they cut to pieces and placed on the altars." Allah forbade this practice for the believers. He also forbade them from eating the meat of animals that were slaughtered in the vicinity of the Nusub, even if Allah's Name was mentioned on these animals when they were slaughtered, because it is a type of Shirk that Allah and His Messenger have forbidden.

Reference: Tafsir Ibn Kathir