



A Shariah Perspective Study on the Concept of Halal Food

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Abstract: Islam is not a religion of worship only but claims a complete code of life which provides guidance regarding all spheres of life to its believers. Food is one of the most important necessities that is needed for the existence of the human body. Therefore, Islam provides complete and clear concepts regarding lawful and unlawful things for human life. The concept of Ḥ alal food given by Islam is getting more importance worldwide with regard to its recognition as pure, hygienic, healthy and of standard quality. Keeping in view the importance of Ḥ alal food for Muslims, the current study intends to highlight the Islamic concept of Ḥ alal food with reference to Qur' ān and Sunnah. In this regard, several Questions are raised as to what is the Islamic concept of Ḥ alal food. What are the benefits of Ḥ alal food on humans? How can one determine the Ḥ alal food in light of Shari'ah? What is the role of the family in instilling the concept of Ḥ alal food in early childhood? To answer these questions, a Qualitative research methodology is adopted. The study concludes that providing awareness to children at an early age is important, and the family plays a vital role in this regard. The study will be helpful for the parents and families in recognizing their duties to make their children aware of Ḥ alal food at an early age.

Introduction

Healthy food is helpful in improving the psychical well-being (Dixey, Rudolf, & Murtagh, 2006). Today people are more concerned about what to eat and drink. Research showed that the estimated market for global Ḥ alal products is projected to reach USD 500 billion in 2010 (Halal Journal, 2008). Globalization takes human beings into a new era by introducing new trends, modes and technologies in the food industry and trade, resultantly which a lot of confusion about what they have to consume is created (WHO, 2007). Research showed that as multiple ingredients and complicated food, the process involved (ISO, 2015); in food products, Ḥ alal food is pure and can be consumed because it is free from impurities (Riaz & Chaundry, 2004). Therefore ensuring to

have Ḥ alal food means to assure that the food is pure, good quality and permissibility (Demirci M., Soon J & Wallace 2016). To establish and promote this concept and practice, it is first important to shed light on its need and significance.

The term Ḥ alal is translated in different meanings as legal, valid, allowed, pure etc. (Khattak et.al., 2011). The Arabic term “Ḥ alal” applies to all food and products which are lawful or permissible (Qardhawi, 2001). Ḥ alal food contains purity, quality, and hygiene. Thus it can be said that Ḥ alal food is which should hygienically be prepared and processed. Yusuf al-Qaraḍ awī characterized Ḥ alal food which is permissible and lawful by Allah Almighty and not

contains any restricted element ([Qarad awi](#), 1994). The term haram refers to any kind of object, act, or conduct that is forbidden in Qur' ān and Sunnah. In Islam, all foods are Ḥ alal except those which are prescribed as haram, e.g. flesh of swine, alcohol, intoxicants etc. Anything which is impure and does not prepare using pure ingredients is not considered Ḥ alal in Islamic law (Riaz & Chaudhary, [2004](#)).

Ḥ alal food in Qur' ān

Human is representative of Allal Almighty and this earth is created for him to survive and search sustenance for his living. It is said in the Qur' ān:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا﴾

"He it is who has created for you all that is on earth" (Qur' ān, 2:29).

According to this verse, nothing on the earth is prohibited except those things which are mentioned as haram either in the Holy Qur' ān or in the Hadith of Prophet PBUH. Therefore, regarding the Ḥ alal and Haram in food, there is a rule that nobody has the right to declare what is Ḥ alal and what is haram as it is only Allah Almighty who has this right, as mentioned in the Qur' ān:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ﴾

"Who is there to forbid the beauty which God has brought forth for His creatures, and the good things from among the means of sustenance?"

﴿لَا تَحْزَمُوا طَيِّبَاتٍ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ﴾

"Do not hold as unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful to you" (Qur' ān, 5:87)
In another place Allah Almighty says:

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ﴾

"And do not utter falsehoods by letting your tongues declare: "This is lawful" and "That is unlawful" (Qur' ān, 16:116)

It is clearly mentioned in the above verse that nobody has the right to make things unlawful

except Allah. Thus any person who tries to make lawful whatever Allah has declared unlawful or claims to have the right to make lawful and unlawful will surely be considered a transgressor.

Islam guides towards what is good for human beings and prohibits what is harmful to him so he would be thankful to Allah Almighty for this Blessing as Allah says in Surah al-Baqarah:

﴿كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ﴾ (القرآن:٢)

"Partake of the good things which We have provided for you as sustenance, and render thanks unto God" (Qur' ān, 2:172)

Eating Ḥ alal and Ṭ ayyab food gives benefit and pleasure to the human body, and brain and, ultimately, leads towards the love of Allah. Therefore, a Muslim should be careful regarding each and every food before its consumption.

Ḥ alal Foods in Hadith

According to verses of Qur' ān one of the duty of Messenger Prophet Muhammad PBUH is to make and explain what is legal and what is illegal.

﴿يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ

الْفِرَاقَ...﴾ (القرآن:٢٤١)

"...the Prophet] who will enjoin upon them the doing of what is right and forbid them the doing of what is wrong, and make lawful to them the good things of life and forbid them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them ..." (Qur' ān, 7:157)

In another place when Prophet PBUH was asked about what is lawful and unlawful he replied:

﴿الْحَلَالُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَالْحَرَامُ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَمَا سَكَتَ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ

مِمَّا عَفَا عَنْهُ﴾

"What is lawful is that which Allah has permitted, in His Book and what is unlawful is that which Allah has forbidden in His Book. What He remained silent about is what is pardoned. (Al-Tirmidhi, [3327](#))"

The verse indicates the legal status of Prophet PBUH regarding declaring Ḥ alal and Haram food. In many Ḥ adith Prophet, Muhammad PBUH gave instructions regarding lawful and unlawful products. It is narrated by Narrated Abu Tha`laba:

﴿عَنْ أَبِي ثَعْلَبَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنْ أَكْلِ

كُلِّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ﴾

“Allah's Messenger PBUH forbade the eating of the meat of beasts having fang” (Bukhārī, 5530) The above mentioned Ḥ adith clarifies what is Haram and not allowed to consume. Moreover, the Ḥ adith narrated by gives direction in situation when a person got confused and cannot differentiate between Ḥ alal and Haram in the following words:

﴿الْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَ ذَلِكَ أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَدْرِي كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ

أَمِنَ الْحَلَالِ هِيَ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْحَرَامِ فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِزِّهِ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ وَمَنْ

وَاقَعَ شَيْئًا مِنْهَا يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُوَاقِعَ الْحَرَامَ﴾

“The lawful is clear, and the unlawful is clear, and between that are matters that are doubtful (not clear); many of the people do not know whether it is lawful or unlawful. So whoever leaves it to protect his religion and his honor, then he will be safe, and whoever falls into something from them, then he soon will have fallen into the unlawful” (Bukhārī, 52)

The Ḥ adith is enough to understand the importance of Ḥ alal food and to avoid every doubtful thing as these things lead towards haram.

Thus Qur' ān and Sunnah directed the human being towards all those pure and legal things which are beneficial and sources of energy for health.

Benefits of Ḥ alal Food

The Real Situation in things is lawful (Ḥ illat)

In Islam, the real situation in all things is legal unless or until its illegality is proved by Qur' ān, Sunnah or any other means. In Qur' ān at several

places, the word Ṭ ayyab is also mentioned with Ḥ alal, meaning pure, good quality and wholesome and reflects the characteristics of Ḥ alal (Adnan, 2011). The general standard of good food in Islam is prescribed as legal and pure (Ḥ alalan Ṭ ayyaban). The condition to meet the Islamic concept of legal and pure are; 1. It should not contain any banned elements, 2. It should be clean and safe, and 3. It should also not contain any element which later on causes harm. Ḥ alal refers to that food which is manufactured in a clean (as in Islam, cleanliness is part (half) of Emaan) and hygienic atmosphere. Hence the Islamic teaching is harmonious with Human nature and structure as stated:

﴿فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا﴾

So eat out of the lawful and good sustenance that Allah has bestowed upon you” (Qur' ān, 16:114)

Here ṭ ayyab refers to utilizing all those pure things which are obtained with lawful means. Therefore it is advised that all things are pure and lawful until or unless have clear evidence for their prohibition based on the legal maxim:

﴿الأصل في الأشياء الإباحة حتى يدل الدليل على التحريم﴾

The original ruling for everything is permissible (mubah) until there is evidence of its prohibition.

Therefore, each and every clean and pure food and drink (such as fruits, milk, dates, honey grain etc.) is Ḥ alal. However, all those things that are harmful to the human body or mind (such as poison, all kinds of drugs, dead blood, etc.) are haram.

Ḥ alal Food as Universal Rule

Islam is a religion of ease, and for the ease of people, each and every pure, ṭ ayyab and beneficial thing is made lawful for mankind.

﴿الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ﴾

“This day all things good and pure have been made lawful to you” (Qur' ān, 5:5)

Muslims are under the obligation to follow the command of Allah Almighty regarding legal and illegal things, and this command of Allah Almighty is universal and for all human beings without any discrimination of color, sexes, race and creed, as it is mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah verse 168:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا﴾

“O Mankind! Partake of what is lawful and good on earth” (Qur’ān, 2:168)

Ṭayyib refers to good quality and delicious food, which means that the food should be clean and not have any Najis element that causes harm to the human body and mind. It can also be defined as balanced food/diet.

What is included in Halal Food

Sustenance is an important part of the human body, and that is the reason Islam has provided the laws related to Halal and Haram and made them obligatory for Muslims to be followed in their daily. Allah Almighty has clearly described in Qur’ ān what is lawful.

﴿أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُنْتَلَى عَلَيْكُمْ﴾

All grazing beasts of the flock are permitted to you except those which are recited to you hereinafter”, (Qur’ān, 5:1)

The word an’ ām (cattle) here refers to sheep, camel, oxen, and goats, and the meaning of the word bahimah is all four-footed grazing animals. In this verse, Allah Almighty has declared that all four-footed grazing animals are lawful, which do not feed on animals but depend on plants. Moreover, the exception is prescribed with the words (إِلَّا مَا يُنْتَلَى عَلَيْكُمْ), so it cannot be understood that all kinds of the beast are lawful and further explain what is now lawful in surah:

﴿إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَحُمَةَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لَغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ﴾

“Allah has forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine; also any animal over which

the name of any other than Allah has been pronounced” (Qur’ān, 16:115)

In Surah Anām outpoured blood (دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا) is added in prohibited things. Hence here it can collude that pure, safe Halal food is which not cause of harm to human life.

﴿أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ﴾

“The game of the water and eating thereof are permitted to you” (Quran, 5:96)

In Hadith Abu Hurairah, when Prophet PBUH was asked about the water and dead meat of the sea then, He PBH said:

﴿هُوَ الطَّهَوْرُ مَاؤُهُ الْحَلَالُ مَيْتَتُهُ﴾

“Its water is pure (and Purification), and its dead meat is permissible (to eat)” (Nisāi, 4350)

Clean and hygienic food leads the human body towards a healthy body.

The Wisdom behind Prohibited food

There are so many verses of the Qur’ ān which clearly state what is unlawful, and the wisdom behind this command of Allah Almighty is to save a human from harm and dangerous diseases. The objective of the prohibition is to make sure that any food one should be pure and safe for human health. Every food has its impact, and when a human body is nourished with unlawful food, it will surely suffer from many diseases and become impure. The prohibition of harmful things to human life is in compliance with the objectives of Shar’ āh (Zuhayli, 2009). In Surah Nahl verse 115, carrion, blood, the flesh of swine and the one which is not slaughtered in the name of Allah are declared haram, and the wisdom behind this prohibition is that the carrion or dead animals are harmful to the human body due to formation of some chemicals present in the rotting process which can be dangerous for the human body. Moreover, Pigs are a mark of impurity, greed and immorality, and a person who eats its flesh has lost his honor and shame. The blood which is drained from animal contains several bacteria

which are harmful to human development. Haram food leads towards disobedience of Allah Almighty. Therefore, Islam is not only directed towards Ḥ alal but Ṭ ayab food.

Family role in promoting Ḥ alal Food Concept in Children

Family is the basic and core unit of society and best place of learning for a child.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا﴾

“Believers, guard yourselves and your kindred against a Fire” (Qurān, 6:66)

﴿أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، قَالَ أَمِيرُ الَّذِينَ عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ

مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ

رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتٍ بَعْلُهَا وَوَلَدُهَا وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهُوَ

مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ، أَلَا فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ﴾

“All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of the people of his house, and he is responsible. A woman is the shepherd of the house of her husband, and she is responsible. Each of you is a shepherd, and each is responsible for his flock” (Bukhārī, 893)

Children are the blessings, and this Blessing should be greeted to pay gratitude to Allah. Parents and children are the closest persons to each other and key players in the family. It is the family who has a vital role in the growth of children and in instilling the concept and importance of Ḥ alal food from early childhood to adulthood. (Khalek, Hayaati & Ibrahim, 2015) French S.A. find out that the family environment is the most important factor which has a strong impact on the eating habits of children (French S.A., Story M., Jeffery R.W, 2001), and most children adopt their parent’s food (Xu, 2022).

It is a family where a child grows and learns from his/her birth, and family members, especially parents being the first teacher of a child, have a strong influence on their children. Parents are the

role models for children from whom a child learn long life living and eating behavior. It is narrated in the Hadith of Prophet PBUH:

﴿مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ﴾ (الترمذی، ٢٠٠٠)

Therefore parents should raise their children in a balanced way and should play an effective role in providing children with Ḥ alal food choices (Cullen et.al., 2000). Hence, family being the most influential factor which affects the eating and nutrition habits of children, the parents are the role model who educates the children about Ḥ alal food from very early childhood. Research showed the positive role of the family regarding the awareness about Ḥ alal and haram to children, and the parents have more powerful and strongest influences in this regard.

Since childhood is counted as a special and golden time where the moral, physical, psychological, and social foundation of a child is built and formed, from birth till the age of six, a child has a strong power to receive stimuli from his/her environment. Research finds that eight types of child development (Moral, spiritual, cognitive, physical, Social, emotional, language, and speech) must be done in early childhood. (Wardhani et.al., 2018).

Studies revealed that in Muslim communities, children are well aware of the Ḥ alal food, which indicates that children can be introduced since early childhood to the food consumption habit concept as learning at this age has long life effects on eating habits.

Being Muslim, parents should bring up their children to be ṣ aleh and should make them fear Allah. Besides other developmental stages, the foremost duty of Parents is to make them aware of what is lawful and what is unlawful. There is a need for a time when there the food industry becomes more developed and discovers a lot of new food products in order to introduce more delicious food tastes. Pure, clean and Hygienic food has a valuable effect on the behaviour of a child in developing activeness in children and

making them more concentrated, so they should learn about eating habits and the relationship between good food and health. For this purpose, the family must direct the children about the origin of the food, whether it is prepared from Halal Ingredients.

Vegetables, fruits, and proteins from different Halal sources are best for health. . For example, milk is a healthy diet, complete food containing calcium, protein, and vitamins A and B. The natural and provisional advantage is to get milk from only lawful animals when they are alive because in the case when they die, it becomes haram and has harmful effects on the human body.

It is necessary for the parents to let the children know about Halal meat and knowledge about what kind of meat is not Halal. The meat is not Halal which is not done by saying the name of Allah as mentioned in the Qur' ān:

﴿وَلَا تَكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِشْقٌ﴾

“Do not eat of (the animal) over which the name of Allah has not been pronounced (at the time of its slaughtering), for that is a transgression” (Quran, 6:121)

There is a need for the time that Parents should realize their duty as Muslims to know the Halal food challenges and issues in the current era and make their children familiar with the concept of Halal and Haram, which will surely keep them on the right path as required by Allah Almighty. Moreover, children must be informed about the preparation, preservation and Halal label method of food products. For this purpose, parents can conduct several activities to make them aware of Halal and Haram, such as making them a sense of shopping, variety of Halal and ṭ ayyab food Children, recognizing food types, food processing knowledge, etc.

Conclusion

Islam is a complete code of life and provides guidance regarding all spheres of life. The laws of

Islam are straightforward, potent, relevant to human nature and universal for all ages and for all human beings. Islamic dietary laws are obtained from Qur' ān and Sunnah. Halal food refers to pure and safe food which is helpful in the development of the human body. Halal food is clearly mentioned in the Qur' ān, and Muslims are obliged to follow these directions in their life. also, it is the duty of family and parents to instil this concept in their children. Family plays a vital and active role in promoting the concept of Halal food, skills in recognizing Halal and ṭ ayyab and shaping the eating habit of children. The study will extend the existing knowledge about the concept of Halal food and make the family and parents realize their role to give knowledge of Halal food to their children young in early childhood.

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