1

What is Halal Food?

Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz

Independent Public Health & Environment Consultant, London, UK

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Basic Terms

The editors appreciate this book is aimed at a wide cross-section of readers, from the devout Muslim practitioner to those who are interested in learning about halal but may know little about the religious context behind it. To aid readers who may be non-Muslim or non-Arabic speakers, we first lay out a few basic Arabic terms:

- Quran: means ‘recitation’ in Arabic and is the literal word of God recited to the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him “pbuh”) (pbuh) in Arabic by the Angel Gabriel.
- Sura: a chapter of the Glorious Quran
- Hadith: means ‘traditions’ in Arabic and is a written record of Mohammed’s (pbuh) life and thoughts.
- Shariah: means ‘legislation’ in Arabic and provides the moral code and religious law for Muslims.
- Halal: means ‘lawful, allowed or permitted’ in Arabic.
- Haram: means ‘prohibited and unlawful’ in Arabic.
- Makrooh: means ‘disapproved, disliked, hated or detested’ in Arabic.
- Mushbooh: means ‘doubtful or questionable’ in Arabic.
- Tayyab: means ‘wholesome or fit for consumption’ in Arabic.

1.1.2 What is Halal?

To understand halal and its importance to Muslims, one must first understand something about Islam. Every day a quarter of the earth’s population is called to prayer five times a day. From Indonesia to Bangladesh, from Nigeria to Morocco, from Egypt to the USA, no matter where in the world Muslims live, whether alone or with others, they are
daily united with fellow believers in this common experience through which each Muslim is required to express devotion to God. These five obligatory prayers take place at daybreak, midday, mid-afternoon, evening, and at sunset while facing Makkah, the holiest city of Islam. Prayer is always done in Arabic regardless of the worshiper’s native tongue.

Much as Islam prescribes the time and nature of worship, it also provides a set of standards by which Muslims are required to live their lives. At the core of these standards are the five pillars of Islam, which are:

1) Shahadah, the declaration of faith
2) Salah, the five daily prayers
3) Zakah, an obligation to give 2.5% of your savings to the poor each year
4) Sawm, fasting during the ninth Muslim month, Ramadan
5) Hajj, the pilgrimage that must be made once in every Muslim's lifetime to the Holy City of Makkah in Saudi Arabia. This takes place during the twelfth Muslim month.

A Muslim who believes in God and accepts his works as revealed by the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) is also required to carry out a set of duties and obligations that impact on every aspect of life. It is only by adhering to this set of instructions that have been clearly laid out by God that you can practice the faith or call yourself a Muslim.

In Arabic, the word halal means lawful or permissible. To the non-Muslim, it is a word that is often exclusively associated with the foods that Muslims are allowed to eat, but in reality it is a term that describes everything that it is permissible for a Muslim to do, both in deed and thought. Halal impacts every aspect of a Muslim’s life, from the clothes that can be worn to attitudes towards work, from relations between men and women to the treatment of children, from the way business is carried out to the treatment of a fellow Muslim, the principal of halal must be applied. Financial products, holidays, sports, films, even how you play a game of chess can be either halal, permissible, or the opposite, haram, unlawful. Haram covers everything that is prohibited for a Muslim. Haram in this sense is just as important as the principles of halal. Its importance to Muslims is due to the Islamic belief that everything put on this earth by God is here for our benefit

Figure 1.1  Slaughtering of cattle showing proper swift cut. Source: The London Central Mosque Trust and the Islamic Cultural Centre.
unless he or she has specified otherwise. In practical terms, this means that everything is halal or permissible unless God has specifically stated that it is not, which is when it becomes haram.

But sometimes things are not that clear-cut. In addition to halal and haram, there are two other terms that are used to describe whether a deed or thought should be permitted. Makrooh is a term meaning disapproved of, disliked, hated or detested. While a lesser sanction than haram, which is something that is prohibited, it is used to describe an action or deed that is described negatively. The other term that is commonly used is mushbooh, which is an action or deed that is doubtful or questionable. In relation to food, something is mushbooh when there is no consensus about whether it is halal or haram. In such cases, it may be wise to avoid the food item in question.

Understanding what is haram and what is halal, and that which is in between, lies at the core of a Muslim's faith. The reason Muslims believe so profoundly in these distinctions is that they have been laid down in Arabic in the Holy Quran, which for a Muslim is the literal word of God.

1.1.3 Halal and the Holy Quran

The first place a Muslim turns to understand what is halal and what is haram is the Holy Quran. In Arabic Quran means ‘recitation’. Over a period of 23 years from Mohammed’s (pbuh) 40th year to his death in 632, the angel Gabriel visited Mohammed (pbuh) and recited in Arabic the word of God. These recitals were later written down in Arabic to form the Holy Quran we know today. This is why Arabic is the language of prayer for Muslims regardless of their mother tongue.

The Holy Quran is about four-fifths the size of the Christian New Testament and is made up of 114 chapters of varying length, each known as a sura. The suras are not ordered thematically so they start with the longest first and end with the shortest. It means that a Muslim can open the Holy Quran at any page and start reciting at the start of any paragraph, as each represents a

![Diagram of a pig's head](image-url)

**Figure 1.2** The proper site for slaughtering in cattle and arteries, veins and organs to be cut. *Source:* The London Central Mosque Trust and the Islamic Cultural Centre.
lesson to be learned and reflected upon. The Holy Quran covers such issues as the existence of God, the early prophet’s historical events during Mohammed’s (pbuh) time, as well as moral and ethical lessons. It also describes what actions are right and what are wrong, or what is halal and what is haram, and it is these exhortations that we will be focusing on in this book.

Islam is not just a religion; it is also a source of law and a guide to social behaviour that sets out a standard by which the good Muslim should live their life. Islam is an Arabic word that means ‘submission’ or ‘submission to the word of God’. Muslim is Arabic for ‘one who submits’. A Muslim submits to the word of God through the expression of the Islamic faith, which involves accepting the ethical standards and practices that are laid out in the Holy Quran. Understanding and adhering to what the Holy Quran defines as halal and haram is part of this process of acceptance. Because these laws are laid out in the Holy Quran, and so it is the literal word of God as described to the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), it follows that all these rules of belief and conduct are the rules that God requires you to follow to be a good Muslim.

Food and its derivatives are mentioned in the Holy Quran 49 times. The two chapters or suras that provide the clearest instruction on what can and cannot be eaten by Muslims are Al‐Ma’ida, which can be translated as the Table or the Feast, and Al‐Baqara, translated as the Cow or Cattle. But it is not just as an expression of faith that Muslims adhere to the laws of halal. Islam teaches of a day of judgement. At a time only known to God, a day will come when everyone is judged along with the dead, who will be resurrected for judgement. The reward comes in the form of passing into heaven, punishment involves passing into hell. The judgement itself is carried out by an omnipotent God who will have witnessed all your deeds throughout your life and so be able to judge your fitness to enter heaven. A Muslim believes God to be ever‐present and knowing of every deed and thought, and so is aware of who follows his command and who does not. An individual’s adherence to the rules of the faith, including halal, is part of the judgement that will determine their status in the afterlife.

Figure 1.3  Slaughtering of poultry showing proper swift cut. Source: The London Central Mosque Trust and the Islamic Cultural Centre.
1.1.4 Other Sources of Halal Instruction

While the Holy Quran is the literal word of God and so the primary source of all instruction, Muslims also look to two other sources for guidance. The first is the Hadith, often translated as the prophetic ‘traditions’, which is also known as the Sunnah, which is translated as the ‘clear path’ or ‘trodden path’. Muslims see Mohammed (pbuh) as not only the (pbuh) but also as a very human figure. Unlike a Christian’s relationship with Jesus, he is not seen in a spiritual light, but rather as a man who set the best possible example for Muslims to follow when striving to do God’s will on earth. Muslims look to the words and deeds of Mohammed (pbuh) as providing guidance in all aspects of life including what to eat and drink.

Because it is believed that the actions and words of Mohammed (pbuh) provide a living example of the meaning of the Holy Quran, early Muslims were keen to record as much of what Mohammed (pbuh) said and did as possible. These oral stories about his life and the example of the path that he trod (Sunnah) are known as the Hadith (the traditions). The Hadith were collected and written down over several 100 years and it is to these written texts that Muslims turn for guidance.

The other source of guidance for Muslims is Shariah law (see Chapter 2). For a Muslim, there is only one authority and that is the authority of God and being a good Muslim means submitting to this one authority. A Muslim does not drink alcohol not because this is a law laid down by the state, but because it is the will of God that he or she should not do so. For a Muslim, there should ideally be no need for a secular legal system because there should be no difference between your duty to God and your duty to the state. To help in this process, religious scholars drew up a set of rules that instruct Muslims on what is the right thing to

![Figure 1.4](Image)

**Figure 1.4** Method of slaughtering in chicken. *Source:* The London Central Mosque Trust and the Islamic Cultural Centre.
do in response to the different circumstances that life throws at them. These laws cover every-thing from religious rituals to setting standards for international law, politics, and economics as well as more personal rules around such things as marriage, divorce, diet, hygiene, and prayer. Islamic law or Shariah law provides a set of standards that unite all Muslims in their struggle to obey the will of God. However, it needs to be noted that legal systems have been developed differently in different countries and so Shariah law is not always consistent. Different countries have interpreted the Quran and Sunnah differently.

The two primary sources for Shariah law are the precepts laid out in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah or example set by Mohammed (pbuh). However, there may be occasions when neither provides an adequate answer to the question ‘What is the right course of action?’ It then becomes the role of Islamic judges (qadis) along with religious scholars (ulama) to look at similar situations or principles (qiyas) that may be used to gain insight into God’s will. When making their decisions religious scholars will also apply the principle of consensus, translated as ‘ijma’ in Arabic, to guide them. In the Sunnah Mohammed (pbuh) is reported to have said that ‘my community will never agree on an error’. This is taken to mean that if a consensus view can be formed it will ultimately be the expression of the will of God.

1.2 What is Halal Food?

1.2.1 Halal Foods in Islam

Food has a great status in Islam and one of the fundamental principles of halal is that unless it is specifically stated that something is haram or unlawful in the Holy Quran or in the Hadith then it is has been put on earth by God for human benefit. To cause unnecessary hardship by unjustifiably prohibiting something and so causing privation is seen by

![Figure 1.5](image-url)
Muslims as going against the will of God. It is not up to humans to second-guess what should be permitted and what should not. When Mohammed (pbuh) was asked about whether animal fat or cheese could be eaten he replied:

‘The lawful is that which Allah has made lawful in His Book and the prohibited is that which He has prohibited in His Book, and that concerning which He is silent He has permitted as a favour to you.’

When it comes to food, Islamic dietary law also requires that food is not only halal but also that it is wholesome and fit for human consumption (tayyab). If something is not fit for consumption and wholesome it automatically becomes haram. This means that all foods have to be produced in hygienic conditions to ensure that no food pathogens are allowed to contaminate the food.

While the consumption of meat is permitted, the choice of animals that are allowed (halal) is restricted and there is a further requirement to follow the prescribed method of slaughter (Al Dabah/Al Zabah) and to ensure that the principles of animal welfare have been adhered to throughout the life of the animal, including its slaughter.

So for a food to be halal it must first of all not be haram, it must be wholesome and fit for consumption, in the case of meat it must be slaughtered in the prescribed manner and good animal welfare must have been practiced throughout the life of the animal and its slaughter.

1.2.2 Halal Food Defined

Food made from the following substances is halal unless it contains or comes into contact with a haram substance:

- All plant and their products.
- Halal slaughtered meat, poultry, game birds and halal animal ingredients which include sheep, lamb, goats, cattle, buffalo, camel, rabbit, and grasshoppers. Wild animals that are non-predatory, e.g. deer, big horn sheep, gaur, and the antelope. Non-predatory birds, e.g. chicken fowl, quails, turkey, hens, geese, pigeons, sparrows, partridges, ostriches, and ducks.

Figure 1.6 The head holder in cattle (Dr.Temple Grandin)
1. What is Halal Food?

- All water creatures, fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. There is no prescribed method of killing them. Dying fish must not be made to suffer or cut open while alive, and shall not be cooked alive.
- Eggs can only come from acceptable birds.
- Non-animal rennet (NAR, culture) or rennet from halal slaughtered calves.
- Gelatine produced from halal beef bones or skins.
- What has been slaughtered under non-normal conditions of the animal, e.g. a battered or a strangled animal about to die but still alive.

Where a Muslim is forced to eat what is not permitted, to avoid the risk of dying, then he or she can eat only an amount sufficient to stay alive.

1.2.3 Haram Food Defined

- Pork/swine and its by-products.
- Animals improperly slaughtered or dead before slaughtering.
- Carrion or dead animals.
- Animals killed in the name of anyone other than Allah (God), and lawful animals not slaughtered according to Islamic rites. (Fish is exempt from slaughtering rules.)
- Carnivorous animals and animals with fangs such as tigers, lions, cats etc.
- Birds that have talons with which they catch their prey such as owls, eagles, etc.
- Land animals without external ears.
- Animals which Islam encourages people to kill such as scorpions, centipedes, rats etc.
- Animals which Islam forbids people to kill such as bees etc.
- Animals which have toxins or poisons or produce ill-effects when eaten, such as some fish.
- Amphibious animals such as crocodiles, turtles, frogs etc.
- Blood and blood by-products, faces and urine, and placental tissue.
- Almost all reptiles and insects, which are considered ugly or filthy, such as worms, lice, flies, etc.
- Wine, ethyl alcohol, spirits, and intoxicants such as poisonous and intoxicating plants.
- Foods contaminated with any of the above products.

Figure 1.7 Imperfect bleeding due to delaying of the slaughter cut of the neck (few minutes) after stunning.
1.2 What is Halal Food?

Foods not free from contamination while prepared or processed with anything considered *najis* (filthy).

Foods processed, made, produced, manufactured, and/or stored using utensils, equipment, and/or machinery that have been not cleansed according to Islamic Shariah law.

1.2.4 Fit and Wholesome Food

*Tayyab* means in Arabic to be wholesome and fit for consumption and it is a requirement of halal food that is should be tayyab. If it is not it cannot be described as halal and so it becomes haram. Of course, regardless of our faith, we all wish to eat food that is fit for human consumption, so countries have their own food hygiene laws that both producers and retailers are legally bound by. Any food that is produced outside these food hygiene regulations is by definition unfit for human consumption so as a starting point all food sold as halal has to be legally produced and has to have met that particular country’s food hygiene standards.

In the case of meat in the UK that would mean the animal has been slaughtered in a licensed abattoir where procedures are monitored by the Food Standards Agency, that the meat has been transported in suitable vehicles, and that any further processing has been done under the appropriate food hygiene regulations.

Where problems often arise with halal foods produced in non-Muslim countries is where halal and haram foods are processed in the same food plant. While halal and haram foods can be stored together, if they come into contact with each other then the halal food is rendered haram.

A production line that produces both non-halal foods and halal foods at different times will often struggle to clean equipment to a standard where cross-contamination does not occur.

![Stunning in cattle](image1)

![Electrical stunning tools](image2)

![Captive bolt shooting in sheep](image3)

*Figure 1.8* Some kinds of animals stunning.
occur. This can be extremely problematic where haram foods such as pork is being processed along with halal foods. There have been many instances where small quantities of pork have been detected in foods that are labelled halal and these have caused quite understandable distress. This particularly came to light during the 2011 horsemeat scandal in the UK and Europe.

1.3 Animal Welfare and Halal Slaughter

1.3.1 Animal Welfare in Islam

In Islam the mistreatment of an animal is considered a sin. Animals are not considered as a merely a resource for humans but as creatures that are dependent on God and that are organized into social groups. They are seen as having their own lives and purpose that is valuable to both themselves and God. In Islam a good deed done to an animal is equivalent to a good deed done to a human. Equally an act of cruelty to an animal is the equivalent of an act of cruelty to a human. Most importantly, Muslims believe that animals engage in the active worship of God. In one Hadith Mohammed (pbuh) tells of a past prophet who ordered an ants’ nest to be burned after being bitten by an ant. Mohammed (pbuh) recounts how God reprimanded the prophet for destroying a community that glorified him.

The message that humans should show kindness to animals can be found in the Holy Quran and the Hadith. The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) provided many examples of his concern for animals. He chastised anyone who mistreated animals while giving praise to those who show kindness. It is forbidden to strike or beat an animal as well as to brand an animal or mark it on the face. Mohammed (pbuh) also introduced, at the time radical, prohibitions against the practice of cutting off the tails and humps of living animals for food.

Types of stunning as claimed to be a humane slaughter in the western countries

Non-penetrating guns deliver a blow on the skull damaging the cortex, midbrain and brain stem

Penetrating guns fire the bolt into the brain through the cortex, midbrain and brain stem

Figure 1.9 Penetrating guns fire the bolt into the brain in cattle.
Mental cruelty to animals is also forbidden. In one instance described in the Hadith Mohammed (pbuh) orders his companions on a journey to return two young birds they had taken from a nest after he saw the mother’s distress.

An animal that has been poorly treated is not halal. In our modern food chain this should begin at the primary point of production, where best husbandry practice should be applied. In Chapter 5 on animal welfare Mehmet Haluk Anil goes into more detail to explain how this can be achieved throughout the whole food chain, including loading, transportation, and slaughter. In Chapter 4 Temple Grandin explains how our knowledge of animal behaviour can instruct us on reducing distress to animals before and during slaughter.

In addition to animal husbandry, the welfare of animals in the Islamic faith extends to the keeping of pets and hunting for sport. A Muslim who chooses to keep a pet must take on the responsibility of the animal’s care and well-being. This means providing the animal with appropriate food, water, and shelter. The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) described how a woman who had cruelly confined her pet cat as well as failing to properly feed it was punished by being forced to enter the fire after death.

Equally, the hunting of animals for sport is prohibited in the Muslim faith. Muslims are only allowed to hunt for food. In the seventh century, when the Prophet (pbuh) was alive, hunting for sport was common practice and Mohammed (pbuh) took every opportunity to condemn the practice as being cruel to animals.

Figure 1.10  Meat texture and colour (a)Normal meat; (b) Pale Soft and Exudative (PSE) meat; (c) Dark Firm and Dry (DFD) meat chambers. Source: Chambers, P.G. and Grandin, T. (2001): Guidelines for humane handling, transport and slaughter of livestock. G. Heinz and T. Srisuvan (Eds.).
1.3.2 Halal Slaughter

The slaughtering (dhabh) rules for halal slaughter are based on the Holy Quran, the Hadiths and Shariah law. In Chapter 5 Mehmet Haluk Anil goes into greater detail on halal slaughter good practice but here we outline the Hadith and Shariah laws as follows:

- The abattoir or factory must be under the close and constant supervision of an Islamic religious organization.
- Animals should have a preslaughter rest, and be well fed and well looked after at the point of slaughter.
- Animals that are slaughtered should be securely restrained, particularly the head and neck, before the throat is cut.
- The premises, equipment, and machinery must be classed according to Islamic Shariah law before any production takes place.
- Muslim men must be trained to slaughter animals in a licensed slaughterhouse that implements all hygiene and animal welfare regulations.
- The slaughterer must be a mature and pious Muslim of sound mind who understands fully the fundamentals and conditions relating to halal slaughter and is approved by the religious authorities and the meat hygiene services.
- The animal/bird must have been allowed to feed and grow up on a natural vegetarian diet.
- The animal/bird must be alive, healthy, and free from any disease or injury at the time of slaughter, as certified and checked by a veterinary surgeon.
- The animal skin or fur and bird feathers must be cleaned prior to slaughter and free from faeces, dirt or other unhygienic substances.
- The animal must be fed and not be hungry or thirsty before slaughter.
- The animal must not be slaughtered in front of other animals and should not see any blood.
- The animal must be handled gently and individually, and the knife should not be sharpened in front of any animal before slaughter.
- No stress or discomfort should be caused to any animal.
- No stunning is allowed before slaughter.
- The knife used for slaughter must be very sharp and clean.
- The Muslim slaughterer must first say, ‘In the name of Allah, Allah is greater (Bismillah, Allah Akbar)’.
- The cut must be made in the correct anatomical site in the neck by cutting the two carotids, the two jugulars, the windpipe, and the gullet, but without gutting the spinal cord.
- All blood should be allowed to flow from the carcass.
- Animals should not be shackled and hoisted before bleeding.
- Hoisting should be done only after the animal has lost consciousness.
- Restraining equipment should be comfortable for the animal.
- A specific time should be allowed till the animal ceases any movement.
- De-feathering, de-skinning, and evisceration can be done after slaughter.
- Any unlawful meat, such as pork, should not contaminate halal meat. Separate knives, equipment, and utensils should be used for halal meat.
1.4 The Holy Quran and the Hadith

1.4.1 Verses that Explain Why Muslims Can Only Eat Halal Foods

Consuming halal is an order of Allah and an essential part of the Islamic faith. Allah has repeatedly emphasized the consumption of halal in His Book. The following are some examples of such verses from the Holy Quran:

O Messengers, eat from the pure foods and work righteousness.  
*Holy Quran 23:51*

O you who have believed, eat from the pure things which we have provided you.  
*Holy Quran 2:172*

O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth (that is) lawful and pure.  
*Holy Quran 2:168*

and eat of the lawful and good (things) that Allah has given you, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, in whom you believe.  
*Holy Quran 5:88*

Therefore eat of what Allah has given you, lawful and good (things), and give thanks for Allah’s favor if him do you serve.  
*Holy Quran 16:114*

O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the shaitan; surely he is your open enemy.  
*Holy Quran 2:168*

O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.  
*Holy Quran 5:87*

O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the shaitan’s work; shun it therefore that you may be successful.  
*Holy Quran 5:90*

O messengers! Eat of the good things and do good; surely I know what you do.  
*Holy Quran 23:51*

O children of Adam! Attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely he does not love the extravagant.  
*Holy Quran 7:31*
1.4.2 Verses That Explain Why Only Allah Can Prescribe What is and is not Halal

And, for what your tongues describe, do not utter the lie, (saying) this is lawful and this is unlawful, in order to forge a lie against Allah; surely those who forge the lie against Allah shall not prosper.

*Holy Quran 16:116*

And what reason have you that you should not eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned, and he has already made plain to you what he has forbidden to you – excepting what you are compelled to; and most surely many would lead (people) astray by their low desires out of ignorance; surely your lord – he best knows those who exceed the limits.

*Holy Quran 6:119*

Say: tell me what Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you make (a part) of it unlawful and (a part) lawful. say: has Allah commanded you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?

*Holy Quran 10:59*

Oh, ye messengers! Eat of the good things [tayyibat] and do righteous deeds. Surely, I know what you do.

*Holy Quran 23:51*

Oh believers! Eat what we have provided for you of lawful and good things, and give thanks for Allah's favour, if it is He whom you serve.

*Holy Quran 2:172, 16:114*

1.4.3 Verses That Explain What is Halal and What is Haram

Haram to you (for food) is carrion; blood; the flesh of swine; that which any name other than Allah has been invoked; that which has been killed by strangling; and beat to death, or dead through falling from a height; and killed by the goring of horns; and that which was eaten by wild beasts, unless you are able to perform dhabiha; and that which is sacrificed to idols.

*Al-Quran Surah Al-Maidah*

I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine – for that surely is unclean – or that which is a transgression, other than (the name of) Allah having been invoked on it; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely your lord is forgiving, merciful.

*Holy Quran 6:145*

He has only forbidden you what dies of itself and blood and flesh of swine and that over which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, but whoever...
is driven to necessity, not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely Allah is forgiving, merciful.

_Holy Quran 16:115_

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 being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the 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 favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion; but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining willfully to sin, then surely Allah is forgiving, merciful.

_Holy Quran 5:3_

They ask you as to what is allowed to them. say: the good things are allowed to you, and what you have taught the beasts and birds of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allah has taught you – so eat of that which they catch for you and mention the name of Allah over it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is swift in reckoning.

_Holy Quran 5:4_

This day (all) the good things are allowed to you; and the food of those who have been given the book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the book before you (are lawful for you); when you have given them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret; and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is of no account, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.

_Holy Quran 5:5_

Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the travellers, and the game of the land is forbidden to you so long as you are on pilgrimage, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, to whom you shall be gathered.

_Holy Quran 5:96_

And he it is who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of his bounty and that you may give thanks.

_Holy Quran 16:14_

Allah is he who made the cattle for you that you may ride on some of them, and some of them you eat.

_Holy Quran 40:79_
1.4.4 Examples from the Hadith (traditions) Covering Animal Welfare

One Hadith quotes Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) as saying:

A good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being.

There is a reward (ajr) for helping any living creature.

*Bukhari and Muslim*

It is a great sin for man to imprison those animals which are in his power.

*Muslim*

The worst of shepherds is the ungentle, who causes the beasts to crush or bruise one another.

*Muslim*

You will not have secure faith until you love one another and have mercy on those who live upon the earth.

*Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu Dawud*

Fear God in these mute animals, and ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and let them go free when... they [need to] rest.

*Abu Dawud*

There is no man who kills a sparrow or anything beyond that, without its deserving it, but God will ask him about it.

*Bukhari, Muslim, and al-Nasai*

The grievous things are: shirk (polytheism); disobedience to parents; the killing of breathing beings ...

*Bukhari and Muslim*

May god curse anyone who maims animals.

*Ibn al-Athir*

It is related from Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

‘A woman was once punished after death because of a cat which she had kept confined until it died, and because of this she entered the Fire. She had neither given it food or drink while confining it, nor had she let it free to eat the creatures of the earth.’

*Muslim*

The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) often chastised his Companions who mistreated animals, and spoke to them about the need for mercy and kindness. Here are several examples from the Hadith instructing Muslims about how to treat animals.

**Reward for mercy:** It is related from Abu Umama that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘Whoever is merciful even to a sparrow, Allah will be merciful to him on the Day of Judgment.’

**Animals are like humans:** ‘A good deed done to an animal is like a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as cruelty to a human being.’

**Animals cannot speak up for themselves:** It is related from Sahl ibn Al-Handhaliyya that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, once passed by a camel
that was so emaciated that its back had almost reached its stomach. He said, ‘Fear Allah in
these beasts who cannot speak.’

*Abu Dawud*

*Mental cruelty is also forbidden:* It is related from AbdulRahman bin Abdullah that a
group of Companions were once on a journey with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and
grant him peace, and he left them for a while. During his absence, they saw a bird with its
two young, and they took the young ones from the nest. The mother bird was circling above
in the air, beating its wings in grief, when the (pbuh) came back. He said, ‘Who has hurt the
feelings of this bird by taking its young? Return them to her.’

*Muslim*

*Forgiveness of sins:* It is related from Abu Hurayra, from the Prophet, may Allah bless him
and grant him peace, that a prostitute once saw a dog on a very hot day going round and
round a well, lolling its tongue because of its thirst. She drew some water for it using her
shoe, and for this action all her sins were forgiven her.

*Muslim*

*Mistreatment is a sin:* It is related from Jabir that the Messenger of Allah once saw a don-
key which had been branded on its face and he said, ‘May Allah curse the one who branded
it.’

*Muslim*

*Give rest to beasts of burden:* It is related from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet, may Allah
bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘Do not use the backs of your animals as chairs. Allah
has made them subject to you, so that by them you can reach places that you would not
otherwise be able to reach except with great fatigue.’

*Abu Dawud*

### 1.4.5 Verses from the Hadith Concerning the Slaughter of Animals

So eat of that (meat) upon which Allah’s name has been mentioned, if you are
believers in His verses.

*Holy Quran 6:118*

And do not eat that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for
indeed it is a grave disobedience.

*Holy Quran 6:121*

The humane slaughter of animals is strongly supported in The Islamic tradition.

Sahih Muslim (Book 21, Chapter 11, Number 4810) records Mohammed (pbuh) saying,
‘Verily Allah has enjoined goodness to everything; so when you kill, kill in a good way and
when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way. So every one of you should sharpen his knife,
and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably.’

Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) has also said, ‘When one of you slaughters, let him complete
it’, meaning that one should sharpen the knife well and feed, water, and soothe the animal
before killing it.

He also said, ‘Do you intend inflicting death on the animal twice – once by sharpening
the knife within its sight, and once by cutting its throat?’
The Holy Quran is explicit with regard to using animals for human purposes. A closer look at the teachings of the Holy Quran and tradition reveals teachings of kindness and concern for animals. Nonetheless, the Holy Quran clearly supports the use of animals, including for food.

If you kill, kill well.  
*Imam Nawawi 40:1*

And cattle He has created for you (men); from them ye derive warmth and numerous benefits, and of their (meat) ye eat.  
*Surrah An-Nahl 16:5*

There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered.  
*Surrah Al-Anam 6:38*

And they carry your heavy loads to lands that ye could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed: for your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful.  
*Surrah An-Nahl 16:7*

We have made animals subject to you, that ye may be grateful.  
*Surrah Al Haj 22:36*

And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment; And he has created other things of which ye have no knowledge.  
*Surrah An-Nahl 16:8*

Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praise all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and Allah knows well all that they do.  
*Surrah An-Noor 24:41.*

There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but they form communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end”  
*Holy Quran 6:38*

Although animals do not have free will, they follow their natural, God‐given instincts, and in that sense they submit to God’s will, which is Islam.

Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praise all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and Allah knows well all that they do.  
*Holy Quran 24:41*

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