**Eating Halal Food**



**23.51.** O you Messengers! Partake of (God's) pure and wholesome bounties, and always act righteously. I have full knowledge of all that you do.



**31:12**. We surely granted wisdom2 to Luqmān,3 and said: "Give thanks to God." Whoever gives thanks to God, gives thanks but for (the good of) his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, surely God is the All-Wealthy and Self-Sufficient (absolutely independent of the whole creation), All-Praiseworthy.

2. For an explanation of wisdom, see *sūrah* 2: 129, note 108, and 269, note 159.

3. Luqmān is one of the three persons – the other two being Dhu'l-Qarnayn and 'Uzayr – mentioned in the Qur'ān about whom it is not clear whether they were Prophets or not. Luqmān was widely known in Arabia before the advent of Islam for his wisdom and spiritual maturity. Some traditions say that he was from Abyssinia and lived in Egypt (al-Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm*, "*Sūrah* Luqmān," note 17). According to some other traditions, he was the nephew of Prophet Ayyūb (Job), upon him be peace, and lived long enough to see Prophet Dāwūd (David) and Prophet Yūnus (Jonah), upon them both be peace (Yazır, 6: 3842).

**Hadith**

*Abu Bakr Siddique(RA)* drank the milk brought by his servant. He later asked as to where he did bring the milk from? The servant replied that he had performed a “*Kahaanat*” for a certain tribe and was given milk in exchange as wages. “*Kahaanat*” is a *Haraam* act, a sort of chanting that was common in the pre-Islamic days. Hearing this  *Siddique(RA)* immediately put his finger in his throat and threw out, and kept doing that for some time. People who saw the situation thought that perhaps *Siddique(RA)* will pass out due to pain. *Siddique(RA)* made repentance, prayed and submitted: “Ya Allah, I repent and apologize for the milk which has gone into my system. When Prophet (SAW) heard of the incident, he commented: “Don’t you know that nothing goes to the stomach of *Siddique* (RA), except what is “*Ta’iyyeb*” pure food?” (3)

One of the surahs in the Holy Qur'an has the name of *Luqman* who is one of the three persons – the other two being Dhu'l-Qarnayn and 'Uzayr – mentioned in the Qur'an about whom it is not clear whether they were Prophets or not. *Aayah* 12 of the *Surah* says that he was granted wisdom. *Luqman*, indeed, was widely known in Arabia before the advent of Islam for his wisdom and spiritual maturity. *Luqman*’s first advice to the people is about the quality of *Salat*. The second advice he gave was about food. He said that you should guard and watch your food intake. It is a two-part advice. One is that over eating should be avoided, because it is the root cause of ill health. Prophet (SAW) had advised us to divide stomach into three compartments; one for food, the second for water, and the third for air. If applied, this formula can ensure good health.

The second part of the advice means to be careful about the *Halaal* (pure and recommended) and the *Haraam* (forbidden) food, because the Holy Qur’an and traditions of Prophet (SAW) mandate *Halaal* food. *Halaal* food means that food must be procured and purchased through fair, legitimate, and honest means. According to a tradition quoted in *Muslim*: “Prophet (SAW) mentioned a person, who had dust on his clothes and hair due to a long journey, was making supplications saying “*Yaa Rub, Yaa Rub*”, but his food, drink and dress was *Haraam*. Though Allah (SWT) accepts supplications of a traveler, but his involvement in *Haraam* made his supplications unacceptable.

According to one of Prophet (SAW)’s tradition, supplications of three persons are accepted: the traveler, father’s supplication for his off spring, and supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor. According to yet another tradition, Allah (SAW) has appointed an angel, who day and night announces from *Bait-ul-Maqdis* that obligatory and supplementary prayers of a person, who eats *Haraam,* will not be accepted.

*Anas* (RA) asked Prophet (SAW) to pray for him so that he may become “*Mustajab-ud-dawaat*”. The term “*Mustajab-ud-dawaat*” means a person whose prayers and supplications are accepted. Prophet (SAW) replied: “*Yaa Anas*, earn an honest living and eat *Halaal* food, Allah (SWT) will make you “*Mustajab-ud-dawaat*”, and will grant you whatever you ask. Keep yourself away from *Haraam*, because even a morsel i.e. a small bite of *Haraam* food invalidates supplications for forty days.” (*At-Targheeb)*

There are many other spiritual and physical disadvantages of *Haraam* food. *Hakim-ul-Ummah*, *Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi* (RehmA) has listed four disadvantages.

1. Haraam food extinguishes the light of Iman, and the heart becomes dark.
2. It makes man dull, lethargic, and inactive.
3. It causes to commit *Haraam* deeds and corrupts thoughts and actions.
4. It kills conscience and puts a barrier between man and virtue.

The essence is that *Haraam* creates a distance between man and *Deen*, ruins the Hereafter, the door of virtues is closed on him, and that of temptations and sin is flung wide open.

*Yusuf ibn-e-Artaat* (RehmA) is quoted in *Kitaab-ul-Kabaa’ir* that when *Shaitaan* finds a youth busy in prayers and submitting to the obedience of Allah (SWT), he asks his friends to find about his food and drink. If it turns out to be *Haraam*, then there is nothing to worry about as his prayers and obedience is futile and wouldn’t be of any good to him.

In today’s society *Haraam* is practiced in many ways, and majority is not even aware of it. Interest, bribery, cheating in commercial transactions, lying, disregards of duties of the self and rights of others, theft and larceny and many other *Haraam* acts are a common practice. Knowledge is not scarce, but it is action which is missing. And the main reason is that our earnings are not honest, and our food and drink is not fair and pure. As a result we cannot practice virtue and are devoid of righteousness.

According to a tradition of Prophet (SAW) there will be some people on the Day of Judgment whose virtues will match the size of the mount *Tihama*, meaning that they will have abundance of good deeds. But when they will stand before Allah (SWT), all their good deeds will be on no value, and they will be thrown into Hell Fire. Companions (RA Ajma’een) submitted, why will that happen *Yaa* Rasul Allah? Prophet (SAW) replied that they performed *Salaat*, observed fast, paid *Zakah*, and performed *Hajj*, but never saved themselves from *Haraam*, which ruined all their good deeds. (*Kitaab-ul-Kabaa’ir*)

Allah (SWT) says in *Aayah* 51 of *Surah Al-Muminoon*:  “Messengers eat good things and do good deeds.”

The *Aayah* has used the word “*Ta’iyye’baat*” which means nice, pure and decent things. In the Islamic Law (*Shari’ah)*, things that are condemned as *Haraam* are neither pure, nor appealing to common sense, that is why “*Ta’iyyebaat*” means things which internally and externally are pure and appealing. The *Aayah* tells us that all the Prophets and Messengers were given two main instructions. One: Eat pure, and *Halaa*l food, and Two: Perform good and righteous deeds. When Prophets and Messengers, who are *Maa’soom min-al-Khata* (incapable of committing mistakes), have been commanded as such, then we their followers should be very particular in taking all precautions possible to avoid *Haraam* and the forbidden.

Scholars say that the combination of these two commands *Akl-e-Halaal* & *Amal-e-Sualeh*, i.e the fairly earned wages and pure food and the righteous deeds are interdependent. There is a saying “*Al-Halaal-u-Yanjilu al-al-Halaal, wo  Al-Haraam-u-Yanjil-u-Al-al Haraam*”. *Halaal* earnings and food make you do good and righteous deeds, and *Haraam* earnings and *Haraam* food prompts you to commit *Haraam* acts and deprives you of the ability to think or do good.

It was due to the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and training of Prophet (SAW) that companions of the Prophet (SAW) were very cautious and conscious about food. Let us look at just one example here: Once *Abu Bakr Siddique(RA)* drank the milk brought by his servant. He later asked as to where he did bring the milk from? The servant replied that he had performed a “*Kahaanat*” for a certain tribe and was given milk in exchange as wages. “*Kahaanat*” is a *Haraam* act, a sort of chanting that was common in the pre-Islamic days. Hearing this  *Siddique(RA)* immediately put his finger in his throat and threw out, and kept doing that for some time. People who saw the situation thought that perhaps *Siddique(RA)* will pass out due to pain. *Siddique(RA)* made repentance, prayed and submitted: “Ya Allah, I repent and apologize for the milk which has gone into my system. When Prophet (SAW) heard of the incident, he commented: “Don’t you know that nothing goes to the stomach of *Siddique* (RA), except what is “*Ta’iyyeb*” pure food?” *(Bukhari)*

May Allah enable us to realize the importance of the gift of life and the countless blessings we have been bestowed with and utilize our time prudently and wisely and the way it pleases Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). Aameen!(4)

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**References**

 **(1) 23:51.The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2) 31:12. The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) (Bukhari)**

**(4) neicc.net/Khutbahs**