

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

EATING WITH YOUR LEFT HAND

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In a gathering of Muslims, the chances are one would instantly be rebuked for eating or drinking with their left hands. Those that inherit their Islamic teachings from their forefathers are taught this as children as part of early indoctrination. Others that come into Islam are informed that the Prophet forbade this. The simple question remains, how many of us have really questioned and studied the veracity of this prohibition in the light of the Quran?

For it is the Quran, that makes it absolutely clear that it is the **only** source that makes matters lawful and unlawful in terms of religious decree. This is a right NOT even granted to the Prophet as can clearly be seen in the following verse:

066:001

“O Prophet! **Why** do you forbid that which God has made lawful to you? You seek to please your wives!. But God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”

The Prophet was clearly instructed to judge believers by the Quran.

005:048

“To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it (between the hands, [1]), and guarding it in safety: **so judge between them by what God has revealed**, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that has come to you...”

006.155

"And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing: **so follow it (Arabic: fa-ittabi'uhu)** and fear (God) / be righteous so that you may receive mercy"

There are numerous verses which deal with eating prohibitions (e.g. carrion, blood and swine). However, there is **not one single verse** that imposes the restriction of eating with the left hand on mankind.

It would appear that many Muslims have not learnt from the wisdom of the Quran with regards the People of the Book and how they made things unlawful for themselves without Divine sanction.

For example, in the matter of food:

003.093

“All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel made unlawful for itself, before the Law (of Moses) was revealed. Say: "Bring ye the Law and study it, if ye be men of truth."”

003:094

“If any, after this, invent a lie and attribute it to God, they are indeed unjust wrong-doers”

The same directive is given to the believers:

005.087

“O ye who believe! make not unlawful the good things which God hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for God loves not those given to excess.”

There are plentiful verses dealing with food restrictions and lawfulness in the Quran (5:3; 2:173; 6:145; 16:115; 5:4; 5:5; 16:118; 5:1 etc). See article [2] below.

There is not one verse which prohibits food and drink consumption with the left hand.

Some simple questions one may want to ponder upon:

- 1 - Why is one's left hand good enough to use whilst cupping the hands in prayer but not to eat with?
- 2 - Why is one's left hand good enough to place on the ground when one meets their Lord in prayer during prostration but not to eat with?
- 3 - Why is one's left hand good enough to cook food with but not to eat with?
- 4 - Why is one's left hand good enough to hold the book of God but not to eat with?
- 5 - Why did God create left handed people?

Are the ethical disciplines imposed by the teachings of the Holy Quran on mankind meant to constrict, suffocate, and make difficult one's practice of religion? Or on the contrary has it been revealed to deepen one's consciousness of belief in the Creator and to do good works (90.17-18)?

020.002-3

“We have not revealed unto thee (Muhammad) this Quran that you should be distressed - But only as an admonition to those who fear (God)”

Alas, the majority of Muslims fail to question their inherited practices and beliefs as they forsake the study of the Quran in favour of the blind practices of their forefathers or follow the instructions of their 'teachers' without question being blindly led by the majority.

006:116

"Were you to follow the common run of those on Earth, they will lead you away from the way of God. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie"

010:036

"And most of them do not follow (anything) but conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail anything against the truth; surely God is All-Knower of what they do"

SO WHERE IS THE PROHIBITION OF EATING WITH THE LEFT HAND FOUND?

Answer: [Islamic secondary sources](#)

"Jabir b. 'Abdullah reported God's Messenger (may peace be upon him) having said: Do not eat with your left hand, **for the Satan eats with his left hand**" [1]

"Ibn 'Umar reported God's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: When any one of you intends to eat (meal), he should eat with his right hand. and when he (intends) to drink he should drink with his right hand, **for the Satan eats with his left hand and drinks with his left hand**" [2]

One finds incredulous reports as to the reason why it is forbidden to eat with one's left hand.

According to the Quran, one is never informed that the Shaiytan (Satan) possessed human traits, ate, drank and had limbs. Rather, one is given an indication of his formative essence as that of 'Smokeless fire' (55.15)

An apt question begs to be asked. Does smokeless fire inherit or possess human traits or was the understanding of the desert Bedouins to humanise what they could not see (commonly known today as anthropomorphism)?

**IS THERE ANY OTHER EVIDENCE WITHIN THE ISLAMIC SECONDARY SOURCES
'HUMANISING' SATAN?**

Answer: Yes

SATAN PASSES WIND (UNPLEASANT) DURING ADHAN

Narrated Abu Huraira:

"Allah's Apostle said, "When the Adhan for the prayer is pronounced, then Satan takes to his heels **passing wind** so that he may not hear the Adhan and when the Muadh-dhin finishes, he comes back; and when the Iqama is pronounced he again takes to his heels and when it is finished, he again comes back and continues reminding the praying person of things that he used not to remember when not in prayer till he forgets how much he has prayed." Abu Salama bin 'Abdur-Rahman said, "If anyone of you has such a thing (forgetting the number of Rakat he has prayed) he should perform two prostrations of Sahu (i.e. forgetfulness) while sitting." Abu Salama narrates this from Abu Huraira" [3]

SATAN URINATES IN THE EAR

Narrated 'Abdullah:

"It was mentioned before the Prophet that there was a man who slept the night till morning (after sunrise). The Prophet said, "**He is a man in whose ears (or ear) Satan had urinated.**" [4]

SATAN LIVES IN THE UPPER PART OF THE NOSE ALL NIGHT

Narrated Abu Huraira:

"The Prophet said, "If anyone of you rouses from sleep and performs the ablution, he should wash his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out thrice, because Satan has stayed in the upper part of his nose all the night." [5]

SATAN TIES KNOTS IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

"Allah's Apostle said, "During your sleep, Satan knots three knots at the back of the head of each of you, and he breathes the following words at each knot, 'The night is, long, so keep on sleeping,' If that person wakes up and celebrates the praises of God, then one knot is undone, and when he performs ablution the second knot is undone, and when he prays, all the knots are undone, and he gets up in the morning lively and gay, otherwise he gets up dull and gloomy." [6]

FINAL THOUGHTS

A very pertinent question remains to be asked. What is the real reason why many Muslims do not eat and drink with their left hands? Is it something God really prohibited on mankind or was this a local Arab custom that over time sought religious sanction?

Articles:

- (1) ['Between his Hands' or 'Before It' \(Ma Bayna Yadayhi\)](#)
- (2) [Food Permissibility and Prohibitions](#)
- (3) [God Has Warned Believers to Only Follow the Quran](#)
- (4) [The Quran Stands Alone As Sole Religious Guidance](#)

REFERENCES

[1] SAHIH MUSLIM, Book 23, Number 5007, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at [online] <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/023-smt.php> [Accessed 12th December 2012]

Highlights in bold are my own.

[2] Ibid, Book 23, Number 5008

Highlights in bold are my own.

[3] SAHIH BUKHARI, Volume 2, Book 22, Number 313, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at [online] <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/022-sbt.php> [Accessed 12th December 2012]

Highlights in bold are my own.

[4] SAHIH BUKHARI, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 492, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at [online] <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/054-sbt.php> [Accessed 12th December 2012]

Highlights in bold are my own.

[5] Ibid, Book 54, Number 516

[6] Ibid, Book 54, Number 491

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