

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

WHY IS SWINE FLESH FORBIDDEN FOR CONSUMPTION?

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Much is often written about the negative effects of consuming swine flesh. Many laborious explanations are given with regards the animal's filthy eating habits, it's shameless living habits and what possible affects it has on the human body. Many extreme views are found where it is asserted that to utter the word 'swine' is forbidden and even pictorial representations of pigs are considered unlawful.

It is needless to say that none of the above views are found in the Quran.

All creation belongs to God. From the smallest bacteria to the might of the dinosaurs, all have been created by God and for a purpose and a destined end. God does not create 'evil' nor create what is 'dirty'. 'Evil' is based on volition and what one species may consider 'dirty', may be perfectly acceptable to another which has been designed that way.

All animals and creatures have been created in communities like ourselves and have their own purposes and will ultimately be summoned back to God.

006.038

"There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities (Arabic: Ummamun) like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end"

This is no different for the pig. Our creator has created animals such as the pig in communities to function, He nourishes them and protects them. God is not unmindful of His creation nor is He excluded from them. Everything must return back to Him.

The Quran makes it 'forbidden' (haram) to eat the meat of swine (2:173; 5:3; 6:145 and 16:115) without elaborating on the reasons. Once it is 'forbidden' (made haram) it becomes impure (Arabic: rijs 6:145) for consumption by believing humans.

It is quite interesting to note a possible analogy. In essence, the Quran gives free reign to consume from good things (2:172) (admitting some requirements of course), but to avoid the flesh of swine as it has been made forbidden (haram 5:3). As already noted, no particular reason is stated and those who believe in the veracity of the scripture accept the commandment.

Similarly, Adam and his wife were told to eat, drink and roam freely in the garden but simply, not to go near a particular tree. No reason was advanced other than they would become wrongdoers (zalimeen) if they did. In fact, it seems probable that silence actually amounted to a test to ascertain whether the commandment would be obeyed.

002.035

"We said: "O Adam! dwell in the Garden, you and your wife; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; **but do not approach this tree, for then you will become wrong-doers (Arabic: zalimeen)"**

However, Satan's argument was persistent, elucidating reasons as to why such a commandment had been made.

007.020

"Then Satan began to whisper suggestions to them what was concealed from both of them of their shame and he said "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, less you should become **angels or such beings as live forever / immortals (Arabic: Khalideen)"**

In the end, the tree's 'unlawfulness' was compromised. The rest of the narrative is well known.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Some directives are stated without Quranic elucidation. The Quran in matters of true faith and belief, claims to be a clear explanation of all things necessary (tibiana lekulli shayin 16:89). Matters that are not given any explanation or are devoid of detail are best accepted if one truly believes in the veracity of the Quran and its wider arguments.

Much wisdom is to be noted from the advice given with regards the sleepers of the cave:

018:022 (part)

"...Enter not, therefore, into controversies concerning them, **except on a matter that is clear...**"

Maybe there is absolutely nothing inherently flawed about the pig and that it was merely created in a particular way. Much like the 'tree in the Garden', the total abstaining from the consumption of swine flesh was merely a commandment to be fulfilled by those that believed. Any further questions then, would be superfluous from a Quranic perspective.

"...We hear and we obey..." (Part 2:285)

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