33763 - Drinking Beer in Islam: Halal or Haram?

the question

What is the ruling on drinking beer, noting that there are two kinds of beer – one with an alcoholic content and one with no alcoholic content? Is that regarded as an intoxicant?

Summary of answer

It is not permissible to sell, buy or drink intoxicating beer. Scholars have ruled that non-intoxicating beer is permissible because it is completely free of alcohol, or because it contains a minuscule amount of alcohol.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Types of beer

It is essential to differentiate between the two kinds of beer:

The first is the intoxicating beer that is sold in some countries. This beer is khamr (an intoxicant) and it is haram to sell it , buy it and drink it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Every intoxicant is khamr and every intoxicant is haram.” Narrated by Muslim, 2003.

It is haram to drink a lot or a little of it, even a single drop, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whatever intoxicates in large quantities, a little of it is haram.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1865; classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih al-Tirmidhi.

The second type is beer that is not intoxicating , either because it is completely free of alcohol, or because it contains a minuscule amount of alcohol that does not reach the level of causing intoxication no matter how much a person drinks of it. The scholars have ruled that this is

permissible.

Scholarly views on non-intoxicating beer

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin said:

“The beer that is on sale in our marketplaces [in Saudi Arabia] is all halal, because it has been inspected by the officials and is completely free of alcohol. The basic principle concerning all kinds of food, drink and clothing is that they are permissible until and unless proof is established that they are haram. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He it is Who created for you all that is on earth” [al-Baqarah 2:29]

So if anyone says, this drink is haram, or this food is haram, or this garment is haram, say to him, bring your proof. If he brings proof then we should do whatever is indicated by the proof. If he does not bring proof, then his words are to be rejected, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He it is Who created for you all that is on earth” [al-Baqarah 2:29]

Everything in this world Allah has created for us. This general meaning is confirmed by the word jami’an (translated here as “all”). And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“while He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you” [al-An’am 6:119]

So if something is haram, there should be a clear and detailed indication that it is haram. If there is no such proof, then it is not haram. The beer that is to be found in our markets here in the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries (Saudi Arabia) is all halal and there is no doubt concerning that in sha Allah.

We do not think that any alcoholic content in a thing makes it haram, rather if something contains a percentage of alcohol which will make a person intoxicated if he drinks it, then it is haram. But if the amount is miniscule and does not have any effect, then it is halal.

Some people think that the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “Whatever intoxicates in large quantities, a little of it is haram”, mean that if a small percentage of an intoxicant is mixed with a large amount of a substance that is not intoxicating, then it is haram. This is a misunderstanding of the hadith. “Whatever intoxicates in large quantities, a little of it is haram” means that if a lot of something will cause intoxication, and a little of it will not cause intoxication, then a lot or a little are both haram, because you may drink a little that does not cause intoxication, then you may be tempted to drink more and become intoxicated. But if something is mixed with alcohol but the alcohol is a small amount and does not have any effect, then it is halal and does not come under the ruling of this hadith.” (Al-Bab al-Maftuh, 3/381-382)

And Allah knows best.