70320 - Is Horse Meat Halal?

the question

What is the ruling on eating horse meat?

Summary of answer

The majority of scholars are of the view that horse meat is halal. Other scholars are of the view that it is disliked to eat horse meat. For more, please see the detailed answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Views allowing eating horse meat

The majority of scholars are of the view that it is permissible to eat horses, because of the sound ahadith that have been narrated concerning that.

Jabir ibn ‘Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: On the day of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade eating the flesh of domestic donkeys, but he granted a concession with regard to horses. (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3982; Muslim, 1941)

Asma bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her) said: At the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) we slaughtered a horse and ate it. (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5191; Muslim, 1942)

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said: We traveled with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and we used to eat the flesh of horses and drink their milk. (Narrated by al-Daraqutni and al-Bayhaqi. Al-Nawawi said: with a sahih isnad.)

Views disallowing horse meat

Other scholars – including Abu Hanifah and his two companions – are of the view that it is makruh to eat horse meat. They quoted a Quranic verse and a hadith as evidence for that.

The verse is as follows (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (He has created) horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment.” [al-Nahl 16:8]

They said: He did not mention eating them, but He mentioned eating an'am animals (camels, cattle etc) in a previous verse (verse 5).

The scholars responded to that by noting that mention of riding and adornment does not mean that their benefits are limited to that, rather these two are singled out for mention because they are the uses to which horses are put in the majority of cases. This is like the verse in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-maitah (the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine” [al-Maidah 5:3]. Here flesh is mentioned because that is what is usually eaten in most cases. The Muslims are unanimously agreed that the fat, blood and all other parts of the pig are also forbidden, and they said: hence Allah does not mention carrying load on horses, although He says with regard to an'am animals (camels etc), “And they carry your loads” [al-Nahl 16:7]. This does not imply that it is haram to carry loads on horses.” (Al-Majmu’)

The hadith that they quote is that which was narrated from Khalid ibn al-Walid, that he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade the flesh of horses, mules and donkeys, and every wild animal that has fangs.” (Narrated by Abu Dawud, al-Nasai and Ibn Majah.)

This hadith is da’if (weak), and was classed as such by al-Albani in Da’if Abi Dawud.

Al-Hafiz Musa ibn Harun said: “This is a weak hadith. Al-Bukhari said: This hadith is subject to

further investigation.”

Al-Bayhaqi said:

“This is a mudtarab (faulty) isnad, and in addition to that it contradicts the ahadith of trustworthy narrators, which say that the meat of horses is permitted. Al-Khattabi said: There is something wrong with its isnad. Abu Dawud said: This hadith is mansukh (abrogated). Al-Nasai said: The hadith which says that it is permissible is more sound. It is more likely, if this is sahih, that it has been abrogated, because of what it says in the sahih hadith, “Permission was given to eat the flesh of horses,” indicates that.” (Al-Majmu’, 9/7-5)

For more about halal and non-halal meat, please see these answers: 1919 , 169813 , 10498 and 22866 .

And Allah knows best.