

FATWA

Eating from the Jews and Christians.

Q. Is it permissible for Muslims to eat from the people of the book at this time, the Christians and Jews or was it for the time of the Prophet (saw)? If we can eat their meat today then can we buy foods from their fast food outlets?

A. With respect to eating from the people of the book, the Holy Quran has mentioned clearly that it is permissible. This is stated in Sura Al Ma'idah Verse 5, 'And the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you'. All the scholars have unanimously declared that the above verse refers to their slaughtered animals.

While commenting on the wisdom for this allowance most of the Sahabahs, Tabi'un and other great scholars of the Holy Quran has stated that, ' the reason for this allowance is that they (the people of the book) were also ordered to slaughter in the name of God. Although many of their teachings were changed, they continued to practise upon this teaching at the time of the Prophet (s.a.s). As such, since they conformed to the law which also came in the Quran, the Muslims were allowed to partake of their slaughtered animals. (See Tafseer Ibn Katheer).

Due to this, the majority of scholars have stated that if they leave out the name of Allah (God) while slaughtering then their foods will not be permissible. In this respect, the leading scholars from among the Jurists and commentators of the Holy Quran have stated, 'And the most preferred and sound view is that the animals slaughtered by the people of the Book on which the recitation of the name of Allah has been left out intentionally, or they have been slaughtered in a name other than that of Allah, are not lawful - if it is certain that the name of Allah was not recited upon them, or a name other than that of Allah was taken or this becomes the common habit of the People of the Book. (Tafseer Al Mazhari).

Using these statements as guidelines, it is common knowledge that most of the Jews and Christians of today do not call the name of Allah (God) upon the animal or chicken while slaughtering. They do not even consider it as part of their law. As such, it would not be permissible to go about eating from fast food outlets, thinking that they are permissible to consume.

And Allah knows best.

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