

## Conclusion

The word 'Kuttha' used in the Sikh Code of Conduct does not refer to Halaal or sacrificial meat at all, but refers to meat and allied products as a whole. It means simply to slay or cut the animal irrelevant of the method of slaughter. The use of the word in the same sense at a number of places in Gurbani brings out this point beyond any shadow of a doubt. Accordingly, eating flesh in general (and not only Halaal) is totally prohibited for the Sikhs and is one of the four Bajjar Kurehits (cardinal prohibitions) in accordance to Gurmat (the Guru's teachings).

## A few of the many health benefits of being Vegetarian:

- Vegetarians have a 20% lower rate of mortality from all causes (ie. they live longer & don't get sick as often)
- Meat is full of traces of antibiotics, hormones, toxins produced by stress & pesticide residues that become concentrated from all the crops they have eaten
- Vegetarians have 24% reduced risk of getting heart disease & Vegans a 57% reduction (heart disease is the biggest killer in the UK accounting for 50% of deaths)
- Vegans & vegetarians have lower blood pressure & cholesterol levels - high levels are associated with heart disease, strokes & kidney failure
- Vegetarians have a 50% reduced risk of dying of diabetes
- Vegetarians have a 40% reduced level of cancer than the general population thought to be because they have a higher intake of vitamins A,C & E
- Vegetarians have a reduced risk of developing gall & kidney stones
- 80% of food poisoning is due to infected meat (faeces, bacteria etc.) after all meat is decomposing flesh - most of the rest is due to salmonella in eggs
- Meat eaters have double the rate of Alzheimers disease as Vegans & Vegetarians - some people also think that Parkinsons disease is also linked to meat eating
- Meat eaters are two and a half times more likely to get bowel cancer than Vegetarians

*"The One True Lord Abides Within All"*

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# Discover Sikhi

## What is Kuttha?

The Panthic Sikh Rehit Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) makes it clear that the four Bajjar Kurehits (cardinal prohibitions) for a Sikh, which result in apostasy from the Sikh faith:

- ੧) ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇ-ਅਦਬੀ
- ੨) ਕੁੱਠਾ ਖਾਣਾ।
- ੩) ਪਰ-ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਪਰ-ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਗਮਨ (ਭੋਗਣਾ)।
- ੪) ਤਮਾਕੂ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਣਾ।



The four transgressions, which must be avoided are (1) Dishonouring the hair, (2) Eating Kuttha, (3) Intimate relationship with a person other than one's spouse, and 4) Using tobacco (i.e. intoxicants).

The question is, what is Kuttha? While Sikh scholars have defined Kuttha in modern times to mean "meat slaughtered in the Muslim way" or "Halaal meat", the other interpretation is "slaughtered animal" or "killed animal" (viz. meat). As a result of this difference in interpretation, some Sikhs understand the word "Kuttha" to mean Halaal meat as opposed to meat in general.

<Note: This leaflet contains some graphic images>



## What is Halaal meat?

Halaal meat is meat obtained by the Muslim method of slaying an animal.

This method of slaughtering animals consists of a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck, cutting the jugular vein and carotid arteries of both sides but leaving the spinal cord intact, while reciting religious prayers.

Muslims claim that this is the most humane method of animal slaughter.



## What is Jhatka meat?

The concept of "jhatka" as it is known today is a Hindu one borrowed from the Rajputs (Hindu ancient warriors) who still do it today and have done it for ages before the Sikhs. Proponents of this practice explain this concept as a "Singh" killing an animal with one stroke of a weapon without exciting fear glands which secrete poisons into its bloodstream and without causing harmful psychic waves to emanate from the animal's mind. The words "Sat Siri Akaal" (God is True) are also recited at this time.



But in Gurbani we are faced with the question:

*"You kill living beings, and call it a righteous action. Tell me, brother, what would you call an unrighteous action? If you religious people are doing "religious" killing for meat, then what is A-dharam (atheism)? If you are a religious person then whom will we call a butcher? | 2 |" (SGGS - Ang 1103)*

*or Meditation, he harps on which is flesh and which is not flesh and which food is sinful and which is not." (SGGS - Ang 1289-1290)*

The Guru is addressing a Vaishnav Pandit (scholar) who believes that he can achieve Nirvana (a state of liberation) only by avoiding meat as food and not trying to obtain the true wisdom through meditation. The Guru has stressed that only avoiding meat will not lead one to the achievement of Spiritual Bliss. Guru Sahib exposes the Pandit's hypocrisy and double standards.

The same hymn states that everything is flesh, which is inappropriately used to argue that eating meat is okay:

*"First, the mortal is conceived in the flesh, and then he dwells in the flesh. When he comes alive, his mouth takes flesh; his bones, skin and body are flesh. He comes out of the womb of flesh, and takes a mouthful of flesh at the breast. His mouth is flesh, his tongue is flesh; his breath is in the flesh. He grows up and is married, and brings his wife of flesh into his home. Flesh is produced from flesh; all relatives are made of flesh. When the mortal meets the True Guru, and realizes the Hukam of the Lord's Command, then he comes to be reformed. Releasing himself, the mortal does not find release; O Nanak, through empty words, one is ruined. | 1 |" (SGGS - Ang 1289)*

The fact is that a human's own flesh is exactly like that of meat. Observing surgery or perusing internal medicine books, one notes that we are the same substance. That's why Guru Nanak Sahib Ji has said not to hate meat. We are meat. But at the same time we cannot eat it because it would be like eating a dead body. It's foul and unthinkable.





itself on life. There is no lack of mercy or daya (mercy) exercised when cutting a vegetable, as it does not react to being cut. Contrast that with animals. These animals beg and cry and little calves cling to their mothers in terror when they sense they will be slaughtered. The word "gardener" has no pejorative connotation. The word "butcher" on the other hand stands for someone who has no mercy. If one's heart doesn't melt at seeing the shrieks and anguish of animals, why would it matter when a human does the same? A butcher will have the heart of a butcher. A butcher can never be a 'Dharmi' (spiritually pious) person.

Meat is disease-ridden and is a dirty thing to eat. Gurbani tells us:

*"O Baba! The pleasures of other foods are false. Eating which, the body is ruined (i.e. are unhealthy), and wickedness and corruption enter into the mind. ||1||Pause||" (SGGS - Ang 16)*

### Distortion of Gurbani to justify eating meat

The only Shabad (sacred hymn) in the whole of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji that is specifically cited by meat eaters in support of eating meat is the Shabad of Guru Nanak Sahib Ji in the Vaar of Raag Malaar that revealed at Kurekshetra during a solar eclipse day, a day considered holy by the Brahmins (Hindus priests). It begins with the couplet:

*"Only the fool quarrels over the question of eating or not eating of the meat. He does not have the True Wisdom. Without True Wisdom or Meditation, he harps on which is flesh and which is not flesh and*

### Halaal meat as a taboo

Some Sikhs who choose to eat meat argue that one of the Bajjar Kurehiths (cardinal prohibitions) is to eat Halaal meat as opposed to eat meat in general. The primary reason for this is that Halaal meat is considered a cruel way to kill an animal due to the length of time it takes for the animal to die.



Sikhs generally hold the view that the Halaal method of slaughter is indeed cruel. Other groups such as the 'The Farm Animal Welfare Council' (FAWC), which advises the UK government on how to avoid cruelty to livestock, hold the same view and say that the way Kosher and Halaal meat is produced, causes severe suffering to animals. In addition, the Humanists movement, which has previously called for the abolition of ritual slaughter, says ethical values should be put above religious ones.

Sikhs do believe it is good practice for society to move away from this type of ritual slaughter of an animal. But below is presented evidence from Sikh scriptures and edicts from the Gurus that encourage and promote a lacto vegetarian diet as the best for a human being.

### Interpretation of the word 'Kuttha'

The word "Kuttha" (ਕੁੱਠਾ) appears in Sri Guru Granth Sahib jee a number of times. Kuttha can have two meanings: either to butcher, kill or destroy or alternatively, it can mean meat (the product of killing, butchering, destroying). The root of the word "Kuttha" is "Kutthaar" (ਕੁੱਠਾਰ) or axe.

A word that operates similarly is "ਮੁੱਠਾ" (muttha) It means to loot or steal, but it also refers to the product, which is something stolen or obtained through bad means.

The question that immediately comes to mind is, if Kutthaar is the root of Kutthaa, when has an axe ever been used in Halaal meat? A sharp blade is used, but never an axe. An axe is used to give swift blows whereas in Halaal, the knife or blade is used to slice the throat.



According Prof. Sahib Singh's *Guru Granth Darpan*:

**“ਕੁੱਠਾ - ਨਾਸ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ”** (*Kuttha - Naas ho jaanda hai*)

“Naas” translates to “Destruction; annihilation; ruin; waste.”

To summarise, the root of “Kuttha” is “Kutthaar” or axe. A word that operates like “Kuttha” is “mutha” which refers to the act of looting and also the product of looting i.e. “the loot”. In this way, Kuttha can mean, “to butcher/ kill/ destroy” and also refers to the product i.e. “butchered meat” irrespective of whether any holy hymns are read at that time or not. It cannot by any means refer to Halaal meat or Muslim meat.

Why would the Sikh Gurus specifically instruct the Sikhs not to eat the meat slaughtered by Muslims, leaving leeway to eat meat ritually slaughtered by Hindus or Jews? There is no justification that can be supported by the principles and ethics of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.



### The 6th and 10th Gurus commandments

In two Hukamnamas (Edicts) of the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, there are clear-cut instructions prohibiting the eating of meat and fish. It says, *“Do not go near meat or fish”*. Some Historians claim that these edicts were issued most likely as a response to Sikhs going hunting to kill animals for food. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Guru went hunting but not for food. Whilst the Sikhs practicing their skills of bravery, the Sikh Gurus

settled long overdue ‘accounts’ to release the souls of the poor unfortunate animals who may have wronged in the past and grant them *Mukti* (salvation). However some ignorant Sikhs began hunting for entertainment and food.

When Guru Nanak in his sixth form prohibits Sikhs from eating flesh in such a strong language, how can Guru Nanak, in his tenth form, issue instructions absolutely contrary to and in negation of his own earlier instructions?

### Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji on Killing Animals

**“ (O Mullah!) If in all is the one God, then why kill a chicken?”** (SGGS - Ang 1350)

**“You kill living beings and worship lifeless things, at your very last moment you will suffer terrible pain.”** (SGGS - Ang 332)

**“O Kabeer! Blessed is the simple food of rice mixed with salt; who would risk his head to be slain hereafter, for the meat one eats here?”** (SGGS - Ang 1374)

### The reason Sikhs don’t eat Meat



The reason why a Sikh doesn't eat meat is not related to 'ahimsaa' or "respect for all life" like the Jains. **The reason is 'daya'**. Mercy evaporates when we butcher and eat meat. A carrot may have life but it will never run away screaming when you go to the garden to get it. Guru Sahib is clear in Gurbani that life must sustain