

Forbidden Meats Throughout Religions

Posted on [December 3, 2015](#)

Throughout many of the worlds majorly practiced religions, the act of eating certain meats is forbidden, for a variety of reasons. Most meats are forbidden on the grounds that the animal is “unclean” and therefore consuming it will make the person consuming it unclean as well. Other religions, specifically those believing in reincarnation, avoid the consumption of all meats on the grounds that killing any living creature is murder.

Contrary to popular opinion, the cow is not actually considered a sacred animal in Hinduism, rather being so heavily reliant on agriculture and farming practices, the cow became a symbol for protection and a source of sustenance throughout India, and is therefore so revered and celebrated today.



Hinduism and Buddhism, both believing in the process of reincarnation, strongly discourage the consumption of meat from another living creature, although no explicit prohibition of meat is actually in either religion. Any disruption of the natural cycle of samsara directly goes against all teachings of both practices.

Islam forbids the consumption of dog, pork, and animals who eat the meat of another animal. Throughout the Quran, the idea of ones cleanliness and purity be maintained, because we as humans all begin as pure souls. The animals forbidden to be eaten, however, are viewed as unclean and therefore unable to be consumed, and even the handling of some of these animals

could require a total bathing and cleaning of oneself. Any meat slaughtered by a Muslim must be in the name of Allah, otherwise it cannot be consumed



A well known practice of Judaism is the forbidding of consumption of pork, or anything that is a bi-product of pork. The lesser known explanation for this is because throughout the Torah, the consumption of any cattle or farm animal was only allowed should the animal have hooves, as well as ruminates, the technical term for chewing their own cud. Animals that meet one, but not both of these requirements are explicitly forbidden.

[Leave a comment](#)[Edit](#)

Vahanas Of Hinduism

Posted on [December 2, 2015](#)

The Vahanas, or Heavenly Mount, of the deities of Hinduism hold much higher importance within the religion than just being forms of transportation, and actually are closely interconnected and meshed with the overall presence of the deity, encompassing their powers and characteristics.



Vahanas take almost every form of animal and are unique to every deity. Pictured above is Devi Durga, the Warrior Goddess, riding her Vahana the Tiger. The tiger symbolizes her strength and cunning, as well as her destructive instinct, as she was manifested to defeat the powerful demon Mahishasura.



Ganesha, the elephant headed deity, rides the mount Mooshika the rat. However ironic this combination may seem, the unity of these two beings symbolizes the greater representation of Ganesha. The rat, left by itself and unattended, is a destructive force than can cause destruction and problems if let run wild. This is to represent the human tendency to be blindly driven by desire with no regard for those effected around them Ganesha shows the ability to control these urges and desires and to master these feelings as a way to propel oneself forward towards nirvana.



Garuda, the Vahana of Vishnu. is one of the most highly regarded Vahanas and is often seem as a lesser god to his master Vishnu, and is worshipped even separately from Vishnu. Made of a man's body with an Eagle's head and wings, Garuda was born out of a ball of fire, and only after people pleaded with him to calm and stop destruction did he calm his flames. Garuda became a Vahana and an ally of the gods after returning the heavenly nectar he stole in order to save his mother. It is shown throughout legend that Garuda made the conscious choice and agreed to become the Vahana of Vishnu, rather than being chosen and forced.



Nandi, the Vahana of Shiva, is probably the Vahana held at the highest regard. Like Garuda, Nandi is worshipped as both a part, and separate from their riders. Nandi is considered a deity of equal level of Shiva, having multiple forms, including one with a human body. His usual form however, is a bull, as he is seen as the protector of herds, and throughout the heavily farm-dependent population of India he is worshipped often in high regard. Nandi also however represents aspects of his rider Shiva, as they are interconnected and heavily intertwined in legend. Representing the power and rage capable of Shiva, the heavily muscular bull is depicted as all white to show the purity of Nandi and Shiva as deities.

[Leave a comment](#)[Edit](#)

Ganesha of Hinduism

Posted on [December 2, 2015](#)

Regardless of how well an individual is versed in the practice of Hinduism, the elephant is usually automatically associated with the religion. Hindu drawings, tapestry, and most other forms of art commonly depict elephants in one form or another. This animal is held in such a

high and sacred status within this religion and in the country of India as a whole, the killing of one in most of India is a crime that parallels murder. Elephants even hold status as deities in Hinduism, specifically one of the most celebrated and worshipped deities of the religion as a whole, regardless of what religious sect, Ganesha.



Ganesha is the son of Shiva and Parvati, two of the most powerful gods in the Hindu religion, and is revered as the Lord of Success and Destroyer of Obstacles, inspiring many followers to pray to him before beginning any task. His body is made of the head of an elephant and the body of a chubby man, each signifying a different trait.

Beginning with his human body, he takes this form to signify the Maya, or the Earthly form of the soul. Each of his four hands is grasping a different item, the noose to capture all bad things and things that would harm success, the bowl of fruit to show the sweetness of life, and the sword to gently push the worshippers towards success. This body is made chubby to show the peaceful, passive nature of Ganesha and the ease with which he goes throughout existence.



Ganesha's head, as depicted above, is a well decorated head of an elephant. This is meant to signify the true form of the Atman or the soul each individual is made of, and also signifies the parallel that elephants don't go around obstacles, rather they go through them, allowing their followers to go through with ease. The right tusk is broken by Ganesha himself to show the sacrifice that must be made to obtain knowledge, and also signifies the need to retain the good of your life and cast away the bad in effort to maintain balance.

Legend says that Parvati, who had gotten dirty from playing with Vishnu, removed the dirt from her body and made a son out of it whom she told to guard her while she bathed. Once Vishnu returned to find a boy who wouldn't let him through, he beheaded Ganesha in a fit of rage. Once Parvati saw what had happened and told Vishnu to fix him, Vishnu had his soldiers take the head of the first animal they came across facing north. Once the head of the elephant was reattached and Ganesha revived, Vishnu made him commander of his forces.

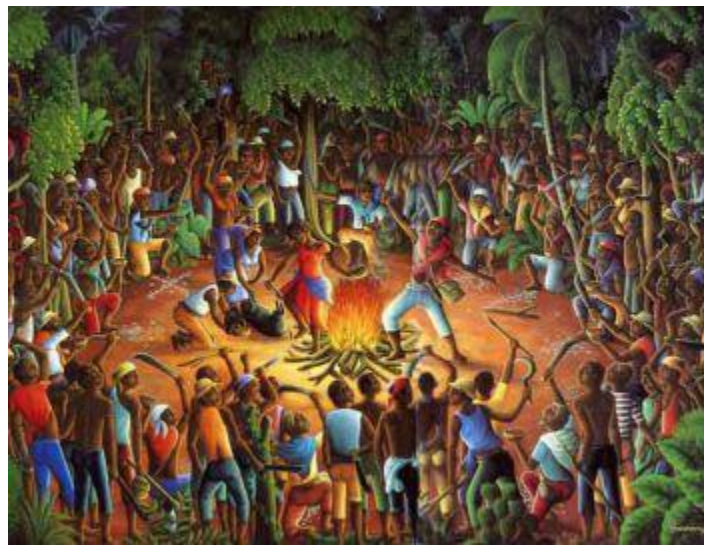
Ganesha is always depicted with a mouse or shrew Vahana, or heavenly mount, showing love for all creatures and humbleness to ride the lowest form of Vahana.

[Leave a comment](#)[Edit](#)

Animal Sacrifice in Santeria and Vodou religions of the Caribbean

Posted on [November 12, 2015](#)

Santeria and Vodou are closely related syncretic religions that came to be when african slaves in the caribbean were forced to convert to Christianity, but incorporated aspects of their indigenous religions. In both Santeria and Vodou, the blood sacrifice of animals is not a celebration of death or a glorification of the dead, but rather an offering of the life force of a being offered as well as the food the animal represents, being as in both religions the animals offered are predominantly animals eaten regularly.



Beginning with the complex religion of Vodou, spirits known as Lwa are central to life and constantly looked to for advice, guidance, healing powers and many other facets. The rituals practiced by members of this religion involve sacrificing the animals used in the ceremony, before a large communal feast is held, so the Lwa may be summoned. No part of the animal goes to waste as the meat is made for the feast, and the sacrifice is more of single part of the entire ritual than a ritual all in itself. These rituals commonly include large fires in the center of dancers where the spirits are summoned to as the animals are sacrificed nearby. Below is a depiction of the sacrifice of an animal in a Vodou ceremony before the communal feast.



Santeria, however close to Vodou it may seem, is very different in regard to this aspect. Santeros, or practitioners of the Santeria faith, perform rituals called ebò, in which a sacrifice of food is made to the spirits known as orishas, which rather than being historic spirits that are uniform for all like with Vodou, these spirits are of the ancestors of the Santero, and will aid them in fixing whatever problem is in their life. The bigger the problem that the Santero faces, the bigger the ebò will have to be, and therefore the bigger the sacrifice. The strongest ebò require the offering of a blood sacrifice, in which case the animal is always a farm animal that is commonly slaughtered and eaten regardless. Another key difference however is that Santeros never eat animal after the ritual. Below is a photo, taken place during an ebò, depicting the sacrificing of a sheep.



[Leave a comment](#)[Edit](#)

Animal Sacrifice In Indigenous and Major Religions

Posted on [November 8, 2015](#)

Since the beginning of human settlement and the establishment of religions, sacrificing souls to appease deities has been a common practice. Aztecs are the most famous for the practice of human sacrifice, a kind of animal sacrifice if you will, and in either ritual murders or battles to the death, the Aztecs would use the people they had captured during a take over of a rival community in these rituals. Pictured below is a depiction of a ritual battle of a captive man bound to a stone in the center of an arena where he is forced to fight a fully armored and armed Aztec Warrior in a ritual “Gladiator” sacrifice.



Moving forward, major religions also have roots deep in sacrificing things to appease deities, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism.

In Judaism, it was customary for a sinner to sacrifice an animal in repentance. The important thing was to understand that the sinner was sacrificing the animal in place of themselves, and that the animal's soul was not the one who had sinned.

In Christianity, animal sacrifice is the central theme of the religion, as the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus could be viewed as a sacrifice for the better of the people.

In Islam, a ritual of sacrificing a lamb or goat is customary after the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca. Below is a depiction of this act performed after the two men made the pilgrimage and prayed in front of the Kabah.



[Leave a comment](#)[Edit](#)