

Halal, fast food and the hospitality industry

The first question relates to takeaway food from shops that sell both Halal and non-Halal ingredients.

The second question relates to working in a hospitality venue.

Our prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him, said:

"إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ، وَالْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدْ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ، وَعِزِّضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ، كَالرَّاعِي يَزْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى، يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَقَعَ فِيهِ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ جَمَى، أَلَا وَإِنَّ جَمَى اللَّهِ مَحَارِمُهُ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ." مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ.

"The halal is clear and the haram is clear, and between them are matters that are unclear, for which many do not have an answer. Whoever protects himself from the doubtful matters, then he has exonerated himself in his faith and honour. Whoever falls into the doubtful matters, he will fall into the Haram. Like a shepherd grazing (his flock) near a (prohibited) boundary that he would almost fall into. Indeed, every king has his (prohibited) boundary. The boundaries set by Allah are what He declared as prohibited. Indeed, there is a substance in the body, if it is working well, then the whole body works well and if it is corrupted, then the whole body becomes corrupt, indeed it is the heart."

Seeing as we are living in a time and place where the haram is widespread and there is no regulatory body that controls this, it is important for us to explore the uncertain areas as Muslims young and old, will potentially purchase food from or work in such situations.

This document only explores halal and haram in relation to food and drink. If anyone is looking for answers to other aspects of working in the food industry (such as compulsory uniform, serving people, whether the owners support a cause antithetical to Islam, etc) then we may address this in future documents.

Allah, Ta'ala tells us in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (البقرة 168)

"O People, eat from what is in the earth, Halal and wholesome and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan, He is to you a clear enemy. (2:168)

قال الحافظ أبو بكر بن مردويه: حدثنا...، عن ابن عباس قال: تليت هذه الآية عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا أيها الناس كلوا مما في الأرض حلالا طيبا (فقام سعد بن أبي وقاص، فقال: يا رسول الله، ادع الله أن يجعلني مستجاب الدعوة، فقال "يا سعد، أطلب مطعمك تكن مستجاب الدعوة، والذي نفس محمد بيده، إن الرجل ليقذف اللقمة الحرام في جوفه ما يتقبل منه أربعين يوما، وأيما عبد نبت لحمه من السحت والربا فالنار أولى به."

Alhafez Abu Bakr Bin Mardaweh narrated that Ibn Abbas said that when this verse was recited in front of the prophet, peace and blessings upon him, Saad bin Abi Waqqas asked: *O messenger of Allah, supplicate to Allah to make me one whose supplications are answered. The messenger of Allah replied: "O Saad, make sure that your food is pure, you will be of those whose supplications are answered; by Him in whose hand is the soul of Mohammad, a man will throw a Haram morsel inside his body, nothing will be accepted from him for 40 days, any person whose meat is nurtured by unlawful (Haram) means and usury is more fitting for the fire.*

If we want our deeds, especially our prayers and our Du'a to be accepted by Allah, we must make sure that our food is Halal in every respect, it must be permissible food, it must be prepared in a Halal way right up to the point of sale to the consumer and it must be purchased with Halal earnings.

The cooking utensils and the serving dishes must also comply with Halal conditions:

روى أبو ثعلبة الخشني قال: قلت يا رسول الله: إنا بأرض قوم أهل كتاب أفنأكل في أوانيهم؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن وجدتم غيرها فلا تأكلوا فيها، وإن لم تجدوا غيرها فاغسلوها واكلوا فيها. متفق عليه.

Abu Tha'laba asked the prophet, peace and blessings upon him, a question: *O messenger of Allah, I live among the people of the book, should we eat from their utensils? The messenger of Allah, peace and blessings upon him, said: If you can find other utensils then do not eat from theirs, but if you do not find other utensils, then wash theirs and eat using them.*

This Hadith shows us that food utensils can become contaminated if they are used for the preparation of non-Halal food.

The same problem arises when unpackaged food is transported, for example, when a refrigerated truck delivers meat to a butcher shop or a restaurant. If this meat is not packed in sealed packages and transported according to Halal requirements, then cross contamination becomes a serious issue that can render a Halal product no longer Halal.

The same applies for a food establishment where the same kitchen is used to prepare Halal and non-Halal, or the same fridge/freezer or the same cooktop.

It is not enough for a food establishment to purchase halal slaughtered meat; Halal is a process that continues right up to the point of serving and consumption of the food and any deficiency in the process can lead to contamination of the food and will affect its suitability for Halal certification.

Some restaurants and butcher shops will display a Halal certificate that was given to their supplier. When you ask them if they are Halal certified, they say that they are not, but their supplier is! Having a certificate from the abattoir or wholesaler of the meat does not guarantee that this meat has not been contaminated after it left the control of the abattoir or wholesaler. To ensure that the halal standard is upheld, every step of the process up to



the point of sale to the consumer is investigated, this is amongst a number of the requirements that AFIC checks prior to issuing a certificate.

Therefore, to be certain that your food has met the halal certification standards, the outlet that you buy from must also be Halal certified by a reputable certifier.

We now move to the second question:

Following is a list of matters which are clearly halal:

- Working in a restaurant which only sells halal foods and drinks, whether it is a halal certified business or is run by Muslims who clearly don't serve alcoholic beverages, pork, or cook using alcohol.
- Working in a restaurant which serves non-halal-certified beef, lamb, chicken, camel, but does not serve pork, or serve or cook with alcohol.
- Working in a restaurant which sells imitation pork, such as beef rashers, facon, etc, but no actual pig-derived products, nor serves or cooks with alcohol.
- Working in a restaurant where pig products are sold but there is no expectation on you to handle the pig products or to transact a pig purchase.
- Working in a restaurant which does not serve pork and does not serve alcoholic beverages, but rather has a "bring your own" alcohol policy. This would be halal if there is no expectation on you to pour the alcohol for the customer.

Following are the types of work that are clearly Haram:

- Working in a restaurant or establishment whose primary function is the sale of alcohol, such as a pub or bar.
- Working in an establishment where you are expected to receive alcohol deliveries, serve, buy, sell, carry, or pour alcohol. This would include an expectation to use alcohol for the purpose of cooking.
- Working in a role where the cooking and handling of pork products cannot be avoided.

If you are unsure about the role you are in or are applying for as it does not fit clearly in the halal or haram categories then please reach out and we will offer advice on that role.

I pray to Allah to help us ensure that every aspect of our lives is Halal, starting with the work we do to earn our living, the food that we buy and continuing to every word we say and every action we make.

Finally, I would like to thank AFIC's Da'wa and Iftaa Manager **Imam Mohammad Trad** for the preliminary research and the Most Eminent **Imam Abdul Quddoos Al Azhari** the National Grand Mufti of Australia for reviewing this article.

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