



THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE



Dedicated to Promoting Halal Food and Nutrition

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EDITORIAL

Alhamdu Lillah, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) was once again called upon by many Muslim brothers and sisters to continue publishing a periodic newsletter. In the past the IFANCA published its newsletter "The Islamic Perspective."

IFANCA receives several inquiries about ingredients of the food and consumable products. Insha'Allah, we will address these concerns through this newsletter. We urge all Muslim brothers and sisters to participate and share their concerns by sending questions and short articles about Halal food and nutrition. In this issue we are bringing out a vital concern facing Muslims. It is the misconception about Kosher Gelatin. Many Muslims may not be aware that gelatin is a product of animal origin and Kosher gelatin does not mean that it is Halal and good for Muslim consumption. In this issue, we briefly discussed why Kosher Gelatin is not Halal.

Also, we have included a winning article "Why Should Muslims Eat Halal?" This essay won the first place among the students of grade 11th and 12th, in an essay writing contest organized by IFANCA.

Until next time.....Wassalamu alaikum!!!!

Is Kosher Gelatin Halal?

IFANCA frequently receives inquiries about gelatin, especially Kosher gelatin. In yogurt, it is listed as Kosher gelatin in the ingredients on the label. In Jell-O dessert, gelatin is not listed as Kosher gelatin but the package (Jell-O) is labeled as Kosher, designated with letter "K." Still in other products that are labeled as Kosher, gelatin may be present but not listed on the label.

What is Gelatin?

Gelatin is a product of animal origin only, extracted from bones and skins of many animals or fish. There is no such thing as plant gelatin. Commercially, common sources of gelatin are Pork skins, Calf skins, Beef bones, Fish skins, and Field bones.

Gelatin is made by simmering the pieces of skins or bones in hot water to a solution that looks like chicken soup. This soupy solution is then dried into

sheets or noodles and crushed into small pieces that look like sugar.

Most common type of gelatin used by the food industry is pork gelatin, due to its price advantage. Calf skin and beef bone gelatin are readily available but cost more than the pork gelatin for an equivalent gel grade. Moreover a very small amount of calf and beef gelatin comes from animals slaughtered by Muslims. Fish gelatin is available in small quantities. It is Halal by its nature but is very expensive. Field bones are picked up by scavengers from the fields or garbage and sold to junk dealers in South Asia. They become naturally degreased and dry in the fields and many Kosher groups prefer these over slaughter house bones. The problem with these bones is that bones of dead animals and Haram animals or even humans get entry into these bones.

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The IFANCA is not for profit, tax exempt, non-political, Islamic organization dedicated to scientific research in the fields related to food, nutrition, and health. IFANCA is registered in the State of Illinois, USA, since 1982.

The *mission* of IFANCA is to promote the understanding of the institution of "Halal" in North America extending the benefits of Islamic dietary concepts and practices to Muslims and non-Muslims.

The *objective* of IFANCA is to promote Halal food consumption through Halal supervision and certification services, consultation, research and publications, and by sponsoring conferences, seminars and symposiums.

IFANCA is recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety Inspection Service as well as Rabita al-Alam al-Islami (World Muslim League) Saudi Arabia; Majlis Ugama Islami Singapura (MUIS); Malaysian Prime Minister's Department, Islamic Affairs Division; Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI); and several other organizations as a certifying agency for Halal slaughter and Halal products.

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Many Kosher groups believe that the process of extracting gelatin from bones or skins is such that the nature of product changes to a chemical form. Therefore many Kosher organizations certify and allow the use of their symbols such as "K" on the products containing pork gelatin. The product like "Jell-O" although marked Kosher, does actually contain pork gelatin. A few years ago, we printed a letter from General Foods, the manufacturer of Jell-O brand desserts. According to General Foods source, the Jell-O is Kosher and the source of gelatin is any animal that has been slaughtered for food purposes. This includes pork. Pork gelatin is merely dried soup from pork hides. It may be Kosher according to General Foods, but it is not Halal. We all know that pork is Haram, how then can dried up soup from pork skin be Halal?

Our advice to the Muslim consumer:

Ask for Halal gelatin, certified by a reputable Islamic organization. Be aware that some Islamic organizations do approve pork gelatin as Halal.

Crescent M

The following *Crescent M* service marks are used on various products, certified to be Halal by IFANCA:



The letter 'M' signifies ... 'Fit for Muslim consumption anywhere in the world.'

IFANCA authorizes the imprint on a product label after an inspection of production facility and a review of all the ingredients. IFANCA Inspectors clearly establish that the products fully meet the Islamic Halal standards.

WHY SHOULD MUSLIMS EAT HALAL?

Mohammed Ayub Khan

Ever since the beginning of Mankind man has been instructed to follow specific guidelines by his Almighty Creator. Those who followed or tried their best in carrying out those instructions were termed as successful whereas those who didn't were doomed.

Among these guidelines was included a specific dietary code which slightly varied from prophet to prophet. The Islamic dietary code in its fullest form was revealed as a whole in its entirety in the Holy Qur'an and the personal example and sayings of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was given as a means to interpret those Qur'anic messages.

To begin to understand *why should Muslims eat Halal?* Lets start by understanding the meaning of Halal itself. "Halal" is an Arabic term which means lawful or permissible, in our case, in this context it means lawful or permissible food. If this question had to be answered in just one sentence, it will be simply because Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'la ordered us to do so. If you are a firm believer in Allah, his message and his messenger, you will simply follow it without questioning, doubting, or complaining. For as Imam Ghazali said "*When faith enters reason departs.*"

In Qur'an Allah very explicitly explains why should Muslims eat "Halal" and restrain from eating "Haram." Allah Almighty in the Qur'an instructs the believers: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things that we have provided for you, and be thankful to Allah if it is He alone whom ye worship. Indeed, what He has forbidden to you is the flesh of the dead animals and blood and the flesh of the swine and which has been sacrificed to any one other than Allah. But if one is compelled by the necessity, neither craving (it) nor transgressing, there is no sin on him; indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (2:172-173). From this passage we understand that Allah permits us to eat what is wholesome and beneficial for our both physical and spiritual health.

Similarly there is one more verse which provides further details: "Forbidden to you are the flesh of the dead animals and blood and flesh and blood of dead animals and that which has been dedicated to anyone other than Allah, and that which has been killed by

strangling or by beating or by falling or by being gored and that which has been eaten by a wild beast except that which you make lawful by slaughtering, and that which has been sacrificed to idols....." (5:4(5:3)).

Renowned Muslim scholar Yusuf Al Qardawi provides a good explanation to the prohibition of these categories of food and the wisdom behind it. The summary of which is:

1. The meat and flesh of the dead animals is prohibited because eating it is contrary to civilized human behavior. If the animal dies, it is possible that it might have died by eating a poisonous plant or some other chronic disease. Hence, eating it will be probably harmful.
2. flowing blood is prohibited because drinking of blood is repugnant to human decency and that it may likewise be injurious to health.
3. Eating of pork is prohibited because pigs like to eat filth and other human and animal waste, and the mere sight of which is disgusting. Medical research has shown that eating swine flesh is injurious to ones health in all climates since it carries a deadly parasite called Trichinia. A few years ago pigs were largely responsible for the brain fever epidemic in Hyderabad, India, because of which hundreds had perished or paralyzed.
4. The food which is dedicated to any one other than Allah is prohibited because it is Allah who created Man and gave him power over the animal and permitting him to take its life for food on the condition that His name pronounced at the time of the slaughter. If one invokes any other name he has forfeited this permission and must be denied the use of this flesh.

In conclusion, Muslims should eat only Halal because by doing so they are obeying their Creator's orders on one hand and benefiting themselves physically by eating what is wholesome and good and not eating what is harmful, and spiritually guarding themselves against all evil that comes out of eating Haram.

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things that we have provided for you, and be thankful to Allah if it is He alone whom ye worship. Indeed, what He has forbidden to you is the flesh of the dead animals and blood and the flesh of the swine and which has been sacrificed to any one other than Allah. But if one is compelled by the necessity, neither craving (it) nor transgressing, there is no sin on him; indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (2:172-173).

Indonesian Delegates Visit IFANCA

IFANCA was honored to play host to some very distinguished guests from Indonesia

Professor Dr. Aisjah and Mr. Endin who represented Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) had detailed discussions with IFANCA staff. They were impressed with IFANCA's commitment to Halal inspection and certification. They found several similarities in methods of inspection and evaluation of foods for Halal verification between MUI and IFANCA and suggested setting up of a mutual recognition procedure to facilitate halal food trade between USA and Indonesia. The guests also visited Lamb-Weston French Fries manufacturing facilities and observed IFANCA's halal supervision at work.

Other visitors included Dr. Ichtijanto and Imam Mosykoer Alie who represented the Department of Religious Affairs, Indonesia. They visited several manufacturing organizations under IFANCA's supervision and were briefed on IFANCA, its objectives and mission by its President, Dr. Muhammad M. Chaudry. They were impressed with the dedication and commitment of IFANCA in the halal supervision and certification areas, particularly its strict adherence to Islamic regulations on halal foods.



From L-R. Mr. Mazhar Hussaini (Executive Director, IFANCA), Mrs. Laura Segreti (IFANCA Staff), Prof. Dr. Hj Aisjah Girindra (Director, MUI-LPP), Mr. Mahmood Baig (IFANCA Staff) and Mr. K.A. Endin (MUI-LPP Staff)



From L-R. Mr. K.A. Endin, Prof. Aisjah Girindra and Dr. Chaudry visiting Lamb-Weston French Fry Plant in Washington State.