



Consuming Halaal

Introduction:

It is the responsibility of every Muslim to ensure that he consumes only that which is completely halaal and pure. When purchasing a house or a car, we ensure that everything is above board and meets our expectations. Similarly, when nourishing our bodies, which house our imaan and are our vehicles to Jannah, we should never settle for anything besides that which is completely halaal.

The Right Fuel:

Just as a petrol fuelled car cannot reach its destination on diesel, similarly it is very difficult for a Muslim to reach Jannah when fuelled by haraam. The reason for this is that haraam nourishment creates the inclination towards haraam in the body and removes the inclination to worship and obey Allah Ta'ala. If we are so particular regarding filling our vehicles, which merely take us from A to B, with the correct fuel, we should be even more particular about filling our bodies, which need to carry us to Jannah, with halaal food.

Lasting Effects:

We must realise that our 'input' has lasting effects on our 'output'. The following two incidents are examples of the positive and negative sides of this.

Positive: Among the prominent rulers of Afghanistan during the 1800s was a man named Dost Muhammad Khan who passed away in 1863. At one point during his rule, he appointed one of his sons as his successor. After some time, when an enemy force attacked his kingdom, he dispatched this very son to defend the kingdom and recover the territory that was lost to the invading force. On the instruction of his father, the son set out with an army.

Later on, Dost Muhammad Khan received the news that his son had been defeated and had fled from the battlefield. Extremely pained, grieved and disappointed, he entered his home and addressed the boy's mother saying, "Our son has turned out to be weak and cowardly! He has suffered defeat and is fleeing the battlefield, whereas this is the time for him to show his courage and bravery! Furthermore, I have appointed him as my successor. The people will now tell me that I have appointed a weakling and a coward as my successor. This has caused me immense grief and disappointment." When the boy's mother heard this, she confidently remarked, "The news that you received is incorrect. It is not possible for my son to have been defeated." Dost Muhammad Khan was astonished and said, "I received this information through official, authentic channels. How can you sit here, in this home, and tell me that this reliable information is incorrect?" After a period of time had passed, Dost Muhammad Khan received the information that his son had actually won the battle and was now returning home victorious! Dost Muhammad Khan was overjoyed and rushed home to inform the boy's mother. After telling her the news, he asked her, "Tell me, how were you able to say with such conviction and certainty, while seated within your home, that the information was incorrect?"

The mother replied, "I would not have normally revealed this to anyone. However, because you have instructed me to tell you the reason, I will do so. When I conceived and I was carrying the prince, I decided that let alone haraam food – I would not even allow a single morsel of doubtful food to pass my lips. I understood that haraam food weakens the heart, causing a believer to lose his courage, strength and bravery. I thus resolved that I will only eat halaal food so that he would be blessed with bravery and strength. After taking this decision, I complied with it completely, ensuring that I only ate halaal. After the boy was born, I decided to adhere to two things. The first is that I would never suckle the child when I was in the state of impurity (needing ghusal). In fact, over and above being in a state of purity, I would also make wudhu. Furthermore, whenever I was able to, I would recite Surah Yaseen while suckling him. The second is that I continued to ensure that I consumed only halaal food so that the suckling child would not be affected by the ill effects of haraam food through the milk he drank. When he marched to combat the enemy, then on account of my adhering to these actions, I had complete conviction that he would return victorious. That is how I knew that the information which you received was incorrect." (*Islaahi Bayaanaat - Mufti 'Abdur Raof Sakkharwi [hafizahullah] vol. 2, pg. 109-111*)

Negative: Imaam Abu Muhammad Al-Juwayni (rahimahullah) was a great ‘aalim who possessed an extremely high level of caution and concern regarding the consumption of halaal and haraam. The level of his concern was such that it prompted him to earn by working with his own hands, in order to have the peace of mind that he was earning a pure livelihood that was untainted by haraam. Understanding the crucial role consumption of halaal plays in the effort of a Muslim to live a life of piety, he ensured that he fed his son only that which was 100% pure and halaal. The effect of this pure wealth was clearly manifest in this son, who also grew up to become a great ‘aalim, “Imaamul Haramain” (Imaam of the Two Harams).

Later in his life, when Imaamul Haramain (rahimahullah) was once engaged in a debate, to the absolute astonishment of all present, he was suddenly overcome by a short bout of stammering and stuttering! Somebody later asked him, “O Imaam! What happened to you? We never once before heard you stammer or stutter!” Imaamul Haramain (rahimahullah) replied, “It can only have been the ill effects of the remaining traces which remained of the sip.” Having given such a vague answer, somebody asked him, “What incident are you referring to by mentioning ‘the sip’?”

Imaamul Haramain (rahimahullah) explained, “My mother was once busy preparing my father’s food when I began to cry. I was, at the time, a suckling infant. As my mother could not immediately attend to me, the neighbour’s slave girl, who happened to be present, clasped me to her chest and fed me one or two sips. When my father entered and learnt about it, he exclaimed, ‘Neither does this slave girl belong to us nor does she have the right to feed our child her milk as her masters have not permitted it!’ Saying this, he turned me upside down; forcing me to vomit until I had emptied my belly of the few sips I had taken. The stammer and stutter you heard from me today is on account of the ill effects of those few sips I had taken.”¹

The effect of haraam is so detrimental that although the father of Imaamul Haramain (rahimahullah) had emptied his son’s stomach of all the milk, the effects of the traces of the milk still remained and were adversely affecting him many years later.

Acceptance of Du’aas:

One of the great benefits of consuming halaal is that a person’s du’aas are readily accepted by Allah Ta’ala. On one occasion, Sa’d bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) requested Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) to make du’aa for him that he becomes mustajaabud da’awaat (one who’s du’aas are readily answered). Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) told him:

« يَا سَعْدُ ، أَطِيبْ مَطْعَمَكَ ، تُكُنْ مُسْتَجَابَ الدَّعْوَةِ »

*“O Sa’d, purify your food and you will become of those whose du’aas are answered.”*²

Conversely, Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) has also explained that the du’aas of the one who consumes haraam is not answered although he may be in a very pitiable state.

Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said, “O people! Allah Ta’ala is pure and accepts only that which is pure. Allah Ta’ala issued the same command to the believers as He issued to the Messengers. He said: ‘O Messengers! Eat of the pure and do good,’ and He said: ‘O believers, eat of the pure which We provided you with.’ He then mentioned a person who undertakes a long journey, with dishevelled hair and dusty clothing. He stretches out his hands towards the heavens saying, “O my Rabb! O my Rabb!” but his food is haraam, his drink is haraam, his clothing is haraam, and his sustenance is haraam. How can his du’aa be accepted?”³

¹ اعتنى به والده من صغره ، لا بل من قبل مولده ، وذلك أن أباه اكتسب من عمل يده مالا خالصا من الشبهة ، اتصل به إلى والدته . فلما ولدته له ، حرص على أن لا يطعمه ما فيه شبهة ، فلم يمزج باطنه إلا الحلال الخالص ، حتى يحكى أنه تلجلج مرة في مجلس مناظرة ، فقيل له : يا إمام ! ما هذا الذي لم يعهد منك ؟ فقال : ما أراها إلا آثار بقايا المصّة ، قيل : وما نبأ هذه المصّة ؟ قال : إن أمي اشتغلت في طعام تطبخه لأبي وأنا رضيع ، فبكت ، وكانت عندنا جارية مرضعة لجيراننا ، فأرضعتني مصّة أو مصتين ، ودخل والدي ، فأنكر ذلك ، وقال : هذه الجارية ليست ملكا لنا ، وليس لها أن تتصرف في لبنها ، وأصحابها لم يأذنوا في ذلك ، وقلبي وفوعي حتى لم يدع في باطني شيئا إلا أخرجته . وهذه اللجلجة من بقايا تلك الآثار . (« طبقات الشافعية الكبرى » ١٦٨/٥)

² عن ابن عباس ؓ قال : تليت هذه الآية عند رسول الله ﷺ : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ، فقام سعد بن أبي وقاص فقال : يا رسول الله ، ادع الله أن يجعلني مستجاب الدعوة . فقال رسول الله ﷺ : « يا سعد ، أطب مطعمك تكن مستجاب الدعوة ، والذي نفس محمد بيده ، إن العبد يقذف اللقمة الحرام في جوفه ما يتقبل منه العمل أربعين يوما ، وأبما عبد نبت لحمه من سحت فالنار أولى به » . رواه الطبراني في « الأوسط » ... (« مجمع الزوائد » رقم : ١٨٠٤٥)

³ عن أبي هريرة ؓ قال : قال رسول الله ﷺ : « أيها الناس ، إن الله طيب لا يقبل إلا طيبا ، وإن الله أمر المؤمنين بما أمر به المرسلين ، فقال : يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ

Motivation towards Good:

In the aayat mentioned in the above hadeeth, Allah Ta'ala says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا

O messengers, eat from the good things, and act righteously.

Mufti Muhammad Shafee' (rahimahullah) says that the 'ulama mention: By bringing these two commands (of eating pure food and doing good actions) together there is an indication that halaal nourishment plays a major role in carrying out good deeds. When the food is halaal, then a person is granted the ability to do good deeds, but when the food is haraam, then despite having the intention to do good, there will be impediments in his path which will prevent him from carrying it out. (Ma'ariful Quraan vol. 6, pg. 316)

Mu'aazah Al-'Adawiyyah (rahimahallah) was a very pious woman and a student of Sayyidah 'Aaishah (radhiyallahu 'anha). She had breastfed Ummul Aswad Al-'Adawiyyah (rahimahallah).

Mu'aazah (rahimahallah) once said to Ummul Aswad (rahimahallah), "Do not spoil the pains that I took in breastfeeding you, by eating haraam, for I did all that was possible to ensure that I ate only halaal when feeding you. Therefore, strive to consume only halaal so that you will perhaps be blessed to serve Allah Ta'ala and be pleased with His decree."

Ummul Aswad (rahimahallah) would thereafter mention, "If I ever partook of food that was even doubtful in nature, the result would be that I would either be deprived of fulfilling a fardh action or some other 'ibaadah that I would normally carry out with punctuality on a daily basis."⁴

Thus the saying 'You are what you eat' applies to a person's spiritual self as well as physical self. If one is particular and consumes only halaal, the pure, wholesome food will assist him in carrying out righteous works. Conversely, consuming haraam contaminates a person's system so that he loses the motivation to perform 'ibaadah and refrain from sin. In fact, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) has said:

« ... وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ ، إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ يَدْخُلُ اللَّقْمَةَ الْحَرَامَ فِي جَوْفِهِ مَا يُتَقَبَّلُ مِنْهُ الْعَمَلُ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا ... » . (« مجمع الزوائد » رقم :

(١٨٠٤٥)

"By the One in Whose control lies the life of Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), when a man places a morsel of haraam into his stomach, no (good) deed of his is accepted for forty days."

Caution of Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu):

Because of the above, the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum) took great care to ensure that only halaal entered their systems.

Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) owned a slave whose work was to earn an income for Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu). One night, the slave presented Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) with some food that he had earned. As soon as the food was placed before him, Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) picked up a morsel and began to eat. Seeing this, the slave was surprised and asked, "What is the matter? You normally ask me every night (as to how I earned the wealth). Why have you not asked me tonight?" Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) replied, "I was overcome by extreme hunger. From where did you get this food?" The slave answered, "During the days of Jaahiliyyah (the days of ignorance, before the advent of Islam), I once passed by a certain tribe and recited some words and blew, as a form of treatment for them. On account of my service, they had promised me that they would later compensate me. It so happened that I passed by this tribe today while they were engaged in wedding festivities. As they still owed me for my service, they gave me some food from the wedding as payment."

When Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) heard this, he exclaimed, "You almost destroyed me (by feeding me haraam)!" He then began to stick his hand into his throat in an effort to spew out the haraam morsel. However, although he retched and gagged, the morsel could not be expelled (as his stomach was too

الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ، وقال : يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ، ثم ذكر الرجل يطيل السفر أشعث أغبر ، يمد يديه إلى

السماء ، يا رب ! يا رب ! ومطعمه حرام ، ومشربه حرام ، وملبسه حرام ، وغذي بالحرام ، فأنى يستجاب لذلك ؟ (« صحيح مسلم » ٣٢٦/١)

^٤ كانت معاذة العدوية أرضعت أم الأسود ، وقالت أم الأسود : قالت لي معاذة العدوية : لا تفسدي رضاعي بأكل الحرام ، فإني جهدت جهدي حين أرضعتك ، حتى أكلت الحلال ، فاجتهدني أن لا تأكلي إلا حلالاً ، لعلك أن توفقي لخدمة سيدك ، والرضا بقضائه . فكانت أم الأسود تقول : ما أكلت شبهة ، إلا فاتني

فريضة أو ورد من أورادي . (« صفة الصفوة » ٢٤٦/٢)

empty). Seeing this, somebody remarked, “The morsel will not be expelled from your stomach unless you drink water.” Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) thus asked for a large bowl of water and began to drink. After he had filled his stomach with water, he again began to stick his hand into his throat, forcing himself to vomit, until the haraam morsel was finally expelled.

A person who had witnessed the scene said to Hazrat Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), “May Allah have mercy on you! You underwent all this difficulty for just one morsel?” Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) responded, “Even if I had to lose my life to remove the morsel, I would have done so! I heard Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) mention:

« كُلُّ جَسَدٍ نَبَتَ مِنْ سُحْتٍ فَالنَّارُ أَوْلَى بِهِ »

‘Every body which is nourished by haram, the fire (of Jahannum) is more worthy of it.’

I was thus afraid that some part of my body would be nourished by this haraam morsel.”⁵

Look at the care and caution the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu ‘anhum) took when it came to consuming halaal. They preferred losing their lives to letting a single morsel of haraam remaining in their bellies.

Another lesson we learn from this incident is that halaal entails more than slaughtering correctly and avoiding haraam e-codes, etc. Rather, we have to ensure that our wealth, which is what we use to acquire all our food, clothing, etc., is totally halaal as well. If our wealth is haraam, then everything that subsequently results from it will also be tainted with the effects of haraam and will thus be void of barakah (blessings). The slave’s income was not correct therefore Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) removed the morsel.

Imaan Abu Haneefah (rahimahullah):

On one occasion, a sheep went missing in Kufah. On hearing of this, Imaam Abu Haneefah (rahimaullah) enquired about the average age of a sheep. When he was informed that it normally lives for up to seven years, he abstained from eating mutton for seven years.⁶

This was the level of the piety of Imaam Abu Haneefah (rahimahullah). Thus, when we follow these great Imaams, then it is not only because of the vast knowledge that they possessed, rather because their knowledge was also complimented with a very high level of piety and Allah-consciousness. Neither can we come anywhere close to their knowledge nor their piety, thus the safest thing for us is to follow them and reach Allah Ta’ala.

Investigating:

In the incident of Ashaabul Kahaf (The Sleepers of the Cave), when they awoke and sent one of their companions to purchase food, they urged him to ensure that he brought food which was absolutely halaal.

فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْ كَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ

“So, send one of you with this silver (coin) of yours to the city and let him look around which food are the purest and let him bring you some food from there.”

⁵ عن عائشة ؓ قالت : كان لأبي بكر ؓ غلام يخرج له الخراج ، وكان أبو بكر ؓ يأكل من خراجه ، فجاء يوماً بشيء ، فأكل منه أبو بكر ؓ ، فقال له الغلام : أتدري ما هذا ؟ فقال أبو بكر ؓ : وما هو ؟ قال : كنت تكهنت لإنسان في الجاهلية ، وما أحسن الكهانة ، إلا أني خدعته ، فلقيني ، فأعطاني بذلك ، فهذا الذي أكلت منه ، فأدخل أبو بكر ؓ يده ، فقاء كل شيء في بطنه . (« صحيح البخاري » ١ / ٥٤٢)

كان لأبي بكر الصديق ؓ مملوك يغل عليه ، فأناه ليلة بطعام ، فتناول منه لقمة ، فقال له المملوك : مالك ، كنت تسألني كل ليلة ، ولم تسألني الليلة ؟ قال : حملني على ذلك الجوع ، من أين جئت بهذا ؟ قال : مررت بقوم في الجاهلية ، فرقيت لهم ، فوعدوني ، فلما أن كان اليوم ، مررت بهم ، فإذا عرس لهم ، فأعطوني ، قال : إن كدت أن تملكني ، فأدخل يده في حلقة ، فجعل يتقيأ ، وجعلت لا تخرج ، فقبل له : إن هذه لا تخرج إلا بالماء ، فدعا بطست من ماء ، فجعل يشرب ويتقيأ حتى رمى بها ، فقبل له : يرحمك الله ، كل هذا من أجل هذه اللقمة ! قال : لو لم تخرج إلا مع نفسي لأخرجتها ، سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول : « كل جسد نبت من سحت ، فالنار أولى به » ، فخشيت أن ينبت شيء من جسدي من هذه اللقمة . (« حلية الأولياء » ١ / ٦٥)

⁶ ومن عظيم ورعه وزهده ... أنه ترك لحم الغنم ، لما فقدت شاة في الكوفة ، إلى أن علم موتها ، لأنه سأل عن أكثر ما تعيش ، فقبل له : سبع سنين ، فترك أكل لحمها سبع سنين ، تورعا منه ، لاحتمال أن تبقى تلك الشاة الحرام ، فيصادف أكل شيء منها ، فيظلم قلبه ، إذ هذا هو شأن أكل الحرام . (« الخيرات الحسان »

لابن حجر الهيتمي ص ٨)

The reason for this was that most of the animals of the city from which they had fled were slaughtered in the names of idols. Due to this practice, most of the meat in the market was haraam. Hence they instructed him to investigate whether the food was halaal.

Mufti Muhammad Shafee' (rahimahullah) mentions that if a person is living in a place where there is an abundance of haraam food, it will be necessary for him to investigate before eating. (Ma'aariful Quraan vol. 5, pg. 572)

Hence it is incumbent upon us in today's time, to investigate and verify that the food we are purchasing is absolutely halaal. We cannot be complacent and feel that "being a Muslim country" or other such factors are sufficient as a mark of halaal assurance.