

## HALAAL CERTIFICATION – YES OR NO?

Optional or imperative? For or against? That is the question.

50 years ago when our mothers and sisters stayed at home, blended their own spices, baked bread, used fresh vegetables, slaughtered their own home-reared chicken, purchased meat only from the Muslim butcher known to the family, cooked and served wholesome sit-down family meals, then there would have been absolutely no need for certification.

Today the reality is that more women are in the workplace than at home. The concept of the family dinner is disappearing from many homes with many working couples grabbing their meals on the run. Ingredients, ready to prepare and pre-cooked meals are picked up at supermarkets and convenience stores, some of which remain open 24 hours a day. A proliferation of restaurants too have mushroomed all aiming for this lucrative market of the working family with offerings not only of Halaal meals but facilities such as wudhu (ablution), salaah (prayer) and family segregation (Purdah).

To meet this explosive growth in food demand worldwide, fuelled further by globalization, Man utilises industrial production techniques. Some three thousand substances are deliberately added to food and drinks to increase their desirability. Another ten thousand compounds and combinations of these can be used during processing, packaging and storing of these products. Supermarket shelves and freezers overflow with an astonishing array of foods from all over the world.

With food in abundance, have you stopped for a moment and examined the groceries in your cupboard or the provisions in your refrigerator? How sure are you that everything is indeed Halaal?

Is the red colouring in the kid's ice lolly derived from the crushed cochineal beetle insect?

Does the flour improver in your loaf of bread contain amino acids derived from human hair?

Have your french fries been coated with an animal-based shortening?

Do you know that the crumbing on fish fillet could be laced with chicken stock?

Does the cheese you relish have a pork-derived enzyme?

Does the chocolate you crave for contain liquor?

Do you know that the cosmetic cream you religiously apply daily could contain human placenta and animal fat steirates?

Chicken fillets used in your savouries could be imported from plants that do non-Halaal machine slaughter?

The braai sausage casing from your local butcher could possibly be from sources in Latin America with dubious Halaal standards?

A restaurant's onion and mushroom sauce can contain white wine and veal stock?

A hot chocolate sauce can contain rum alcohol?

The restaurants signature butternut soup may contain chicken stock?

The basting brush you use may be made from pork bristles?

If you can state with absolute conviction that you are aware of the composition of all the ingredients of a product including the flavouring, accept the validity of the Halaal certificate issued, you are satisfied with the monitoring and auditing of the procedures and processes employed in the Halaal chain including slaughter both locally and abroad, then by all means you would have no need for assurance from any Halaal body as was the case 50 years ago.

However for the rest of us who realise that it is impossible for an individual to control or have knowledge of every ingredient and the manufacturing process, who rely on an independent third party quality assurance, there can be nothing but a resounding **YES** to Halaal certification to safeguard our Imaan.

The Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam predicted that **"There will come a time upon my Ummah when people will not be concerned about what they consume. It will not matter to them whether it is Haraam or Halaal."** It is further reported, **"When such time appears, none of their duas will be accepted."** (Al Bukhari)