

MODULE 4

Class Title: Bon Appetit- part 1

Aim of the lesson: To understand which foods are permitted and prohibited in Islam

Category: Worship

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

Greeting to students) *AssalamalaikumwaRahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanirRajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *BismillahirRahmanirRaheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbishrahlisadriwayassirliamriwahluluqdatummillisaniyafqahuqawli*(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 2:

Teacher: Let us begin our class with a basic question. What is *deen*?

Deen means a way of life. It tells us how to conduct our matters of life and deal with various problems; it encompasses every aspect of our life. In short, our life style is designed by our *deen* so it is much more than just religion. Now do you think food would be included in this?

Student: yes

Teacher: yes most certainly. Food is what sustains us, keeps us nourished. It keeps us going, it is a very important part of our lives, isn't it? In fact, sometimes it becomes a bit too important when we just live to eat!

Everything in Islam is interlinked. Our spirituality is linked to the food we eat. Eating *Halal* food is the key to the door of Allah (swt). When a person eats *halal* food this definitely has an impact on his spirituality.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom you worship" (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 172).

Rasool Allah (pbuh) said: On the authority of Abu Huraira (ra), who said: The Messenger of Allah said: "Allah the Almighty is good and accepts only that which is good. Allah has commanded the Faithful to do that which He commanded the Messengers, and the Almighty has said: "O you Messengers! Eat of the good things, and do right.." (23:51). And Allah the Almighty has said: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you.." (2:172). Then he mentioned [the case of] a man who, having journeyed far, is disheveled and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the sky [saying]: O Lord! O Lord!-while his food is

unlawful, his drink is unlawful, his clothing unlawful, and he is nourished unlawfully, so how can he be answered!” (Muslim).

Slide 3:

Allah (swt) says in the Qur’an,

‘O Mankind, eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth and follow not the footsteps of *shaitan*, Verily he is to you an open enemy’ (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 168).

Therefore, the Qur’an tells us to eat everything-everything as long as it is **lawful**. Today, *InshaAllah*, we will talk about the lawful and the unlawful food.

Teacher: what kind of a book do you think Qur’an is?

Student: A book that contains commandments, like pay *zakah* and establish *Salah*.

Teacher: yes, Allah (swt) has given commandments for all aspects of our lives. So there are commandments related to food also which I find really cool. Allah (swt) knows it is our weakness so He has mentioned it too.

Slides 4-13:

Teacher: can you name a few foods that He (swt) has mentioned in the Qur’an?

Student: olives

Teacher: Yes, He has mentioned olives in the Qur’an. Olives are amazing little things that are full of goodness and nutrition. You can just eat them as they are or toss them in salad or pasta. You also get olive oil from them, which is good for our digestive system, skin and hair. Newborn babies are massaged with it to strengthen their bones.

He has mentioned *anaar*, pomegranates. They are such beautiful things! I really like pomegranates not only because of their taste, but just look at them... they have such a grand crown on top! When you open an *anaar*, you find beautiful little beads in magenta shade that are full of vitamin C and fiber.

We have figs, *injeer* that we mostly consume in the dried form and is really good for cough and sore throat. Then you have grapes. Who likes grapes?

Student: I love the purple ones.

Teacher: Yes, there are different kinds of grapes, purple and green and when you dry them, you have raisins and black currants. Absolutely amazing little bundles of green things!

He has also mentioned honey. We all know how honey is good for health and it is not just Winnie-the-Pooh who likes honey, we all do, don't we? Then He has also mentioned milk, you guys might say "milk, eww".

Student: I like Milo.

Teacher: Some like chocolate milk while some like it plain. Either way it is milk.

Teacher: Tell me what are these?

Student: peas in pod?

Teacher: No.

Student: cocoa beans

Teacher: yes, cocoa beans. Cocoa beans are the raw material for chocolates that we crave or scrumptious desserts, brownies, smoothies etc. Such a delightful blessing of Allah (swt).

Slides 14-16:

Today we will talk about *Halal* and *Haram* foods. These two are Arabic words, which apply to different aspects of our lives, but today we are going to talk about *halal* and *haram* foods only.

Teacher: What does *halal* mean?

Student: Lawful. Permitted.

Teacher: what is *haram*?

Student: Not allowed, unlawful, not permitted.

Now the concept of *halal* and *haram* is very important for us as Muslims. We consume food several times a day so we need to know what is *halal* and what is not. We must also keep in mind that no one other than Allah (swt) can tell us what to eat and what not to. If Allah has said something is *haram* then it is *haram*. End of story.

Slide 17:

Allah (swt) says in *Surah Al Maida*, verse 3;

‘Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maitah (the dead animals - cattle-beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild

animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, (all) that is Fisqun (disobedience and sin).....’

Muslims are allowed to eat what is "good" - that is, what is pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, and pleasing to the taste. In general, everything is allowed (halal) except what has been specifically forbidden. Muslims are enjoined by their religion to abstain from eating certain foods. This is in the interest of health and cleanliness, and in obedience to God.

You must be wondering, so many *haram* things. However, if you count, there are only five or six things. We will look at all of these one by one *InshaAllah* and we should keep in mind that *shaytan*, because of our ignorance and his innate capacity to deceive and to mislead us, creates discontent in us regarding permissible and non permissible things. This especially becomes the case when you go abroad and find your food list restricted to some extent.

Teacher: Let us look at each one of these things carefully. Okay so the first thing was animals that are improperly slaughtered.

Slide 18:

This is a cow being slaughtered. In foreign countries, various chemical and mechanical methods are used to sacrifice an animal. The chemical way is to enclose cattle in a room drained from oxygen and there is abundance of carbon dioxide. In such cases, animal naturally chokes to death.

The other way, shown here is through electrocution or by gunshot. This is a bolt where they put the head of the animal. It is electrocuted with 300-watt current to stun the animal or make it unconscious. It is found that sometimes it is over electrocuted, which affects the bones and the meat. Tests conducted have proved that when a graph was made of the intensity of pain the electrocuted animal goes through, was intense compared to the Muslim way of slaughtering. On the outside, it may seem that the Muslim way is quite cruel but these tests prove that the threshold of pain that the animal feels inside is so high that the waves shoot up and down on the graph. Another prohibited way is to slaughter is without saying *Bismillah*.

Slide 19:

Then there is the case of an animal that was already dead before being slaughtered. What happens in the Muslim slaughtering way that is called *zabeeha*, is that when the throat is slit, the blood rushes out immediately. We know that all sorts of bacteria and infections are found in blood so when blood rushes out, it brings out all the harmful bacteria with it leaving the flesh clean. However, for an animal which was dead before being slaughtered, has all the bacteria accumulated in it. This is what science tells us today and is thus unhealthy and *haram* for us.

Slide 20:

Allah (swt) also forbids us from the intake of blood. Now this picture is of a black pudding, which is considered as a delicacy by many people. It is made of blood and over here; you can see this guy making sausages out of blood. This is absolutely *haram*. We are not talking about those tiny dots of blood that you see in meat while cooking, we are talking pure blood.

Student: Are sausages *halal*?

Teacher: If they made from halal meat then yes they are halal.

Slides 21-22:

Another thing, which is haram for us, is pork and all its by- products, swine, lard etc. Also gelatin if it's made from pork meat or from an animal which is not slaughtered the Muslim way.

Slide 23:

Allah (swt) says that animals, killed in the name of anyone other than Allah (swt), are also *haram*.

This is an animal sacrifice done at a temple. It seems like a Chinese ceremony.

Slides 24-26:

Have you heard of *niyaaz* and *koonday*? People cook meals in the name of different *sahaba* and saints, like on 22nd *Rajab* they cook a meal on the name of *Jaffar As Sadiq*. This has become a ritual in our part of the country. Do you think it's alright cooking food in a person's name, other than Allah?

Teacher: no. This becomes *haram*, if it is in somebody else's name.

If you say, "I'm not doing it in *Hazrat Fatimah's* (ra) name or whoever's name, but I'm doing it because everyone else's doing it". Is that okay? On *shabe baraat* and why?

Student: You are doing it on that particular day.

Teacher: You do it on a particular day; you are following that ritual, that tradition. Why are you making *sooji ka halwa* on that day, why couldn't you make it the day before or any other day? Even if your intention is clear but remember our actions leave an impact on others in society.

Student: If you don't know about those days, and you cook those things on that day by coincidence, then?

Teacher: If it is a random day for you- you don't have any idea of the customs prevailing on that day and coincidentally, you just feel like cooking items that are cooked on that day, well, that's okay. But these would be too many coincidences and you'd have to be completely cut off from the world to not know the festivities of that day. Because nowadays, media alone is sufficient to give a more-than-is-necessary description of a particular day.

Slide 27:

Alcohol and all intoxicants are *haram*, as we know. I am not talking about medicine drugs, rather drugs that make you high like marijuana and heroin and all that stuff which plays with your senses.

Student: What about sniffing glue?

Teacher: The poor people in our country sniff glue and it makes them high. Even that glue is *haram*.

Slide 28-30:

Allah says in Surah Al Maida Verse 90,

‘O you who believe, intoxicants and gambling and *al ansaab* and *al azlaam* (arrows for seeking luck and decisions) are admonition for *shaitans* handwork.’

We can see from this ayah that all intoxicants are *haram*. What about cigarettes?

Student: haram

Teacher: Who is saying its neither *halal* nor *haram*? It is *haram* because it causes serious damage to our bodies and we are not allowed to harm our selves deliberately.

Student: Tobacco contains drugs.

Teacher: Yes it does.

Teacher: it is not mentioned in the Qur'an or the Hadith specifically but it is considered to be slow suicide.

Slide 31:

It is also not permissible to eat carnivores i.e. animals that kill other birds or animals to eat.

Student: Why are they *haram*?

Slide 32:

Teacher: There is a *hadith* narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas (ra) that the Prophet (pbuh) prohibited the eating of fanged, beasts of prey and all the birds having talons (Muslim).

Slide 33:

In *Bukhari*, Anas ibn Malik narrates that a person came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said that “The donkeys have been (slaughtered and) eaten.” Another man came and said: “The donkeys have been destroyed.” The Prophet(PBUH) ordered a caller to announce to the people: “Allah and His Messenger forbid you to eat the meat of donkeys, for it is impure.” Thus the pots were turned upside down while the (donkey’s) meat was boiling in them.” (Bukhari).

Slide 34:

Abduallah bin Umer (ra) narrates that the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said: ‘Two types of dead meat and two types of blood has been made lawful for our consumptions, the two dead meats are fish and locusts, and the two types of blood are liver and spleen.

(Abu Dawood, Ahmed and Ibn Majah.)

Student: Who eats locusts?

Teacher: People do.

Slides 35-38:

Teacher: Fish is *halal* and so are mussels, crabs, lobsters, shrimps, prawns and octopus. However, let me make one thing clear. There is a school of thought who disagrees and says prawns and lobsters aren’t *halal*. Therefore, this is up to you whether you follow their interpretation or the school of thought who says it is *halal*. Because according to Surah Nahl ayat 14, Allah says, ‘And it is He Who has subjected the sea (to you), that you may eat thereof fresh tender meat, and that you may extract out of it ornaments to wear...’

Slides 39-40:

Muslims are enjoined to slaughter their livestock by slitting the throat in a merciful and swift manner with a sharp knife. And it is made sure that the blood is completely drained out of the animal’s body and is none is left behind. While slaughtering the animal Allah (swt) has instructed us to recite His name in the following words:

“*Bismillahe Allahu Akbar*” (Qur'an 6:118-121).

This method is called *zabeeha*. This is in acknowledgement that life is sacred, and that one must kill only with God's permission, to meet one's lawful need for food. This meat is *halal* for us, and fit for consumption. It is the most humane and hygienic way.

It is stated in a *hadith* in *Sahih Muslim*,

‘Verily Allah has prescribed proficiency in all things. Thus if you kill, kill well; and if you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen your blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters’.

Slides 41-44:

Let us come to something in today's time which has caused a bit of ambiguity and problem for us. Processed foods are largely available in the market and certain chemicals and food colors are added in it to preserve them or for them to have a longer shelf life. We need to be very careful about these ingredients to assure that they are *halal*. We must check the label of the package to see if it says *halal* or not especially, if it contains gelatin. In stores like Agha's and Paradise where there are plenty of imported items, we need to make sure it says *halal* and if it doesn't say so, we must try to find out.

Slides 45-46:

When we go abroad, we find that in most places there is a certificate at the entrance that says *halal* e.g Mc Donalds, KFC, Hardees etc. In supermarkets also, there are different aisles for *halal* foods and meat shops where *halal* meat is available. Alhamdulillah, in today's world, life has become easy and we don't have to make such big efforts for availability of *halal* food but still caution is advised. In case you are unsure about something, you have technology in your homes, in your bags, in your rooms so you can look up on Google, books etc. In some food products, there is an E code and all you have to do is to browse on the internet and see if the E code is *halal* or *haram*.

Slide 47-48:

These few ingredients should be avoided if we do not know their source. One of them is lard. Lard is the fat of pigs and hogs, which is melted down and used in cooking.

Gelatin is obtained from boiling bones and trotters of animals. It is odourless and tasteless and is used in jellies and puddings so you have to make sure that it is *halal* as we discussed earlier.

pepsin is an enzyme that aids in the digestion of protein. Enzymes should be avoided unless they are microbial enzymes.

Rennet which is obtained from the stomach of a calf is used to make cheese so if rennet comes from an animal which is not slaughtered according to *zabeeha* then it should be avoided. And

whey too, unless it is used made using vegetables; whey is the watery part of milk that is left behind when you curd milk.

Vanilla extract is the flavor that comes from vanilla beans and it is *haram* because it is soluble in alcohol. but the vanilla that you get here in Pakistan is not the real vanilla, it doesn't come from the actual vanilla beans so it's okay but you have to make sure if you are buying it from places where you think it is imported from abroad then you should avoid vanilla extracts.

So do you understand the concept of *halal* and haram? Everything is permissible except for a few things. Read labels of all packaged food. It also includes cornflakes and cereals. The packet must say halal or suitable for vegetarians and if you are still not sure go to the website and check it out.

Now I have a few things here. Pass it around and have a look at it.

(Teacher distributes a variety of packaged and canned food with clear labels and dodgy labels too.)

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*