



MUSLIM JUDICIAL COUNCIL

CLARIFICATION OF CERTIFIED GELATINE AS A HALAAL INGREDIENT IN FOODS

October 2006

Introduction

The issue of the use of gelatine in our food products has been dealt with in detail by the Muslim Judicial Council, however there is a need for us to reassure the community that the use of certain gelatine containing products if certified by the MJC is halaal.

The MJC being an organisation entrusted by the Muslim community with ensuring that food consumed is halaal has therefore thoroughly investigated the matter and can confidently say that whatever products is certified by the Muslim Judicial Council is halaal and in particular gelatine used in foods consumed by Muslims.

This information booklet will give the reader all the necessary information needed if ever there is a doubt as to the consumption of MJC certified gelatine in foods.

Part 1

GELATINE

What is Gelatine?

A colourless or slightly yellow, transparent, brittle protein formed by boiling the specially prepared skin, bones and connective tissue of animals.

Gelatine is manufactured from bovine hides (bones and skins of cattle and / or animals).

How is Gelatine produced?

The process to manufacture gelatine as mentioned henceforth, are virtually applicable to all circumstances wherein gelatine is produced or, at least, the process we approve of:

Preparation of bovine skins:

Raw skins are soaked in lime water in order to remove all impurities, meat, blood hair, etc. After having been soaked in lime baths for a considerable length of time, the skins then transform into a sort of neutral substance.

Preparation of bovine bones:

Bones are first cleaned and all meat and fatty substances are removed. The bones are then crushed into smaller pieces. These bone pieces are then soaked into hydrochloric acid to remove the potassium chloride. The bones are now softer and ready to be transformed into Gelatine.

* In both cases, under the influence of heat, water and pressure the product is changed into a liquid gelatine substance. Following various processes, this liquid is transformed into a solid spaghetti-like substance, which is finally dried and crushed into gelatine granules of various sizes. These processes are irreversible. In other words, the end product (the gelatine) cannot be reverted back into skins or bones.

Uses of Gelatine:

Gelatine is used in: foodstuffs, medicines, a supplementary source of protein, as a carrier material, as a bonding agent stabilizer and emulsifier; as an aid for frothing up flavour enhancement, common salt replacement, clearing of drinks; as a collagen source in dietetics, in soft and hard medicament capsules; also in photographic films, theatrical lighting, etc.

In this modern world of today gelatine has become an almost indispensable product with a wide range of uses, as indicated above.

Davis Gelatine now known as Gelita S.A. has a gelatine plant in Krugersdorp, Gauteng supplies 95% of South Africa's gelatine needs. The MJC Fatwa Committee and 13 Muftis and 'Ulama from the Jami'atul 'Ulama of Transvaal have inspected the Davis Gelatine plant in Krugersdorp. It was found that its production of gelatine is in line with the above-mentioned production processes. They also do not use dog, monkey or pig skins as a norm. They however, import skin as well. It is correct to say that the skins and bones, which are used to produce gelatine, are from Halaal slaughtered sources as well as from other sources.

The Islamic perspective on the aforementioned:

In the Shari'ah there is a process called "Al Istihaalah", which means 'change of essence'. It is an irreversible process, whereby the original status of a product has been transformed completely into another status. The Shari'ah is clear on this, that the transformed status of the product is 'Taahir' – pure and clean – irrespective whether the original status of the product was unclean and impure.

On the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (r.a), he reported that the Prophet (Pbuh) said: "If the skin (of an animal) has gone through the process of tanning, then it is pure and clean."(Bukhari & Muslim).

Likewise, when raw material, like raw skins or bovine bones from Halaal or non-Halaal sources are transformed into a totally new product of gelatine, through a process as mentioned above, the end-product (gelatine) is then pure, clean and Halaal. The Fatwa Committee of the MJC, on the basis of the aforementioned and other empirical research methods, has found that the gelatine of Davis Gelatine and that of the two Belgium plants, Gent and Angolene, are Halaal and fit for Muslim consumption.

Signed by: Maulanaa Yusuf Karaan

Date: 11/11/2003

Part 2

RE: GELATIN : FATWA – MJC Halaal Trust

The MJC has visited various plants in South Africa as well as overseas to inspect the production of gelatin from bovine sources, bones as well as skins. From our inspections, it is quite clear that bones and skins from both Halaal slaughtered cattle and non-Halaal slaughtered cattle are used for Gelatin information.

During the process of production, a complete transformation of the skins and bones take place, changing it into collagen and from there finally into gelatin crystals. The transformation taking place, which in Shariah is called Tabdeelul – Maahyat, is a process whereby a non-Halaal item is changed to become Halaal as is the case of wine being transformed into vinegar or unclean spermatozoa becomes transformed to a foetus in the mother. There are many other examples of this in the Shariah.

Because of this Tabdeelul Maa-hiyat – change in essence –, which is completely irreversible, Ulema, especially from the Hanafi Mazhab, like Imam Muhammad, the famous student and colleague of Imaam Abu Haneefa has given a verdict of permissibility.

Hence, our fatwa at the MJC is this that Gelatine produced from skins or bones of edible animals, cattle, poultry, fish etc are Halaal to be consumed by Muslims. This is the Fatwa we have given. It excludes pigs and dogs and non-Halaal animals – animals that are Najaasatul – `ayn.

A vast member of Ulema in the Muslim world has accepted this verdict of ours. We are in possession of a detailed fatwa issued by Moulana Burhamudien of Nadwatul ulema in Lucknow, India, which he issued after an inspection of Davis Gelatine in Gauteng.

This is also corroborated by fataa-wa from the following institutions:

- National Islamic Halaal Trust
- Darul Uloom, Newcastle
- Moulana Raza-ul-Haq of Madrassa Arabia Islamia, Azaadville
- Mufti A.K. Hoosen of Channel Islam
- Sheikh Yusuf Al Qardawi from Qatar
- Mufti M. Taqi Usmani of Pakistan
- Mufti M. Ashraf of Darul Uloom, Springs
- Majma –ul-Fiqhy in Jeddah
- Majlisul Ulema of Indonesia

In conclusion, allow me to inform you that our decision to issue a verdict of permissibility of gelatine from Halaal animals was not one taken lightly. A lot of thought and consideration of the facts, both jurisprudential and scientific data, as well as the views of men of science had gone into the consideration as well as a lot of reading of reference works before we came to the conclusion.

Most definitely, this fatwa was not sucked out of our thumbs and we strongly resent the view of some Halaal Authority that goes about spreading the word that Bovine Gelatine is non-Halaal. That may be a personal view of some people being stubbornly held by them by no means a universal view.

Our view is that gelatine formed from Halaal animals is Halaal for Muslim consumption and is so even if the skins or bones come from animals not slaughtered in the Shariah manner of Thabah.

Hoping this clarifies matters for you.

Jazaakumullah

MOULANA YUSUF KARAAN

(Head: Muslim Judicial Council Fatwa Committee)