198536 - Ruling on sweets which contain a very small amount of alcohol

the question

I have four children, the oldest of whom is nine years old. Usually I used to buy them Ribena and Lucozade, and sweets, until one of my friends told me that Lucozade contains 0.01% alcohol and Ribena goes through a filter that is made of porcine gelatin. I researched on the Internet and I found that according to the Sharia Council in the UK it is halal. That was in 2004.

What do you say about this matter?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

In our response, we would like to note the following:

1. It is not permissible for the Muslim at all to add any alcohol or pork products, or other prohibited substances, to any of his food or drink, even if it is a small amount, because he is enjoined to avoid all of that.

2. If the Muslim finds any kind of food or drink being sold in the market, and he is not certain about it, or he does not think it is very likely that some haram substance has been added to it, then the basic principle is that food or drink is permissible, and mere doubt or suspicion on its own does not affect anything.

3. If he finds out that some alcohol or pork product, or any other haram substance, has been added to the food or drink, then if it is a small amount that is absorbed into the other substances, and no trace of it remains in the food or drink, meaning that no colour, taste or smell of it can be discerned, then this does not affect anything either, and it is not prohibited to consume those foods or drinks. This is the case with regard to the small amount mentioned in the question. Such

small amounts are absorbed into what they are added to, and no trace of them remains.

4. It is haram to consume any of these foods or drinks if a large amount of haram substances that leaves a trace has been added to them, or a small amount has been added, but it leaves a trace and is not absorbed; rather some of its characteristics remain, such as its colour, taste, smell or any other trace, such as an intoxicating effect in the case of alcohol and other intoxicating substances.

5. With regard to intoxicating substances, it is not stipulated that the amount of this food that is normally consumed should not cause intoxication. It is well known that sweets and chocolates cannot contain enough alcohol to cause intoxication directly from the amount that people usually consume. Rather the Islamic principle regarding this matter is that what causes intoxication in large amounts, a small amount of it is haram.

6. There is a general principle and Islamic etiquette that is prescribed for the believer, which says that whatever you feel uncomfortable about, and whatever causes you to feel doubt and un-ease, you should leave it, and take from the good (halal) options that do not cause you to feel that way, because the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt, for what is true brings reassurance and what is false brings doubt.” Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2442) and others; classed as sahih by al-Albani. And the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “That which is halal is clear and that which is haram is clear, and between them are doubtful matters which many people do not understand. Whoever guards against the doubtful matters will protect his religious commitment from shortcomings and will protect his honour from slander, but whoever falls into that which is doubtful will fall into that which is haram, like a shepherd who grazes his flock around reserved land; he will soon graze in it. Verily, every king has his reserved land and verily, the reserved land of Allah is that which He has forbidden.” Narrated by al-Bukhari (1910) and Muslim (2996).

See also the answer to question no. 114129 .

And Allah knows best.