

314410 - Is it permissible to call something “haleem”?

the question

What is the ruling on calling food (and things in general) by one of the names of Allah?
“Haleem” is a kind of food that is popular in India and Pakistan.

Summary of answer

Giving a name such as this to this type of food is like a metaphor, and there is no reason to think that it is sharing a name with Allah, may He be exalted.

Detailed answer

The names of Allah, may He be exalted, are of two types:

The first type is names that are exclusive to Him, may He be glorified, such as: Allah, ar-Rahman (the Most Gracious), ar-Rabb (the Lord), al-Ahad (the One), and so on. It is not permissible to call anything or anyone by these names, because that is like competing or disputing with Allah, may He be exalted, regarding something that is unique to Him alone.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Among the names that are not permissible to use for people are the names of the Lord, may He be blessed and exalted. Therefore it is not permissible for a person to be called al-Ahad (the One), as-Samad (the Eternal Refuge), al-Khaliq (the Creator), ar-Raziq (the Provider), or any of the other names which belong exclusively to the Lord, may He be blessed and exalted. And it is not permissible for kings to be called al-Qahir (the Subduer) or az-Zahir (the Prevailing), or to be called al-Jabbar (the Compeller), al-Mutakabbir (the Supreme), al-Awwal (the First), al-Akhir (the Last), al-Batin (the Most Near), ‘Allam al-Ghuyub (Knower of the unseen).” (*Tuhfat al-Mawdud* p. 125).

The second type are names which are shared, so there is nothing wrong with calling people or things by them, such as Karim (noble or generous), Halim (or Haleem – forbearing)), Rahim (merciful), Hakim (wise), ‘Alim (knowing), and so on.

Allah, may He be exalted, said regarding Ibrahim and his son Isma‘il (peace be upon them both) (interpretation and meaning):

{So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy} [As-Saffat 37:101].

There were among the Companions some who had such names, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not change those names, such as ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and Hakim ibn Hizam (may Allah be pleased with them both).

It says in the commentary on the book *Asna al-Matalib Sharh Rawd at-Talib* (4/243), which is a Shafa‘i book:

It is permissible to call people and things by names of Allah, may He be exalted, which are not unique to Him. As for those which are unique to Him, it is haram to do that. An-Nawawi stated that clearly in *Sharh Muslim*. End quote.

Based on that, there is nothing wrong with calling some type of food “haleem”, because this is one of the names that are shared, and it is not a name that belongs exclusively to Allah, may He be exalted.

Moreover, giving a name such as this to this type of food is like a metaphor, and there is no reason to think that it is sharing a name with Allah, may He be exalted.

And Allah knows best.