






## Food Safety and Health from the Perspective of Islam

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### Abstract


**Background and Objective:** The relationship between food and the health of the soul and body is one of the issues mentioned in a monotheistic worldview including Islam. The verse "And We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers" confirms the influence of religious teachings in this respect. This study examines the Qur'anic guidelines on food safety and hygiene.

**Methods:** This review study investigates into the health system through library reviews of authentic sources, religious teachings, Quranic verses, authentic statements from the infallibles (Imams and the prophet), important Qur'anic commentaries, statements and books on nutrition on national and international databases. After categorization, the results were analyzed and integrated. The authors declared no conflict of interest.

**Results:** About 250 Qur'anic verses and dozens of statements from the infallibles point to the importance of food and nutrition. The Holy Qur'an mentions the word "food" 48 times, the word "eating" 107 times, and the word "drink" 39 times. In the verses related to food, it has been mentioned six times that food should be Halal, and in various interpretations, the importance of nourishing the body is emphasized. Attitude to food as a sign in knowing God, believing in divine generosity, enjoying divine intent, asserting the rights of those in need, clean eating, having a balanced diet, adhering to halal food, and avoiding forbidden foods are the most important attitudinal and habitual strategies related to food safety. In addition, human dignity is one of the most important outcomes of adhering to Islamic food safety strategies.

**Conclusion:** Since in revelatory doctrines, a healthy diet involves physical, mental, spiritual and social aspects of human life, it is essential that health policy makers consider the Islamic nutritional approach to achieve a true universal health.



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### Summary

#### Background and Objective

The relationship between food and the soul is one of the issues addressed in the monotheistic worldview and Islam. Nutrition is one of the strategic issues in the physical and spiritual evolution of man (1-4). Health and safety of food means ensuring food health,

ensuring that it is not contaminated with any unhealthy agent and knowing the behavioral principles of its consumption (5). In the Qur'an, God has always emphasized the health of body and soul, and His dear prophet Muhammad has bestowed it upon humanity (6), including the verse: "Then let mankind look at his food" (7); That is to say, one must pay attention to food, nutrition, and what he/she eats, ensuring that it is clean, neat, halal, beneficial, and edible in all respects, and should take enough care in terms of health and nutrition to ensure that whatever s/he is eating is healthy and not contaminated from the outside and inside. From the verses of the Qur'an (8-11), it is clear that Islam has given precious advices on the health and well-being of human beings and has pointed out that human beings must avoid all aspects of ugliness, filthiness and contamination in food, nutrition, life and education.

### Methods

This review study aimed at researching the health system through library reviews of authentic sources, religious teachings, selection of Quranic verses, authentic hadiths of the infallibles (Imams), important Qur'anic commentaries and hadiths and books related to nutrition on national and international databases. This study was based on the tools of gathering, studying, examining and meditating inspired by the teachings of the sages in the Islamic civilization about food safety and health guidelines. After categorization, the results were analyzed, integrated and reported.

### Results

According to the results, the term "food" has been mentioned 24 times in Makki Surahs and 24 times in Madani Surahs in different forms, out of which six times were for the principle of halal food, six times for feeding the needy, twice for forbidden foods, and four times for the remission of sins through feeding the poor. Also, in the Quran, in addition to the word "food", the word "eating", the word "drink", have been mentioned 107 and 39 times, respectively. The important effect of nutrition on the soul has been emphasized in different interpretations of the Quran. Related words such as meat, honey, water, candy, fruits, beans, onions, milk, fat, and mouth have been also mentioned in some verses, which have mentioned some foods as examples (1). One of the verses that is of greater importance in the field of safe or healthy nutrition and is more commonly used and cited is verse 24 of Surah Al-Abasa, in which God says: "Then let mankind look at his food" (12). Of course, this verse should be interpreted drawing on other verses, such as verse 19 of Surah al-Kahf, verse 57 of Surah al-Baqarah, and verse 15 of Surah al-Saba (12). According to verse 12 of Surah al-Muhammad, animals eat grass without knowing where it comes from, whether it is halal or haram, seized or permissible. Unbelievers also eat without paying attention to its filth and permissibility and forbearance and; therefore, they have a similar outcome (13). Believers pay attention to the divinity and know their source of nutrition and

salvation is from God, as Abraham Khalilullah (AS) points out: "And the God who feeds and drenches me" (14).

A review of Islamic texts suggests that one of the indicators of nutrition safety is nutrition customs. One of these practices is the observance of moderation in nutrition. In the Quran, God emphasizes the balance of consumption "Eat and drink and do not waste that he does not love wasters" (15). Tayeb food is one of the other strategies in nutrition safety. This term 'Tayeb' is derived from the word Tuba, which means good, tasty, sweet, pure and clean and not polluted by execrable things (16). In the Qur'an, God emphasizes the Tayeb food in verse 168 of Surah al-Baqarah and in verse four of Surah al-Maeda (17). In some narrations there is a reference to avoiding to eat raw meat, which is somehow related to food safety (18). One of the principles of healthy nutrition that has also been taken into account in Islam is to have a balanced diet to meet the body needs (19). So people should consider using different types of useful foods and balance in their diet.

Islam's recommendations on nutrition not only ensure the health of the body but also guarantee mental health. In fact, one's perception of morality and behavior can be directly and indirectly affected by the type and quality of the food he/she takes.

One of the common human foods is meat and protein products that Islam and other divine religions have focused on. In Islam, while it is recommended to consume meat as much as it is necessary for the body, it is forbidden to eat certain types of animal meat (20). In four verses of the Quran (verse 173 sura al-Baqarah, verse 3 sura al-Maeda, verse 145 sura al-An'aam, verse 115 sura al-Nahal), pork has been considered as haram (forbidden). This repetition demonstrates the importance and affirmation in avoiding pork consumption (20).

The Quran has allowed foods that are beneficial to the human body and soul, and also prohibits people from eating harmful food. Prohibition of unhealthy food is one of the divine services to humans because it banned them under the conditions that the causative agents had not been discovered yet and their effects on causing diseases were not clear.

### Conclusion

Qur'anic verses and religious teachings state that if one pays a special attention in his/her own nutrition and well-being, he/she can better serve God and people. Healthy nutrition is an introduction to a more important issue, which is the edification of the soul and one of the requirements for having an enlightened soul is to pay attention to body health through the acquisition of halal food. In dietary advices of the Quran, physical health via using Tayeb (clean) food, a balanced diet and moderation in consumption are considered as important. Since revelatory doctrines healthy nutrition includes physical, mental, spiritual and social aspects, it is essential that health policy makers consider the Islamic nutritional approach to achieve a true and universal health.

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**Authors' contributions**

All authors have participated in all stages of writing the article.

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