

DIETARY PRECAUTIONS IN ISLAM AND CONTEMPORARY MEDICAL SCIENCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Islam is a complete code of life. It provides guidance in all field of life relating to human as the address of Holy Quran and Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is man. Food is one of the important element of human life, therefore, Islam teaches about its proper usage so that it may be helpful for the body. If proper dietary precautions are not taken, the food will be harmful. This article will highlight all the precautionary measure regarding food in the light of Holy Quran, Hadith and then they will be compared with modern science.

KEYWORDS: Food, Dietary, Nutrition, Halal, Haram

INTRODUCTION: Islam is a religion of nature which always keeps human nature and command or prohibit according to the nature and capacity of human. It does not command which is against human nature or beyond its power. In the same way, it does not forbid the things that human nature demands. The knowledge of Allah Almighty is perfect, while due to the limited and weak means by which man acquires knowledge, it cannot be definite and certain. Therefore there is always possibility of error in it. There are some commandments in the Holy Qur'an which are very clear while others need explanation to understand and implement them properly. This explanation has been left to the human intellect, but he is bound to interpret it in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah by using the brainpower and understanding gifted by Allah Almighty. The Holy Qur'an contains principles and doctrines which man could not achieve by the power of his intellect. However, the rules or conclusions that man could attain by the dint of his intellect are not mentioned. Islam wants the survival and protection of humanity in all circumstances. Therefore, its every command has the aspect of its protection. It being a last and final religion which provide complete guidance in every matter even in the matter of food and nourishment. The guidance given by Seerah-e-Tayyibah and medical science in the matter of food and nutrition can be divided into the following sub-headings.

1. Halal and Haram Islam provides guidance on whether food is halal or haram. It makes the things lawful that are beneficial for human and makes things unlawful which are harmful physically, morally, or intellectually for them. There are many verses in the Holy

Quran which clearly show the Halal and Haram. For example, it is said in Surah al Maida verse 88, "Eat of the things which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, in whom ye believe." (Ali, The Glorious Qurán: Translation and Commentary, 1975) Again it is said in Surah al Baqrah, verse 172 "O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him ye worship." (Ali, The Glorious Qurán: Translation and Commentary, 1975) Again it is said in Surah al Nahl verse 67 "And from the fruits of palm trees and grapevines you derive intoxicants as well as wholesome provision. Surely in this is a sign for those who understand." In Fatir verse 12 it is said, "The two bodies of water are not alike: one is fresh, palatable, and pleasant to drink and the other is salty and bitter. Yet from them both you eat tender seafood and extract ornaments to wear. And you see the ships making their way through both, so you may seek His bounty and pay thanks to Him." In these verses it is commanded to eat pure things, as they have effects on a person. It improves his morals, health and protect him from various diseases too.

2. Teachings about Nutrition:

i. **Use of pure things and sustenance** It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: O people, Allah is pure and accepts only the pure. Eat of the good things and do good. I am aware of what you do. He said: O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, then he mentioned a man who travels long distances with troubled hair and dusty body He stretches out his hands towards the sky and says: O Lord, O Lord! Although his food is haram and his wearing is haram and his clothes are haram and his food is haram, how can his supplication be accepted? (Hajjaj, Al-Jami 'al-Sahih)

ii. **Directive to eat after cooling the food:** Seerah-e- Tayyibah gives us various guidance regarding the state of food Hazrat Jabir narrated that prophet of Allah said, Cool hot food because hot food is not blessed." (Al-Nisaburi) According to Ibn Shahab, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade hot food." (Mahmoud Nassar and Sayyid Yusuf Ahmad, 1998) Hazrat Javairia narrated, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not like to eat food in hot condition until its steam evaporated." (Al-Harith) Kanz- al-Ummal the same concept is given in the following wordings, Kanz- al-Ummal (15/259), 40855 - The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade hot food until it cools down. " (Hussamuddin)

According to the above traditions, it is cleared that food should be eaten after cooling and when its vapors disappear.

3. Teachings regarding food preservation

i. **Ruling on covering food and beverages:** Islam instructs us to preserve food and water. It is narrated on the authority of Jabir that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "When you go to sleep at night, turn off the lights and close the doors and the mouth of the musk and cover the food and water." 'I think he also said that even if it is from a piece of wood.' (Bukhari M. i., Al-Jami 'al-Sahih) This tradition

shows that if food is to be used later, it should be protected so that it does not become contaminated and harmful to human health.

4. Measures to prevent food contamination

i. **Prohibition of urinating in stagnant water:** Islam directs for the conservancy of water too. For example, it is narrated from Jabir (R. Allah) that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade urinating in stagnant water. (Hajjaj, Al-Jami 'al-Sahih al Muslim) In order to make the stored water usable for humans and animals, it is taught not to urinate in it. It means that we should not add sewage to the reservoirs.

ii. **Prohibition of inhaling food and beverages:** Wafting in food is forbidden. Hazrat Abdullah bin Abi Qatadah narrated by Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the Holy Prophet did not breathe in food and drink. (Tabarani) It is narrated on the authority of Abu Qatadah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "When a person drinks water, he should not breathe in a vessel, and when he goes to the toilet, he should not touch the private parts with his right hand or perform istanja with his right hand". (Bukhari M. i., Al-Jami 'al-Sahih)

Breathing increases the risk of food contamination and can spread the diseases to many people if they share food.

iii. **Prohibition of waking up and touching a pot of water:** It is forbidden to put one's hand in water after waking up. It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (R. Allah) "When one of you wakes up from his sleep, he should not put his hand in a vessel until he has washed it three times, because he does not know where his hand stayed overnight". (Musnad Al-Humaidi)

This tradition shows that after waking up, one should not put one's hand in the water, but should take water in a pot and wash one's hands first so that the water is not contaminated.

5. Directives related to food utensils

i. **Ruling on covering food utensils:** According to Islamic teachings food utensils should be covered. It is narrated on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah (R. Allah) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Cover the vessels in the evening and close the mouths of the water vessels and close the doors and prevent your children from going out at Isha because at that time the jinn spread out and lose their hands. Turn off the lamp while sleeping, because the rat sometimes pulls out the (burning) lamp which makes the house burnt, and Ibn Juraj and Habib said, 'The words of **فان للشياطين** have been narrated". (Isma'il Bukhari) It can save the food from the risk of contamination. If it is not covered, it will affect badly human health as lizards, rats or insects can enter them.

ii. **Prohibition of eating and drinking in silver and gold vessels:** Instructions about food utensils are given. Hazrat Abdul Rahman bin Abi Laila (R. Allah) says that Hazrat Hudhaifah (R. Allah) asked for water and a fire worshipper brought water in a silver vessel. Hazrat Hudhaifah (R. Allah) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) says 'Thou shalt not wear a garland of gold, neither shalt thou eat in the silver and gold vessels, for these things are for the unbelievers in the world'. (Hajjaj, Al-Jami 'al-Sahih al

Muslim) Eating and drinking in gold and silver utensils is prohibited because it not only contaminates the food but also harms human health by adding gold and silver particles to the food.

6. Directives regarding the quantity of food

i. **Prohibition of overeating:** Overeating is prohibited. Hazrat Miqdam ibn Mu'adikarab (R. Allah) said, "The Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) said, "Man has not filled a vessel worse than his stomach. So, for the Son of Adam, a few bites are enough to straighten his back. If there is more food than that, he should make three portions of the stomach, one for food, another for water and a third for breathing". (Tirmidhi, Sunan Tirmidhi) Eating too much has harmful effects on human health. That's why overeating is forbidden.

7. Injunctions for multiple Meals

Rulings regarding two curries in one pot: It is forbidden to eat more than one curry together. It is narrated from Hazrat Anas (R. Allah) that a cup was offered to the Holy Prophet which contained some milk and some honey. So, he said, "I do not eat it in a cup contains two curries, nor do I consider it haram." (Al-Mustadrak on the Sahihin) This prohibition is because it poses a risk to human health.

8. Precautions before and after food

i. **Ruling on washing hands after eating:** It has been ordered to wash hands after eating. It is said by Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) said, "Whoever falls asleep with grease in his hands and then bitten by something off, he should only blame himself". (Tirmidhi, Sunan Tirmidhi) This indicates that there is a risk for health if hands are not washed.

ii. **Rinse after drinking milk:** Rinsing has been ordered after drinking milk. It is narrated on the authority of H. Abbas (R. Allah) that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) drank milk, then rinsed it and said, 'milk is lubricated'. (Bukhari M. i., Al-Jami 'al-Sahih Bukhari) It is narrated on the authority of H. Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Drink milk and rinse it because it is lubricated'. (Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah) Rinsing is instructed because milk contains lubricants that can be harmful to the mouth, teeth and stomach.

9. Method of consuming food

i. **Prohibition of drinking water while standing:** It is forbidden to drink water while standing. Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) said, "None of you should stand up and drink (water etc.) and whoever forgets to drink it should vomit it". (Muslim, Al-Jami 'al-Sahih Muslim) This prohibition is because it has harmful effects on the human body.

ii. **Drinking water in three breaths:** A man should drink water in three breaths. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Ibn Mahdi, Arwa ibn Thabit Ansari, Thamama ibn Hazrat Anas used to drink one (medium) vessel in three breaths and used to say that the Messenger of

Allah (May peace be upon him) used to breathe three times in one vessel. (Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah) If water is drunk in one breath, there is a risk of suffocation.

iii. **Prohibition of eating by leaning:** It is forbidden to eat while lying down. The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I do not eat leaning". (Bukhari M. i., Al-Jami 'al-Sahih Bukhari) It has harmful effects on the human body as food cannot be consumed properly.

iv. **Order to take off one's shoes and eat:** It has been ordered to take off shoes while eating. Hazrat Anas ibn Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) said, The Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "When food is placed in front of you (and you sit down to eat), take off your shoes, because taking off your shoes is very comfortable for your feet." (al-Darmi) This command has been given because eating food in this way soothes the feet which has good effects on human health.

v. **Prohibition of eating lying on one's stomach:** It is forbidden to eat lying on one's stomach. Salim narrates from his father Ibn Umar (R. Allah) that the Holy Prophet forbade him to eat two meals. On a table on which alcohol is being drunk, by eating lying on one's stomach. (Dawud, Sunan Abu Dawud) In this tradition, it is forbidden to eat lying on one's stomach because it not only puts a strain on the stomach but also does not digest the food properly.

10. Valuable nutrients

i. **Directive of use of honey:** The use of honey has been instructed. Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood (May Allah be pleased with him) says that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Make the two healing things mandatory on you, one is honey and the other is the Qur'an. (Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah) And Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) says that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Whoever licks honey in the morning three days in every month, he will not be in any great trouble. (Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah) The wisdom of using honey is that it cures diseases. It can be used to prevent and treat different diseases.

ii. **Vinegar is the best curry:** The use of vinegar has been instructed. H. Jabir (R.Allah) narrates from Hazrat Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he said that the best curry is vinegar. (Dawud, Sunan Abu Dawud) Vinegar is a cure for many diseases according to medical experts.

11. prohibited foods

Prohibition of alcohol: Alcohol is prohibited. Salem narrates from his father Ibn Umar (R.Allah) that the Holy Prophet forbade him to eat two meals. On a table on which alcohol is being drunk, by eating with the other face upside down. (Dawud, Sunan Abu Dawud) Use of alcohol is forbidden because it damages the intellect, and a person can harm others by using bad wordings and smashing their properties.

12. Effects of insects and animals on food

i. **Ruling about the water in which the dog puts its mouth:** It is forbidden to use water in which a dog puts its mouth. It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (R. Allah) that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: When a dog puts its mouth in one of your dishes, wash it and then wash it seven times. (Muslim, Al-Jami 'al-Sahih Muslim) It can transmit the virus to humans, so it has been instructed to wash thoroughly.

ii. **The order of the water in which the cat puts its mouth:** It is forbidden to use this water in the vessel in which the cat puts its mouth. It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (R. Allah) that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "If a dog puts its mouth in a vessel, that vessel should be washed seven times, the first or last time with clay, and if a cat puts its mouth in a vessel, it should be washed once. (Muhammad ibn Isa Tirmidhi) Utensils must be washed as its saliva can transmit viruses to water and can have certain harmful effects on human health.

13. Modern science and dietary health Science and technology, along with other aspects of human life, have changed the way we use food, its etiquette, and manners. At present, various companies are preparing a variety of foods by mixing compounds and chemicals for its preservation. They are being sold all over the world with beautiful packaging and trademarks. Inspired by their beauty, man is using it in droves, but he is totally unaware that such food is deprived of nutrition. It can only maintain the vitality of life. At the same time, due to the ignoring of the status of food as Halal or Haram and its carelessly usage falling people prey to various diseases. If food is used in accordance with the precautions prescribed by Islam, then food will not only give it life but also help in keeping the body healthy. Medical science proved that the use of hygiene and halal food is essential for the survival of the human body. A person, therefore, should be careful in eating and drinking and must avoid overeating. It is well known that overeating can cause indigestion and stomach and liver diseases. After eating, it is forbidden to use other foods until it is digested, as this process will cause indigestion and cause stomach and liver disease. It is clearly mentioned in Holy Quran which was revealed more than 1400 years ago. "And eat and drink but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (Mawdudi, 1998) According to Henry B. Lin, "Modern research shows that overeating develops hypertension, fatigue bowl and liver toxicity, heart attack and even cancer and in addition to obesity." (Lin, 2000) The Qur'an declared that some foods (foods and beverages) are halal, and some are haram. The reasons of declaring the food haram is widely accepted by medical science too. According to Biochemistry, the body of human is a compendium of complex chemical compounds which react with the food which is called metabolism. By this process when food is decomposed into molecules, it is termed as Catabolism reaction. When the food does not suit the human body, it will create xenobiotic compounds which endanger the balance of human body's chemical compounds. The food which creates xenobiotic compounds in human body are alcohol, poisons, drugs meat of

pigs, repulsive animals etc. The food also plays an integral part of making hormones and enzymes in human body. Consequently, the physical shape of the body and psychological and character of a person is determined. Those who very often consume wild animals, they became ferocious like the animals they consumed. (Yanis Musdja, 2018) Some other Medical Dietary Precautions can be concluded as; Islam does not allow to drink water in standing position without exceptional case. Allama Ibn al-Qayyim (May Allah have Mercy on him) highlights its dangers, "There are some difficulties in drinking water while standing. The first problem is that it does not completely relieve it. The second is that it does not allow the water to stay in the stomach for so long that the liver carries it to other organs. It comes quickly to the stomach, which threatens to cause the temperature to cool down and complicate it." (Nadvi, Etiquette of eating and drinking and their wisdom, n.d.) Islam also forbade to eat hot meal as it causes physical harms to the person. It burns the person's lock. Modern medical research has shown that it can also causes cancer in the upper organs of the digestive system. Due to its prevalence, throat cancer is one of the most common diseases in the world and about 500,000 died annually. According to medical scientists smoking and alcohol are the main causes of this cancer. The most affected area of this cancer is Gulistan region of northern Iran, although smoking and drug addiction is not common there, but tea is used plentifully. Research by Iranian doctors has shown that people who take hot tea between sixty-five and ninety-five degrees are twice as likely to develop cancer as those who take hot tea below sixty-five degrees. People who take 70 or more degrees of hot tea have eight-fold increased risk of developing cancer. Canner's disease is not related to the amount of tea but to its temperature. (Nadvi, Etiquette of eating and drinking and their wisdom, n.d.) Nowadays, it is often observed that many people use tissue paper after eating and go about their business without rinsing. This slight negligence creates many medical problems for them. Dr. Tim Taylor wrote, "A quick rinse with water in mouth will boost body's natural ability to clean itself after a meal. Rinsing with water protects enamel by removing food and sugar leftover, and about 30% of oral bacteria without the forces of brushing that, when combined with acid, can damage your enamel." He further said, "After eating anything, it's a good idea to quickly rinse out mouth with water. It is an easy and free way to instantly boost oral health. Rinsing with water is better for teeth than brushing them right after eating if one wishes to avoid damage to one's enamel." (Tim Taylor, 2017)

14. Conclusion: From the above discussion it is cleared that Islam is a complete code of life. It covers all aspects of life even it does not neglect the precautionary and post cautionary measurement of food. If these measures are taken, the food will be helpful for human body. The medical science also recommends these measures which further prove that Islam and science are related with each other.

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