

Exercising Peace Through Food: Dietary Guidelines in Islam

Monthly Taleem Focus Slides

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Health problems such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease plague the United States.

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009–2010



- More than 2 in 3 adults are either overweight or obese.
- More than 1 in 3 adults are obese.
- More than 1 in 20 adults are extremely obesity.
- About one-third of children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be overweight or obese.
- More than 1 in 6 children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be obese.

Obesity is killing three times as many as malnutrition (Salomon, et al *The Lancet* 380 9859, 2010)

Islam was not only a spiritual revolution, but also a culinary one

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا
مُتَرَكَبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ
مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“And it is He Who sends down water from the cloud; and We bring forth therewith every kind of growth; then We bring forth with that green foliage wherefrom We produce clustered grain. And from the date-palm, out of its sheaths, come forth bunches hanging low. And We produce therewith gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate — similar and dissimilar. Look at the fruit thereof when it bears fruit, and the ripening thereof. Surely, in this are Signs for a people who believe.” (6:100)

Holy Qur'an provides concrete & specific examples of foods that are good for human health

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۖ نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ

“And surely in the cattle too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from betwixt the feces and the blood, milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.” (16:67)

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ۚ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"Then eat of every kind of fruit, and follow the ways of thy Lord that have been made easy for thee. There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect." (16:70)

Continued . . .

وَهُزِّي إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسَاقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رُطْبًا جَنِيًّا

“And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will cause fresh ripe dates to fall upon thee” (19:26)

ج وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۖ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ ﴿٢٣٤﴾

“And mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years; this is for those who desire to complete the suckling” (2:234)

Allah enjoins us to eat food that is halal (lawful) and tayyab (wholesome and pure)

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ

“Forbidden to you is the flesh of an animal which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine; and that on which is invoked the name of one other than Allah; and that which has been strangled; and that beaten to death; and that killed by a fall; and that which has been gored to death; and that of which a wild animal has eaten, except that which you have properly slaughtered; and that which has been slaughtered at an altar.” (5:4)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

“O ye men! Eat of what is lawful and good in the earth; and follow not the footsteps of Satan, surely he is to you an open enemy” (2:169)

Continued . . .

- The influence of unlawful and unwholesome food tends to impairs man's moral faculties and impede his spiritual development
- The flesh of swine has been proved to be injurious, besides man's physical health, to his moral and spiritual health. Tape worms, scrofula, cancer, and encysted trichina are known to be more prevalent among pork-eating peoples. (Gamble, *Rev. sci. tech. Off. int. Epiz.* **16** 2, 1997)

Zabiha halal process strives to respect God, respect human beings, and respect animals

- The word "zabihah" is a specific Arabic word that literally means "slaughtered"
- The Companions asked the Holy Prophet^{sa}, "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "There is a reward for serving any living being."
- Respectful and humane
- Slaughterer should be a believer
- Esophagus or jugular vein should be cut
- Point the animals face towards Mecca
- Invoke God's name upon slaughter
- Drain out blood of animal, usually done by gravity
- Treat animal properly through the entire process, one animal does not see another animal being slaughtered or have a knife sharpened in front of it.

Fasting is not a new thing

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous (2:184)

- Fasting is the most ancient therapy of healing and purification
- See Taleem slides on Fasting

Studies find routine periodic fasting is good for your health, and your heart

- Calorie restriction (CR), defined as a reduction in energy intake without malnutrition, has been shown to increase life span, improve numerous functional indexes, and reduce metabolic risk factors for chronic disease in several mammalian species (Varady, et al *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* **86** 1, 2007)
- Fasting not only protects against immune system damage, but also induces immune system regeneration (Cheng, et al *Cell Stem Cell* **14** 6, 2014)

Holy Prophet relationship with food

- Whenever he ate, he never ate to fullness
- Ate very little, but his foods were simple and wholesome
- Sahl ibn Sa'ad relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} never even saw bread made out of fine flour throughout his life. The Holy Prophet^{sa} ate barley bread made of unsieved flour.
- The Prophet^{sa} is reported to have said, "A house without dates has no food."
- The Holy Prophet^{sa} warned us about the dangers and health hazards of overeating. He advised us to fill our stomach with 1/3 for food, 1/3 for drink, and 1/3 for air. He added, "A believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry."

Food and Piety

A hadith relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) eagerly ate gourd/squash pieces cooked in broth and said what a fine thing gourd was. However, there was a time when Hindu culture had influenced Muslims in many ways and one of which was that only those were considered pious who did not eat good food. On the contrary if they saw any holy person eating good food they would remark what sort of a holy person would do that! Likewise, once a Hindu resident of Qadian asked Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) that he had heard that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) ate palau (rice dish cooked with meat) and used almond oil. He went on to ask if it was warrantable to eat palau and use almond oil. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) told him it was warrantable in his faith (Islam). The man then said he meant if it was even alright for ascetics and holy people. He was told that yes, in Islam it was warrantable even for ascetics and holy persons. The man went quiet. Imagine the man came up with this great objection that how could one be the Promised Messiah if one ate palau and used almond oil! (Friday Sermon Sept. 18, 2015)

Eating is a daily reminder that only God is self-subsisting and self-sustaining

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى بَرَكَاتِهِ

In the name of Allah and with the blessings of Allah (I start eating)

- This is the prayer to recite before the meal
- The purpose of this is to stress two important points. Firstly, there is no one but God which is the “Provider” of bounties such as food. Secondly, there is no one but God who is the real source of blessings, who can bestow on us with more and more food producing a healthy effect on both our soul and our health

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

All praise belongs to Allah, who fed us and quenched our thirst and made us Muslims

- Prayer after the meal

One Dish Rule

Hadrat Musleh Maud^{ra}, set an excellent example by abiding by all the rules of Tehrike Jadid in his household. One of the rules required that everyone should have only one dish at every meal. One day at dinner, one of his wives did not like the dish and requested another one. So there were two dishes on the table. Hadrat Musleh Maud noticed this, and suddenly left without eating the food, because of the violation of that rule.

Promised Messiah's View

Moderation is key in the consumption of meats and vegetables. Experience also shows that different types of food affect the intellect and the mind in different ways. For instance, careful observation would disclose that people who refrain altogether from eating meat gradually suffer a decline of the faculty of bravery; they lose courage and thus suffer the loss of a divinely bestowed praiseworthy faculty. This is reinforced by the evidence of the divine law of nature that the herbivorous animals do not possess the same degree of courage as do carnivorous ones. The same applies to birds. Thus there is no doubt that morals are affected by food. Conversely those who are given to a diet consisting mainly of meat and eat very little of greens suffer a decline of meekness and humility. Those who adopt the middle course develop both types of moral qualities. 'Eat and drink but do not be immoderate (7:32).' That is to say, eat meat and other foods but do not eat anything to excess, lest your moral state be adversely affected and your health might suffer (The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, 1989).

Summary

- Modern diets and lifestyles are inefficient and unsustainable
- A Muslim is advised to avoid extremes and to choose a moderate course in his/her eating habits
- A combination of pure foods and eating is one vehicle to develop and reflect all of God's attributes
- The Holy Quran commands us "...and waste not by extravagance. Verily, [God does not like] those who waste by extravagance." (7:32)
- Reflect on your current dietary lifestyle and see if it is in agreement with the commandments of Allah

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Sign Up For Health Challenge in January



30 Day Health Challenge

- Pledge Online in December @ www.mkausa.org
- Challenge begins January 1st
- Top Prize: \$200 Gift Certificate: Based on total number of pledges submitted online by Local Majalis members.

Pledge Options

*Must pledge a minimum of 2

1. Soda and Sports Drinks (No High Fructose Corn Syrup)
2. Fast Food Restaurants
3. Fried Food
4. Packaged Snacks (Chips, cookies, cereal bars, etc...)
5. White Bread (Pizza, Bagels, Naan, Pretzels, etc...)