

## Healthy Nutrition in Quran, the Muslim Holy Book

Doralnajaf Peyravi<sup>1+</sup>, Masoome Moezzi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doralnajaf Peyravi - Responsible Author - Student of Ph.D. in Quran and Hadith Sciences at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

<sup>2</sup> Masoome Moezzi, Ph.D. - Assistant Professor of Department of Social Medicine - Medical Sciences University of Shahre Kord

**Abstract.** Quran is a book by the creator of human and includes the most complete health program for human beings. Therefore, human can obtain perfection and loftiness through reflecting on Quran and conforming their lives to it, as God stated, "Verily this Quran doth guide to that which is most right (stable).", (Bani Isra'il /9) "We send down stage by stage in the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe." (Bani Isra'il /7) So, reading this holy book, thinking and mediating on it, guide human in every field.

**Findings:** One of the key concepts in Quran is Quranic medicine that defines the course of human's health in three categories: medicine, health care and maintenance of health and wellbeing. "Invitation to healthy nutrition" is mentioned in Holy book repeatedly. The examples of invitation to healthy nutrition are paying attention and looking to foods which we use, eating pure and clean foods, introducing the foods which our body needs, introducing illegitimate and harmful foods according to the effect of healthy nutrition on the prevention of diseases, especially diseases that are not contagious.

**Methodology:** This study investigates the Quranic verses in terms of invitation to healthy nutrition in a library and analytic way.

**Keywords:** Quran, Health, Nutrition

### 1. Introduction

Quran is God's greatest gift to human beings and leads them to eternal prosperity. Repeatedly Quran recommends people mediate on its verses.

"Here is a book which we have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may mediate on its signs (Sad /29) Quran is not just limited to these notices, but also reprimands those who do not mediate on it.

"Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or are their hearts locked up by them?" (Muhammad /24). As a confirmation of His lofty concepts, He stated in other verses: instructing you in new knowledge" (Baqara/151). It means that Quran teaches you something that you do not know and hereby Quran asserts the human's ignorance and unawareness and revived the feeling of need to know in its addressees.[1] From the revelation of Quran until now, a lot of thinkers and interpreters make an effort to interpret and explain Quranic verses in order to understand this Book that calls human towards itself, and each of them tries to understand and make the others understand Quranic concepts according to their understanding. Generally, the center of all verses is God and all of the topics about the human and nature (the universe) are to lead human toward perfection and development, though He stated: "nor anything fresh or dry (green or whitered) but is inscribed in a record clear to those who can read." (An'am 59). But always it should be noted that all of the topics are planned toward divine training of human and obtaining perfection.

On this basis, Quran sciences can be classified as follow:

- Theoretical issues; what causes human thought to develop. This category divides into four parts:

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+ Corresponding author.  
Email adress: payravy@gmail.com

- Theism (traits and deeds of God) (A'raf/180) " the most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on him by them.
- Cosmology including the topics of the creation of world "Earth, heaven and stars", atmospheric phenomena "thunder and lightning, rain and wind, concatenation of day and night, movement and extinction of moon and sun"[12] It is he who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light of beauty and measures out stages for her; that ye might know the number of years and the count of time" (Yunus/5)
- Anthropological issues including creation of man, the features of soul, human dignity, various aspects of human existence, the divine traditions, final destination of human and Resurrection.
- The Way and the Guide including the topics of acquired and inner knowledge, prophecy, the necessity of being chosen as God's messenger and its goal, miracle and immaculateness, Quran and its features, general and specific guidance and etc.[15]
- Scientific issues including human topics and paying attention to the different needs of human beings in order to obtain perfection and the assurance of the health of body and soul through following the Quranic instructions which design a practical program for human life. [14] This category includes the following parts:
  - Praying programs including prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, sacrifice, praying, and prayer recitation. The fundamental base of these actions is the reinforcement of the relationship between God and human, and these actions consider many social interests. [2] "Nay, seek Allah's help with patient perseverance and prayer; (strengthen by resistance and controlling the internal whims and paying attention to God) it is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit" (Baqara/45)
  - Physical health and wellbeing: some of them are in the form of individual commandments including the topics of legitimate and illegitimate drink and food (food and drink - hunt and kill) then let man look at his food, (and how we provide it)
  - Ethics and mental health (including the topics of self-knowledge and self-training, purification of human, human dignity, degree of Allah institution, [11] the role of faith and practice and their effect on each other, paying attention to human's mental health through eliminating ethical rascality"[4]

## 2. Discussion

In the Holy book, Quranic medicine is divided into three categories of medicine, health care and maintenance of health and wellbeing.

The first category investigates some topics like the creation of man (from the formation of embryo and fetus and its development, coming of the baby into this world, the way of nursing and breastfeeding the baby) and paying special attention to the causes of human disease, self-knowing and the relationship between physical diseases and death and the Resurrection)[6]

The second category is about health care topics such as paying attention to diseases, preventing the diseases, health care and personal health such as food, paying attention to what we eat and drink and the environment hygiene.

The third category is about health issues such as paying attention to food, not wasting food, avoidance of eating harmful animal meat, alcohol etc. [17]

## 3. Methodology

In this study, we intend to mention some of the verses of Holy book and their explanation in terms of Quran invitation to healthy nutrition through library study and making use of available books. In addition, we try to analyze them and conform the current scientific findings to some of these verses. In medical concepts, the most important determinant of health is lifestyle. In addition, healthy nutrition is regarded as a fundamental base for the correction of lifestyle. Healthy nutrition is effective on the prevention of chronic diseases that are considered as the major cause of death.[7]

In Quranic medicine, one of the main aspects of interest in health care, health and wellbeing is nutrition and invitation to healthy nutrition.

#### 4. The Findings

The issue of nutrition is so important in Quran. In one of the verses of Quran, it is directly commanded that human pay attention and look to his food. "Man must look to his food" (Abasa/24) The word "look to" is repeated Four times in Quran. Two of them (Kahf /19 \* Abasa/24) are used for the food of human, one of them is used for the practice of human (Hajj, 15) and the other one (Tariq, 5) is used for how human is created. In Abasa, at first the exalted God ask human to pay attention to the ingredients of his nutrition and to find out which food has priority over the other one. However, some of the interpreters and sages define the concept of food beyond its material aspect and include the food of thought. This means that human must look to his food of thought and reflection just like the food of body. The food of body and soul or thoughts, cultures, religions and books [3]

Some of the interpreters presume that the superficial meaning of "look to" is intended here. In other words, a kind of "looking" that stimulates saliva glands, and so help the digestion of food. Some of them believe that the meaning of "looking to food" is that when a man sitting at the table, he must look at how he provides this food. Does he prove it legitimately or illegitimately? [16] Legally or illegally? Therefore, to consider the ethical and legitimate aspects Undoubtedly, the superficial meaning of the verse is about physical foods but also we can use food of the soul through the comparison of the priority, because human is composed of body and soul, as his body needs material food, also his soul needs spiritual food. [13] Quran expresses the way of choosing food according to its purity (cleanness) in eight verses (Mu-minun/51) (Anfal/26) (Maeda/88) (Baqara/57/172/267) (Ta-ha/81) (A'raf/160) "eat of the good things we have provided for you." [8]

O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good" (Baqara/168) God said to all people that (His saying is not for a particular religion but for all people): "Eat of what is on the earth and use it." But, He puts two conditions and human must consider (follow). At first, the food must be legitimate and not among foods which are not allowed). Second, the food must be clean and pure (not among the dirty and bad food). Considering (following) these two conditions ensures the health of nutrition. It should be noted that additives, even the legal ones, which are added to food because of its packaging and shelf life are not considered clean and pure due to its pathogenic effect and we must hesitate packing convenience .

(Baqara/172) " O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that we have provided for you."

God recommended believers eat the cleanest and purest blessings that we have provided you. [9] The exalted God recommended human eat and drink the cleanest and purest blessings moderately. Using the best blessings is emphasized in order to obtain a healthy and pleasant life. In the other hand, Quran warn people against immoderation. In addition, one of the instructions of Quran is having a diet appropriate to the needs of body. Eat and drink: but waste not by excess" (A'raf/31) (One of the major issues in nutrition is the issue of the nutritional requirements and classification of foods. During the past centuries, human considers food important in terms of both health and disease. But the findings of nutritional sciences were limited. In addition, from the beginning of 19th century, protein, fat and sugar were recognized as energetic food and vitamins were discovered in the beginning of 20th century. Today, protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamin, and minerals are considered as the food which human needs. [7]

Our Holy book also mentions the food which human needs. In these verses, food requirements of human are mentioned according to priority. In addition, this shows the greatness of Quran [10] for that we pour forth water in abundance, and we split the earth in fragments, and produce therein corn, and grapes and nutritious plants and olives and dates, and enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees, and fruits and fodder, for use and convenience to you and your cattle. (Abasa 25-34) This verse introduces the food that our body needs as following: At first, this verse introduces one of the important and fundamental blessings that it is water. Then herbal proteins (herbal seeds), sugary materials (grapes etc.), fat (olive etc.), vitamins and minerals (fruits and vegetables). Quran introduces meats as animal proteins "It is He who has made the sea subject that ye may eat thereof flesh that is fresh (Nahl/14).

Quran especially puts emphasis on the freshness of the meat, because in Quran Age, there were many stale meats and in our Age, there are many stale meats. Therefore, this shows the importance of this blessing and the importance of eating fresh meat. [16]

"lawful to you (for food in pilgrimage) are cattle" (Hajj/30). Therefore, eating fresh marine meat is recommended and the meats of farm animals like sheep, cow and camel are introduced as healthy food. In the following verse, milk is introduced and verily in cattle (too) will ye find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies between excretions and blood, we produce, for you drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it (Nahl/66) here, milk is introduced as the most refreshing drink after water. Quran describes honey in this way There issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for men (Nahl/69).

In addition to introducing honey as nutrition, the remedial and healing feature of honey is also mentioned. This valuable food has a great impact on diseases especially infectious diseases and it is useful for all kinds of disease. [18] Quran also introduces illegitimate and harmful food in the following verses "He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of Allah (Baqara/173). Quran explains this in surahs like Maeda 1&3 and An'am 145. The philosophy of these prohibitions is to prevent the losses and harms of eating the aforementioned foods such as pork meat and it seems that, in addition to its physical effects, it has also mental effects. But we still must expect new scientific findings. In addition, we find out the philosophy of these prohibitions as the science progresses. [19] Quran pays attention to the issues that medical sciences did not discover them before.

## 5. Conclusions

Paying attention to divine verses has a great impact on the correction of lifestyle and prevention of diseases. According to the relationship between healthy nutrition and prevention of chronic and infectious diseases and the role of dietary factors in cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer, God's instructions in terms of healthy nutrition is an invitation to the maintenance of health and wellbeing. The results of this study show the greatness of Qur'an. Thinking and reflecting on Quranic verses is a kind of guide for us in all aspects of life including health and wellbeing issues.

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