

Young Muslim Life Styles

Health is a gift from Allah

Islam considers health as a basic human right. “Your body has a right over you”, mentioned in one of the hadith (saying) of Prophet Muhammad. Health is a state of total physical, mental and social well-being in order to maintain the quality of life that we can enjoy at our best performance. A Muslim’s quest for good health is in conformity with his salvation in the life hereafter, as much as for the enjoyment of life in this world. For a Muslim, health consciousness is God consciousness. Quran is explicit in this matter and states:

O you who believe, be God conscious and let every soul look toward it send for the life hereafter, and observe your duty to God, so God is informed of what you do. Be not like those who forgot God and therefore He caused them to forget themselves. Such are the wrongdoers. (Chapter 63, verses 18-19).

We forget ourselves not only by forgetting the reality of the life hereafter, but also by forgetting our duties here, including responsibilities regarding our own bodies which have been given to us as a trust. We will be questioned if we do not keep the trust. Knowledge of health and disease is not just for physicians and those involved in health care, but for every one of us since we live in our own bodies and feel the pain when the body suffers.

Thus, we will be directly affected if we are not able to maintain the machine that we live in. If we clog up our arteries with excessive salt, sugar, fat and lack of exercise and develop diabetes and coronary artery disease or high blood pressure as a result, we cannot call this the will of God as it is not the will of God for us to do so. Good health is a gift from God, and illness sometimes is from our own actions. Quran says,

“Everything good that happens to you is from God. Everything bad that happens to you is from your own actions.” (Chapter 4, verse 79).

Quran is not a textbook of medicine but in it, there are guidelines that if practiced correctly will give the healing that it calls itself. God says in Quran, “We have sent down in the Quran that which is healing and a mercy to those who believe.” (Chapter 17, verse 82). In addition, Allah says, “O mankind! There has come unto to you a direction from your Lord and healing for the diseases in your hearts, -- and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy.” (Chapter 10, verse 57). Quran causes the healing not by kissing it or keeping it on a high shelf, but by following the guidance from it and avoiding what is prohibited and do what is good.

Eating Habits

Eating like all other acts of a Muslim is a matter of worship and begins in the name of Allah. Bismillah. Islam reminds Muslims that food and drink are the provision of Allah for survival and for maintaining good health. The following seven habits were recommended by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and are practiced by Muslims all over the world:



1) **Du'a'** (Supplication) **before** each meal:

"Bismillah wa 'ala barkatillah."

"In the name of Allah and with the blessings of Allah."

2) **Du'a'** (Supplication) **after** each meal: "Al hamdu lillahi ladhii at 'a mana wa saqana waja-alana minal muslemeen."

"Praise be to Allah the One Who gave us the food and the drinks. Praise be to Him Who made us Muslim."

3) **Eating less**: Overeating is discouraged and wasting of food is condemned.

4) **Dieting**: One of the main principals of good health is a balanced diet. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) emphasized the behavior of eating less as a method of preventing sickness and diseases. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is reported to have said: "Eat less you will be healthier." (Hadith)

"Nothing is worse than a person who fills his stomach. It should be enough for the son of Adam to have a few bites to satisfy his hunger. If he wishes more, it should be: one-third for his food, one-third for his liquids, and one-third for his breath." (Tarmizi, ibn Majah)

5) **Eating slowly**: Eating slowly is recommended for good health as it facilitates the food being thoroughly chewed and hence easier to digest.

6) **Moderation and sharing**: A Muslim is advised to avoid extremes and to choose a moderate course in all his affairs, including his eating habits. "Eat of the good things we have provided for your sustenance, but commit not excess therein." (Qur'an 20:81)

7) **Eating together**: The benefits of enjoying meals together applies whether it's a family sitting down together, a husband and wife dining out. The Prophet (pbuh) emphasized the importance of this when he said, "Eat together and not separately, for the blessing is associated with the company." (Ibn Majah)

Nutrition:

Allah loves His creations so much that He is concerned even with what we eat and put in our body. Our muscles, bones, lungs, liver, brain and secretions are made from the raw product we feed it. If we provide the factory with junk raw products, the factory will not produce tough bones, strong muscles, good pump (heart) and clean pipes (vessels).

"O mankind: Eat of what is lawful and good on earth" (Quran 2: 168).

What are the lawful animals?

The general rule in Islamic Law is that all animals are allowed to be used for food



except for those that are expressly forbidden in the Qur'an or the Prophet's traditions. Forbidden animals are as follows:

1. **Pigs:** Pigs, indeed any of their body parts and by-products, are considered 'filthy' in Islam and thus forbidden for human consumption. As the Qur'an states, *"Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maitah (the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allaah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allaah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns — and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal — unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone-altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision; (all) that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allaah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above mentioned meats), then surely, Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"* (Al-Maa'idah, 5:3)
2. **All meat eating animals,** whether they are large, such as lions and tigers, or small, such as cats and dogs are also included in this category.
3. **Carrion or dead animals,** the decaying flesh of dead animals is unhygienic and offensive to human taste.
4. **The Meat of Animals Slaughtered in Dedication to Other than Allah**
5. **All predatory birds,** such as falcons and eagles.
6. **Flowing blood,** blood carries organisms which are responsible for various diseases. It is therefore harmful to consume blood.

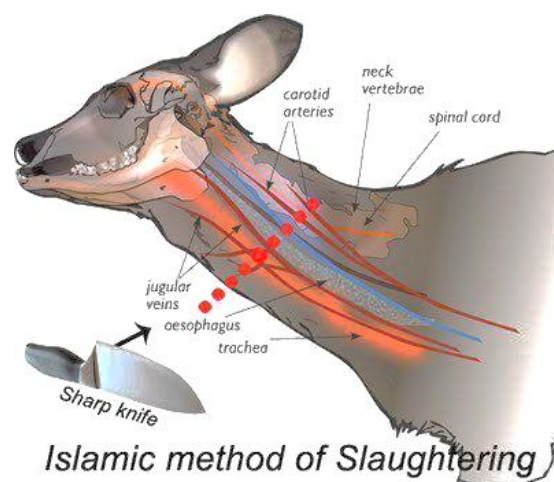
Islamic Slaughter

This means slaughtering animals in a manner which satisfies the conditions of slaughtering stipulated by Islamic law.

Conditions for slaughtering animals in Islam

Allah ﷻ has made the food of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) lawful for us as long as they observe the legal method of slaughtering animals.

1. The person undertaking the slaughtering process must be Muslim or a member of the People of the Book (that is, Jews or Christians). In addition, he must have reached the age of discretion and carries out this act for the intended purpose.
2. The tool used for slaughtering the animal must be suitable for the intended purpose and sharp, such as a knife. It is forbidden to use anything that may kill the animal due to its heavy weight, hit its head to death or shock it and render it unconscious by resorting to electric stunning, for instance.



3. The name of Allah must be pronounced by saying Bismillaah (in the name of Allah) at the time of slaughtering the animal.
4. The cut must sever at least three of the following: the trachea, the oesophagus and the two blood vessels on either side of the throat.

If these conditions are met, the meat of the slaughtered animal will be lawful; however, if one single condition is not met, its meat will not be lawful.

The State of Disease

Many of the common chronic illnesses (i.e. coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, peptic ulcer disease, obesity and depression) also have a common man-made etiology that is rich food, too much food, too much salt, too much sugar, smoking, stress and alcoholism.

If we give up excessive salt, sugar and cholesterol from our diet, and do not drink and smoke, and stay active, it is possible that the pump (the heart) won't be rusted from inside.

What should a Muslim do when disease is confirmed?

Accept it as a will of God as Kaffara for his sin, and ask him remove the affliction.



"And if God touches thee with affliction, none can remove it but He: if He touches thee with happiness He has power over all things." (Quran 6:17).

In summary, our healthy body is a gift from Allah. We are the trustees. We should not misuse it, nor provide wrong raw products for the factory and we should keep superb maintenance of this delicate and sensitive machine, in order to enjoy it. It is the container of our soul.

Think-up

Sacrificing animals the Islamic way rids animal of all the blood. Read up on other different ways of sacrificing animals and find out how the Islamic method of slaughtering is the best way.

Stretch Your Mind

In Islam, Muslim wine drinkers get punished, but not pork eaters. Why?

Study Questions

1. What are the main kinds of meat that Allah made unlawful to eat?

2. Why did Allah prohibit certain types of meats?

3. What dead animals that we are allowed to eat? Support your answer with evidence from the Qur'an or the Sunnah.

4. What do other religions say about pork? Support your answer with a quotation from their holy books.

5. Can a Muslim sell pork products and other haram food as long as he or she does not eat it? Support your answer with a hadeeth.
