

## A Thematic Analysis of Human Nutrition as Described in the Holy Qur'an

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### Abstract

The Qur'an is the basis of the Islamic belief system and is believed by Muslims to not only contain divinely inspired spiritual guidance, but also guidance on daily affairs including nutrition. This narrative study details the verses identified within the Qur'an that provide principles and advice regarding nutrition. Of the Qur'an's 6236 verses, 74 verses were identified to contain some reference to nutrition. A thematic analysis of these verses has been performed and categorised into four groups; principles of nutrition, permissible food, impermissible food and breast feeding.

### Introduction

The Qur'an is a script in Arabic language revealed to Muhammad (the Prophet of Islam) circ. 610 AD and is believed by Muslims to be the divinely inspired words of God (Allah). Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the immutable word of God, however, flexibility is given to the interpretation of the verses, and even encouraged.

The Qur'an contains 6236 verses in 114 chapters. Numerous verses are relevant to concept of health(1), guidance and principles of healthy lifestyle (2), nutritional concepts(3), description of various types of food and nutrition (4–7). Many verses of the Qur'an also describe multiple aspects of lifestyle in a single verse, however, in this study, author will focus only on the nutritional aspect of relevant verses.

According to the Muslim belief system, submission to the words of the Qur'an is the most essential part of getting guidance from the Qur'an as its stated in the verse 2:5. Allah has made the Qur'an easy to understand and in fact asks mankind to ponder on the verses of Qur'an, four times in chapter 54 verses 17,22,32 and 40, and twice

in verses 4:82 and 47:24, so human being may understand (verse 6:65), and consider and think about these verses (2:266, 6:50,2:219). Furthermore, the verses of Qur'an are constant and will never ever change as these are protected by Allah, according to verse 15:9.

The interpretation of the certain verses of Qur'an can sometimes vary according to certain schools of Muslim jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Rulings have therefore changed throughout the ages depending on the contemporary knowledge and the cultural era Muslim's reside in. Regardless, obeying the different rulings based on the guidance provided in the Qur'an is obligatory and is incentivized with either rewards or punishments in the afterlife. Secondary to the spiritual effects of obeying the rulings, Muslims believe that there are additional material effects and benefits of following the rulings and guidance which they might not even comprehend.

Nutrition has a vital role in the development of human growth and wellbeing. It has a significant role in prevention and treatment of certain acute and chronic health conditions, infections and cancers which can contribute to the "burden" of society(8). Various types of

food components like carbohydrates, fats and protein and a variable quantity of certain types of food consumed is

implicated in diseases of malnutrition and obesity.

#### Method:

The Qur'an is a significant religious text written in classical Arabic. The original Arabic and multiple English translations of Qur'an (9) including translations by Mufti TaqiUsmani, Muhsin Khan, Sahih International, Sayyid Abdul Ala Maududi and Yusuf Ali were reviewed to identify key phrases, terms and messages related to the promotion of health and guidance pertaining to food and nutrition. Many verses were identified using cross references of relevant verses. The English translations of all relevant verses were analysed qualitatively for thematic content and tabulated by topic and citation. Verses were then categorised into four groups; principles of nutrition, permissible food, impermissible food and breastfeeding.

#### Results:

Of the Qur'an's 6,236 verse, a total of 74 relevant verses were categorised by chapter name (Surah) and location (Table 1) and categorised by group (Table 2). "Principles of nutrition" (Group 1) included 30 verses. This was further subcategorised into "God (Allah) as the sustainer" (Group 1a = 17 verses), "Permissible and impermissible foods" (Group 1b = 10 verses) and "Avoiding excess food" (Group 1c = 3 verses). "Permissible food" (Group 2) included 31 verses. This was further subcategorised into "Vegetarian food" (Group 2a = 19 verses) and "Non-vegetarian food" (Group 2b = 12 verses). "Impermissible food" (Group 3) included 11 verses. "Breastfeeding and lactation" (Group 4) included 5 verses. Three verses (20:81, 6:141 and 6:118) have been included in more than one group as these verses cover multiple categories.

**Table 1: Verses categorised by chapter name (Surah) and location within the chapter**

Chapter (Surah) No.	Name of Chapter (Surah)	Verse numbers	Total number of verses in each Chapter (Surah)
2	Al-Baqarah( The Cow)	168,57,172,233,173,219,183, 184,187,	9
23	Al-Muminun (The Believers)	51, 18,19,20,21	5
5	Al-Maidah( The Table Spread)	88,87,96,4,3,90,91,	7
7	Al -Araf (The Height)	160,31,157	3
20	Taha (Taha)	81,53, 54	3
6	Al-Anam( The Cattle)	95,118,141, 99,142,145,119	7

36	Ya-sin (YASIN))	33,	1
16	Al-Nahl(( The BEE)	114,5,10,11,14,66,67,69,115,	9
50	Qaf( The Letter “QAF”)	11,10,	2
19	Maryam( Mary)	25	1
80	Abasa( He Frowned)	24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,	9
35	Fatir (Orginator)	12	1
13	Ar-Rad( The Thunder)	4,	1
55	Al-Rahman ( TheBenefcent)	11,12,	2
21	Al-Anbya( The Prophets)	30	1
56	Al-Waqi ah (The Inevitable)	68	1
24	Al-Nur ( The Light)	45	1
25	Al-Fuqan (The Criterion)	54	1
31	Luqman (Luqman)	14	1
46	Al-Ahqaf (The Wind-curved sandhill)	15	1
28	Al-Qasas (The Stories)	7,12	2
18	Al-Kahf( The Cave )	45	1
22	Al-Haj	28,30,36,63	3

**Table 2: Verses of Qur'an in groups for cross references**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Verses</b>
<b>Group 1: Principles of Nutrition</b>	
<b>Group 1a: Concept of Allah as a sustainer</b>	<p>“Surely, Allah is the one who splits the grain and the date-stone (for sprouting). He brings forth the living from the dead, and He is the One who brings forth the dead from the living. That is Allah! To where, then, are you being turned away (by your desires)?”</p> <p>6:95 Al-Anam (The Cattle)</p>
	<p>“And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave it life and brought forth grain from it; so, from it they eat.”</p> <p>36:33 Ya-sin (Yasin)</p>
	<p>“as a provision to the servants (of Allah). And We gave life with it to a dead land. Similar will be the exit (of the dead from their graves).”</p> <p>50:11 Qaf (The Letter “Qaf”)</p>
	<p>“He is the One who sent down water from the heavens, of which you have your drink; and with it (you grow) plants on which you pasture your cattle.” 16:10 Al-Nahl (The Bee)</p>
	<p>“And We sent forth winds carrying the clouds, then sent down water from the sky and gave it to you to drink, and you are not able to store it.”</p> <p>15:21 Al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract)</p>
	<p>“So, the man should consider his food.”</p> <p>80:24 Abasa (He Frowned)</p>
	<p>“then how nicely We split the earth”</p> <p>80:26 Abasa (He Frowned)</p>
	<p>“And He is the One who created man from water, then made of him relations created by lineage and relations created by marriage. Your Lord is All-Powerful.”</p> <p>25:54 Al-Furqan (The Criterion)</p>
	<p>“Did the disbelievers not observe that the heavens and the earth were closed, then We opened them? And We created from water every living thing. Would they still not believe?”</p> <p>21:30 Al-Anbya (The Prophets)</p>

	<p>“Again, tell Me about the water you drink:” 56:68 Al-Waqi'ah (The Inevitable)</p> <p>“Allah has created every moving creature from water. So, some of them move on their bellies; and some of them move on two legs, and some of them move on four. Allah creates what He wills. Surely, Allah is powerful over everything” 24:45 Al-Nur (The Light)</p> <p>“(He is) the One who made the earth a cradle for you, and made in it pathways for you to move, and sent down water from the heavens; and We brought forth with it pairs of different vegetations” 20:53 Taha (Taha)</p> <p>“Eat [therefrom] and pasture your livestock. Indeed, in that are signs for those of intelligence.” 20:54 Taha (Taha)</p> <p>“Give them the example of the worldly life; it is like water We sent down from the sky, then the vegetation of the earth was mingled with it, and then it turned into chaff that is blown by the winds, and Allah is powerful over everything.” 18:45 Al-Kahf (The Cave)</p> <p>“Did you not see that Allah has sent down water from the sky, whereby the land becomes green? Surely, Allah is All-Kind, All-Aware.” 22:63 Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)</p>
<p><b>Group 1b:</b> <b>Concept and philosophy of Permissible (Halal) and Impermissible (Haram) food</b></p>	<p>“O people, eat permissible good things out of what lies in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of ShaiTān (Satan); indeed, he is an open enemy for you.” 2:168 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)</p> <p>“O messengers, eat from the good things, and act righteously. Of whatever you do, I am fully aware” 23:51 Al-Mu'minun (The Believers)</p> <p>“Eat from what Allah has provided you as good and lawful, and fear Allah in whom you believe.” 5:88 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)</p> <p>“And We made the cloud give you shade, and sent down to you Mann and Salwā: “Eat of the good things We have provided to you”. And they (by their ingratitude) did Us no harm but were harming only themselves.” 2:57 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)</p>

	<p>“And We divided them into twelve tribes, as separate communities, and We revealed to Mūsā when his people asked him for water, “Strike the rock with your staff.” Then twelve springs gushed forth from it. Each tribe came to know their drinking place. We shaded them with the shadow of the clouds. And We sent down to them Mann and Salwā (saying), “Eat of the good things we have provided you.” And they did us no harm, rather they have been harming their own selves.”</p> <p>7:160 Al-A’raf (The Height)</p>
	<p>“So, eat (the flesh) of that (animal) upon which the name of Allah has been invoked (when slaughtering), if you do believe in His verses.”</p> <p>6:118 Al-Anam (The Cattle)</p>
	<p>“O you who believe, do not hold as unlawful the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Verily, Allah does not like the transgressors.”</p> <p>5:87 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)</p>
	<p>“O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided to you and be grateful to Allah, if it is He whom you worship (in real terms).”</p> <p>2:172 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)</p>
	<p>“So, eat the permissible and pure things from what Allah has provided you, and be grateful for the bounty of Allah, if you worship Him alone.”</p> <p>16:114 Al-Nahl (The Bee)</p>
	<p>“those who follow the Messenger, the Ummiyy (unlettered) prophet whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Injīl , and who bids them what is fair and forbids what is unfair, and makes lawful for them good things, and makes unlawful for them impure things, and relieves them of their burden, and of the shackles that were upon them. So, those who believe in him and support him, and help him and follow the light sent down with him, - those are the ones who are successful.”</p> <p>7:157 Al-A’raf (The Height)</p>
<p><b>Group 1c: Avoidance of Excess food</b></p>	<p>“Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every time of Prayer, and eat and drink without going to excesses. For Allah does not like those who go to excess.”</p> <p>7:31 Al -A’raf (The Height)</p>
	<p>“Eat from the good things We have provided to you, and do not exceed the limits in it, lest My wrath should descend on you. The one upon whom My wrath descends certainly falls into destruction.”</p> <p>20:81 Taha (Taha)</p>
	<p>“He is the One who has created gardens, trellised and untrellised, and date-palms and crops with a variety of edibles, and the olive and the pomegranate, (some) similar to one another, and (some) dissimilar. Eat of its fruit when it bears fruits, and pay its due on the day of harvest, and do not be extravagant. Surely, Allah does not like the</p>

extravagant.”

6:141: Al-Anam (The Cattle)

## Group 2: Permissible food

### Group 2a: Vegetarian food

He is the One who has created gardens, trellised and untrellised, and date-palms and crops with a variety of edibles, and the olive and the pomegranate, (some) similar to one another, and (some) dissimilar. Eat of its fruit when it bears fruits, and pay its due on the day of harvest, and do not be extravagant. Surely, Allah does not like the extravagant.

6:141 Al-Anam (The Cattle)

And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave it life and brought forth grain from it; so from it they eat.

36:33 Ya-sin (Yasin)

“He causes the crops therewith to grow for you, and olives, and date palms, and grape vines, and all the fruits. Surely, in that, there is a sign for a people who ponder.”

16:11 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

“And from the fruits of date palms and grape vines, you obtain intoxicants, and good provision. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who understand.”

16:67 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

“Shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards yourself and, it will drop upon you ripe fresh dates.”

19:25 Maryam (Mary)

“then We grew in it grain”

80:27 Abasa (He Frowned)

“and grapes and greens”

80:28 Abasa (He Frowned)

“and olive and date-palms”

80:29 Abasa (He Frowned)

“and gardens, full of thick trees”

80:30 Abasa (He Frowned)

“and fruits and fodder”

80:31 Abasa (He Frowned)

	<p>“ Then, eat from all the fruits, and go along the pathways of your Lord made easy for you.” From their bellies comes out a drink of various colors in which there is cure for people. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who ponder.”</p> <p>16:69 Al-Nahl (The Bee)</p>
	<p>"He is the One who sent down water from the heavens. Then We brought forth with it vegetation of all kinds. Then from it We brought grains set upon one another. From the palm-trees, from their spathes, come forth the low hanging bunches. (We produce) vineyards and the olive and the pomegranate, either similar or not similar to each other. Look at its fruit when it bears fruit, and at its ripening. Surely, in all this there are signs for the people who believe.”</p> <p>6:99 Al-Anam (The Cattle)</p>
	<p>“And in the earth there are tracts of land neighbouring each other, and gardens of grapes, and farms and date palms, some having twin trunks and some having a single one. (Although) all of them are irrigated with the same water, We make some of them better than others in taste. Surely, in that there are signs for a people who understand.”</p> <p>13:4 Ar-Rad (The Thunder)</p>
	<p>“in which there are fruits and date palms having sheaths,”</p> <p>55:11 Al-Rahman (The Beneficent)</p>
	<p>“and the grain having chaff, and fragrant flowers”</p> <p>55:12 Al-Rahman (The Beneficent)</p>
	<p>“And lofty palm trees having fruit arranged in layers”</p> <p>50:10 Qaf (The Letter “Qaf”)</p>
	<p>“Then We produced with it gardens of date-palms and vines for your benefit. For you there are many fruits in them, and of them you eat.”</p> <p>23:19: Al-Mu’minun</p>
	<p>“and (We produced) a tree (of olive) that comes forth from the (mount) Tūr of Sinai, which grows with oil and with a dressing for those who eat.” 23:20: Al-Mu’minun</p>
<p><b>Group 2: b: Non-Vegetarian Food: / Sea food</b></p>	<p>‘Made lawful for you is the game of the sea and eating thereof, as a benefit for you and for travellers. But the game of the land has been made unlawful for you as long as you are in the state of IHRām. Fear Allah (the One) towards Whom you are to be brought together.’</p> <p>5:96 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)</p>



“ He is the One who has subjugated the sea, so that you may eat fresh meat from it, and may take out from it ornaments you wear, and you see the boats cleaving through it, and so that you may seek His bounty, and that you may be grateful”

16:14 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

“He has created cattle in which there is warmth and other benefits for you; and from them you have food;”

16:5 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

“The two masses of water are not alike. The one is sweet, sates thirst, and is pleasant to drink from, while the other is salt, bitter on the tongue. Yet from both you eat fresh meat, and extract from it ornaments that you wear; and you see ships cruising through it that you may seek of His Bounty and be thankful to Him.”

35:12 Fatir (Originator)

“Surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle. We provide you, out of what lies in their bellies between faeces and blood, the (drink of) milk, pure and pleasant for those who drink”

16:66 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

“as a benefit for you and your cattle.”

80:32 Abasa (He Frowned)

“Among cattle (He has created) those fit for loading and those fit for laying on the floor. Eat of what Allah has provided you, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is an open enemy to you”

6:142 Al-Anam (The Cattle)

“They ask you as to what has been made lawful for them. Say, “Made lawful for you are good things, and (hunting through) birds and beasts of prey that you train, teaching them out of what Allah has taught you. So, eat of what they hold for you, and recite the name of Allah upon it.” Fear Allah. Surely, Allah is swift at reckoning.”

5:4 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)

“so that they witness benefits for them, and recite Allah’s name in specified days, over the provision He gave them from the cattle. “So, eat thereof and feed the distressed, the poor.”

22:28 Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)

“Having said that, whoever observes reverence of the things sanctified by Allah, it is good for him with his Lord. And permitted to you are the cattle, except those mentioned to you through recitation (of the verses). So refrain from the filth of the idols and refrain from a word of falsehood,”

22:30 Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)

“The big animals of sacrifice (like camels and cows) are made by Us among the symbols of Allah for you, in which there is much good for your benefit. So recite the name of Allah over them as they are lined up (for sacrifice). Then, once their flanks fall down (after slaughter), eat of them and feed the one who is content and the one who wishes to receive. Thus We have made them (the animals) subjugated to you, so that you may be grateful.”

22:36 Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)

And indeed there is a sure lesson in the cattle for you. We give you a drink from that which lies in their bellies, and for you there are many benefits in them, and of them you eat,”

23:21 Al-Mu'minun

### Group 3: Impermissible food

“What should cause you to avoid eating of that upon which the name of Allah has been invoked, while He has spelled out to you all that He has made unlawful for you, except that to which you are compelled by extreme necessity? Surely, there are many who misguide people on the basis of their desires without having knowledge. Surely, your Lord is the best knower of those who cross the limits.”

6:119 Al-Anam (The Cattle)

“Prohibited for you are: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and those upon which (a name) other than that of Allah has been invoked (at the time of slaughter) , animal killed by strangulation, or killed by a blow, or by a fall, or by goring, or that which is eaten by a beast unless you have properly slaughtered it; and that which has been slaughtered before the idols, and that you determine shares through the arrows. (All of) this is sin. Today those who disbelieve have lost all hope of (damaging) your faith. So, do not fear them, and fear Me. Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as Dīn (religion and a way of life) for you. But whoever is compelled by extreme hunger, having no inclination towards sin, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful”

5:3 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)

“He has only prohibited for you carrion, blood, the flesh of swine and that upon which a name of someone other than ‘Allah’ has been invoked. Then, whoever is compelled by necessity, neither seeking pleasure nor transgressing, there is no sin on him. Verily, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.”

2:173 Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 16:115 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

Say, "I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, anything (out of the cattle under discussion) prohibited for anyone who eats it, unless it be carrion or blood that pours forth, or flesh of swine - because it is impure - or there be an animal slaughtered sinfully by invoking on it the name of someone other than Allah. However, if anyone is compelled by necessity, neither seeking pleasure nor crossing the limit, then your Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful."

6:145 Al-Anam (The Cattle)

"O you who believe! Wine, gambling, altars and divining arrows are filth, made up by Satan. Therefore, refrain from it, so that you may be successful."

5:90 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)

"Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So, will you not desist?"

5:91 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)

"They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit." And they ask you what they should spend. Say, "The excess [beyond needs]." Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses [of revelation] that you might give thought."

2:219 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

"O you who believe, the fasts have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be God-fearing. [Fasting for] a limited number of days."

2:183-184 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

"eat and drink until the white thread of the dawn becomes distinct from the black thread; then complete the fast up to the night"

2:187 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

## Group 4: Breast Feeding

"Mothers (should) suckle their children for two full years, for one who wants to complete the (period of) suckling. It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs that he provides food and clothing for them (the mothers) with fairness. Nobody is obligated beyond his capacity. No mother shall be made to suffer on account of her child, nor the man to whom the child belongs, on account of his child. Likewise, responsibility (of suckling) lies on the (one who may become an) heir (of the child). Now, if they want to wean, with mutual consent and consultation, there is no sin on them. And If you want to get your children suckled (by a wet-nurse), there is no sin on you when you pay off what you are to give with fairness, and fear Allah, and be assured that Allah is watchful of what you do"

2:233 Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

	<p>“And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents. His mother carried him with difficulty and delivered him with difficulty. And his carrying and his weaning is (in) thirty months, until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years, he says, “My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favour You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And set righteousness, for my sake, in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You.”</p> <p>46:15 Al-Ahqaf (The Wind-curved Sandhill)</p>
	<p>“We commanded man (to be good) in respect of his parents. His mother carried him (in her womb) despite weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. (We said to man,) “Be grateful to Me, and to your parents. To Me is the ultimate return.”</p> <p>31:14 Luqman (Luqman)</p>
	<p>“We inspired the mother of Mūsā saying, “Suckle him (Mūsā). Then once you fear about him, cast him in the river, and do not fear, and do not grieve. Surely We are going to bring him back to you and appoint him one of (Our) messengers.”</p> <p>28:7 Al-Qasas (The Stories)</p>
	<p>“And We had already barred him (Mūsā) from (accepting) any suckling women, so she (his sister) said (to Pharaoh’s people), “Shall I point out to you a family who will nurse him for you, and they will be his well-wishers?”</p> <p>28:12 Al-Qasas (The Stories)</p>

**Discussion:**

Muslims believe that the Qur’an is a divinely inspired text that describes not only spiritual advice but also advice on daily affairs including nutrition. Revealed in classical Arabic, a word in the Qur’an may have multiple different meanings and connotations depending on the context within the verse, which sometimes makes translation problematic and controversial. Certain words in English language do not represent the exact meaning of Arabic word for example the word “*tayyub*”. Whilst multiple translations were reviewed as described in the methods, a single translation provided by Mufti TaqiUsmani has been cited for simplicity and consistency (10).

In this study, 74 relevant verses were identified which are related to nutrition within the Qur’an. There are limited studies on the nutritional concepts described in the Quran. Therefore, it’s difficult to compare. Some authors in another study have identified 257 verses using databases in Persian language. They have used 64 key

words and have identified more than 30 food principal food stuffs. They have found that some of these keywords like cattle, poultry, vegetables and fruit were repeated more than 20 times (3).

Other studies which purely looked at fruits and plants mentioned in the Qur’an have identified names of 18 fruits and plants. in the Qur’an(11). Another study has provided botanical characteristics of the 22 identifiable fruits and plants which are described in the Qur’an (7) .

Out of 74 identified verses in this study, nutrition is often described in the context of God (Allah) as the creator, provider and sustainer. The Qur’an states that living beings are created from water (21:30 and 24:45) and states that God (Allah) has sent down the water from the sky for humans to drink (16:10, 56:68, 15:21, 20:53,) and for the earth to produce various types of food (36:33, 16:10, 6:99,18:45, 22:63,23:18) and has described water as an essential component of diet to maintain life and nutrition (56:68). Specific examples cited include grains,

fruits, vegetables nutritional plants  
(6:95,36:33,16:10,6:141, 16:11, 16:67,  
16:11,80:27,80:28, 80:29, 80:30, 80:31,6:99, 13:4,  
55:11,55:12, 50:11,23:19, 23:20) which in turn provide  
nutrition for human and cattle which are also consumed  
by humans (16:5,16:66, 80:23,6:142, 20:53, 20:54, 22:28,  
22:30, 22:36, 23:21).

The concept of food being “*tayyub*” has been described in 8 verses (2:168, 23:51,5:88, 2:57, 16:114, 7:160 2:172, 20:81,) and is translated with connotations of “pure”, “good” and “clean” and is described as the food that is to be recommended and preferred to be consumed. To satisfy the condition of “*tayyub*”, the Qur’an applies two conditions; the food must be permissible (Group 2) and not among food which is impermissible (Group 3).

Clear examples of food that are classified as permissible for human consumption include meat of cattle, fish, milk, grains, plants, fruits and vegetables. Further specific examples have been provided for certain foods including grains, dates, grapes, pomegranate, olives and honey. The Qur’an states that one should not hold as unlawful what God (Allah) has made lawful (5:87). The Qur’an allows for the consumption of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. However, there are certain types of food like the flesh of swine, carrion, blood, that upon which a name of someone other than ‘Allah’ has been invoked and substances which causes intoxication like alcohol that are explicitly declared impermissible (Group 3).

To clarify the interpretation of verses of the Qur’an and to derive rulings (fiqh), Muslims turn to the practice and teachings of Muhammad, codified and classified through a system of “hadith”. Global rulings about the guidance about permissible and impermissible food is obtained through interpretation of both the Qur’an and the Hadith to develop a consensus amongst the Muslim jurists (ijma). According to one such hadith, it has been reported that “Both legal and illegal things are evident but in between them there are doubtful (suspicious) things and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So, whoever saves himself from these suspicious things saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these suspicious things is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the Hima (private pasture) of someone else and at any moment he is liable to get in it.”(12).

Three verses describe the word “*al-khmar*”, that is described for the substances causing more harm than good (2:219), “an act of evil” (5:91) and as impermissible (5:90). Whilst often referring to fermented drinks containing alcohol, its interpretation as

“intoxication” is extrapolated to include multiple other non-alcoholic intoxicating substances (5:91). Certain stipulations have been declared where impermissible foods become permissible. In a matter of life and death, the Qur’an provides allowance for an impermissible food to become permissible, in an amount that is required to preserve life (6:119,2:173). In the state of fasting, which is mandated in the month of Ramadan for most healthy adult Muslims (2:183, 2:184), the permissible food becomes impermissible (2:187).

With regards to the excess of food consumption, the Qur’an states to eat and drink what is permissible but to not exceed the limits (20:81). Further verses expand on this where God (Allah) is displeased with those who go to excess and transgress even for the permissible foods and drinks (6:141, 7:31,20:81). Eight verses describe breast feeding and nursing mother (Group 4). The Qur’an encourages mothers to suckle their children for two years (2:233, 31:14) or up to thirty months (41:15).

### Conclusion:

This review provides a basis for further research. The critical analysis of the on-going and up-to-date medical literature about the nutrition would provide further understanding of the guidance about the human nutrition provided in the Qur’an.

### Limitations:

This is a narrative analysis of the verses of Quran. The author reviewed the two formats of the Quran, which were read in Arabic and the translation in English. All efforts were made to identify as many verses possible where nutrition related subject has been mentioned. Therefore, there is potential that some verses might not have been picked up. The sources of data were from the English translation of the original Quran which is in Arabic. Therefore, the relevant citations might have been misinterpreted through semantics and syntax in the translation of chapters and verses.

### Disclosures and declarations:

The author is a medical doctor and practising Muslim. There was no financial support or funding obtained. The work is purely author’s personal interest and understanding of the literature. The readers would be advised to use this as an academic material for understanding of the subject and as a base for further research.

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