

# Developing the Halal Nutrition Model

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## ABSTRACT

Protecting the future population and the people's welfare, as mentioned in the "Maqasid Shariah" or the aims of Islamic Law, is very important in view of the increasing negative behaviours existing in today's societies at large. This research is aimed at studying on halal food consumed by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating practices which will impact any person's health. Some foods mentioned in the Quran and Hadith were studied to associate the relationship of halal food and health. The method used is reviewing journals, the Qur'an and Hadith and conduct cross referencing. It is concluded that the Halal Nutrition Model is in line with the Malaysian Healthy Plate whereby it is actually suitable and befitting the halal nutrition but the whole model has to be without the haram elements which are blood, pork, carrion and liquor to provide proper nutrition guidelines for quality and better consumption of halal food for the future population.

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## 1. Introduction

The protection of life is one of the elements of "Maqasid Shariah" (Primary objectives of Islamic Law), which should be given emphasis in view of the increasing worry on public health and negative behaviours existing in societies at large. Records from the World Health Organization showed that of the 56.4 million deaths worldwide in 2015, more than half (54%) were due to the top 10 causes. Ischaemic heart disease and stroke are the world's biggest killers, accounting for a combined of 15 million deaths in 2015. These diseases have remained the main causes of death globally in the last 15 years (WHO, 2017).

The lives of every Muslims, including their dietary requirements are guided by the Shariah Law or Islamic Law. In Islam, the only guidance for halal nutrition is the Qur'an and Sunnah, which is manifested through the food of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating practices, which will impact any individual's health. Young children, pregnant mothers, teenagers and adults should be educated on eating halal food in moderation, in ensuring the future generation of healthy and good individuals. All foods are accepted as halal except those mentioned in the Quran as follows:

"Forbidden to you (as food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than God. That which hath been killed by strangling, or by violent blow, or by headlong fall, or being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows; that is impiety." The Quran (5:3)

The word Halal is an Arabic word that means permitted, allowed, lawful or legal. Halal may be defined as an act, object or conduct over which a Muslim has freedom of choice and its exercise does not carry either a reward or a punishment.” (Miskam, S. et al. 2015).

Halal diet usually refers to food that is allowed to be consumed by Muslims, as outlined in the Islamic law. In perspective, every aspect of a Muslim’s life including his dietary requirements is regulated by the Islamic law, which is based on the Quran, Hadith, Ijma and Qiyas’. Basically, the basic principle of a Muslim diet is the food should be halal (permissible) and Tayyiban (wholesome) as clearly stated in the Quran, 2:168.

**“O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Halal and tayyiban; and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is to you an avowed enemy.”**

In this context, halal means that the food complies to shariah requirements and tayyiban means the food is of good quality, safe, clean, nutritious and authentic. Halal and Tayyiban themselves, portray the symbol of integrity in line with best international hygiene practices. Clearly, Halal food is for everyone in the world, required by all Muslims but it has no problems with non-Muslims, so Halal food can also be considered as universal food, which is excellent news for any food producers to supply their Halal food products to over 7 billion people in this world. For Muslims, eating Halal and tayyiban food is an obligation. They should therefore make sure that the food is not only Halal, meaning does not contain any haram or najis components, but it should also be tayyiban or wholesome (Qur’an 2:168).

The Malaysian Halal standard, MS1500:2019 entitled the “Malaysian Standard on Halal Food – General Requirements (Third Revision)” defines halal food as food and drink and/or their ingredients permitted under the Shariah law and it does not comprise of any parts or products of animals that are non-*Halal* by Shariah law or any parts or products of animals which are not slaughtered according to Shariah law, it does not contain any *Najs* according to Shariah law, it is safe for consumption, non-poisonous, non-intoxicating or non-hazardous to health, not produced using equipment contaminated with *Najs* according to Shariah law, does not contain any human parts or its derivatives that are not permitted by Shariah law, and during its preparation, processing, handling, packaging, storage and distribution, the food must meet the above requirements or is physically separated from any other food and any other things that have been declared as *Najs* by Shariah law (MS1500:2019).

*Najs* is defined as dogs and swines and their descendants, halal food that is contaminated with things that are not Halal, any liquid and objects discharged from the openings of human beings or animals such as urine, vomit, pus, placenta and excrement, dead meat or Halal animals that are not slaughtered according to Shariah law, and khamr and food or drink which contain or mixed with khamr.

The study was conducted due to current global issues on over nutrition whereby many people are deemed to consume the western diet which are protein, carbohydrate and fat rich (Ayton, A. et al 2020). The need to look for a better nutrition model is imperative as it will be a model to follow by the public as a guideline.

Bearing in mind about the rising trend on obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular diseases throughout the world, there is a need now to study the food eaten by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating practices which reflect the best mode to eat and drink daily. The halal food should be a part of our everyday lives. Ali, S. et al (2018) highlighted various superfoods in the form of herbal foods such as dates, pomegranate, olives, figs, grapes, and black seeds which were usually consumed by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. with their powerful healing properties and act as favorable dietary interventions for disease prevention as well as for the good maintenance of health. Nurdeng, D. 2009 also pointed out that the Qur’an and the Sunnah clearly showed that substances that are hazardous to health have been prohibited or declared unlawful under Islamic law. In this regard, the prohibition of maytah (the meat of dead animals or carrion), flowing blood, flesh of swine and meat dedicated to anyone other than Allah (s.w.t) are for preservation of man’s health. It is the characteristic of Islamic medical law that gives more emphasis on prevention rather than medical treatment.

The objective of this study is to understand about halal food eaten by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating practices which will impact any person's health. Some foods mentioned in the Quran and Hadith were studied to associate the relationship of halal food and health. It is also aimed to develop the Halal Nutrition model based on the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines, Malaysian Healthy Plate and the Prophet's diet and eating practices.

## 2. Materials and methods

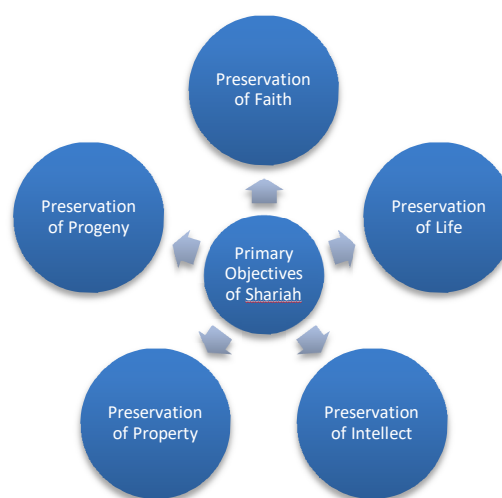
This study was conducted using a library method. In this regard, the food of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating manners and the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (MDG) were searched through secondary sources which obtained from journals, books, magazine and electronic media and in the Qur'an and Hadith were investigated. Finally, we did comparative comparison and cross referred with the MDG against the Prophet's diet. Eventually the list of Key Messages of the MDG were listed and cross referred to the Prophet's diet. These databases and documents were obtained at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah library besides surfing through the internet from 2016 - 2018.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. The Maqasid Shariah (Primary Objectives of Shariah)

The Maqasid Sha'riah or the aims of Islamic Law (Figure 1) is a general philosophy translated from the Quran and Sunnah, which benefits everyone on this earth and eliminate prejudice and hardship to establish justice. The laws of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* enhances support and co-operation within the family and the society at large. The Maqasid is classified into three categories, namely: the *daruriyyah* (the essential), the *hajiyyah* (the complementary) and the *tahsiniyyah* (the desirable). The *daruriyyah* or the essential Maqasid is further divided into five elements: life, intellect, faith, lineage and property. The protection of these elements are seen as absolute requirements to the survival and spiritual well-being of individuals, which otherwise will result in destruction or collapse of a family and society. The *Shari'ah* basically protects and promotes these essential values, and verify all measures required for their protection. (Kamali, H. 2009).

In order to protect the five elements and to ensure the continuity of healthy individuals in the future, a Muslim should oblige by adopting the Islamic way of life (ad-deen); the food you eat, the way you dress, the way you interact with people, the way you live and etc. This paper will only focus on the food, as it is the basics in developing a human body, which comprises of the physical body as well as the spiritual body.



**Fig. 1.** The importance of preservation of life (Maqasid Shariah)  
(Shariah: Islamic Laws & Ways of Life prescribed by Allah s.w.t.)

Health is very pertinent in our lives. Anyone who is ill cannot enjoy life. Hence, Islam has made health through protection of life, a maqasid syariah, that is, an aim of the Syari'ah that must be observed. Therefore, we cannot do bad things that will impact on to our health. This is clarified by Allah SWT in Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 195:

“Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and do not cast yourself to harm by your own hands; and do good. Indeed Allah loves the beneficent. It is our duty to take care of our health and not to do anything that will be detrimental to it. We have to ensure that we make good lifestyle choices, take care of our diet and weight, eat only that is halal and beneficial, exercise and also not to smoke.”

### 3.2. The Prophet's Diet

Islam highlighted the importance of having a balance diet that can supply sufficient nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals to the body. Verses related to food in the Quran recommend foods with variety and high nutrient density. Selecting the right halal food is equally important. The food should not only be halal and safe but also to be taken in certain amount as required by the body. This fits very well with the practice of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, who only eats when he is hungry and stops eating before he is full. The diets of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. are milk, fruits (dates, grapes, and fig), and honey, which are all very nutritious and healthy. In his book entitled “Eat to Live”, Fuhrman, J. (2011) discussed about the importance of nutrient dense food as nutritional medicine in treating many of his obese patients, which is parallel with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

Milk is a complete food, rich in protein, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin B. It is the favorite food and drink of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

In a span of human life, breastfeeding is the first, complete, practical, economic food for babies in meeting its nutrient and body-immunity needs. Islam encourages breastfeeding for two years, as stated in the Qur'an (2:233). “Mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period].” This is in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organization which encourages mothers to breastfeed their babies for six months and to continue up to two years. (WHO, 2001)

Sevim (2017) reported that the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. talked about meat as precious meal of both this world and after death. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. liked forelimbs of sheep and preferred this part over others. It was reported that he took the cooked forelimbs and ate with his hand. The liver from sheep and camel was one of the favorites. The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. ate the liver of a slaughtered sheep with bread. He also liked cooked brain served to him.

“And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hill, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and to find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought.” The Quran 16:68-69.

Honey contained sugars like glucose and fructose and minerals like magnesium, potassium, calcium, sodium chlorine, sulphur, iron and phosphate. It contains vitamins B1, B2, C, B6, B5 and B3 all of which change according to the qualities of the nectar and pollen. Besides the above, copper, iodine, and zinc exist in it in small quantities. Several kinds of hormones are also present in it. (Alvarez-Suarez et al. 2013).

Medical journals cite more than 600 cases in which honey was utilized to treat wounds. By applying honey to your wounds, you prevent infections. Honey is a natural antiseptic. It contains antimicrobial agents, which prevents infections by killing the bacteria in and around your wounds. When using honey it may help to heat it up before putting it on your wound. Many types of bacteria cannot survive in honey, so wounds heal, swelling eases, and tissue can grow back. (Samarghandian S. et al. 2017)

Aggad, H. et al confirmed honey antibacterial activity in their laboratory work in 2014, whereby honey is associated with osmolarity, its high sugar contents, creates a high osmotic pressure

unfavourable to bacterial growth and proliferation. The acidic pH between 4.31 and 6.02 plays a role in microbial control. Other honey contents such as aromatic acids or phenolic compounds, may also contribute to the overall antibacterial activity.

”It is He, Who produce gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for Allah loveth not the wasters.” (Surah Al-An’Aam 6:141)

The Prophet usually breaks his fast by eating some dates before offering Maghrib prayer, and if ripe dates were not available, he used to replace them with some dried grapes. When they too were not available, he used to have a few sips of water, according to some reports. (Hadith Haylamaz, 2014: Narrated by Ahmad, 12265).

The Prophet s.a.w. likes eating dates, grapes, olive, pomegranate and fig (Sahih Bukhari & Muslim). Fruits contain high natural fibre (important to avoid constipation), vitamin A (important for vision), sugar, vitamins, minerals and water important for healthy body. (Slavin J. et al, 2012).

Dadach (2019) reported that pomegranates are thought to have been the Prophet’s favourite fruit. Modern scientific research has proven pomegranates to be one of the healthiest foods in the world. They contain manganese, which helps in the formation of bone structures during the metabolic process, and potassium, which helps in maintaining cellular function and retains a balance in fluid levels. Also, they are high in flavonoids and polyphenols, antioxidants which protect our bodies against heart disease.

Sevim (2017) also highlighted that the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. also liked zucchini, onion, chard, garlic, leek, mushroom and turnip. A tailor from Madinah prepared a dish with meat and zucchini. The Prophet Muhammad preferred the zucchini in this dish and the host put zucchini close to The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Besides that bread made from barley was consumed more frequently by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. It was his staple food.

Halal nutrition is about the prophet’s diet and the way he eats his food. Muslims ought to consume for survival and to maintain good health, they should not live to eat, or make food the sole focus of their existence. Balanced and moderation in dietary habits can help people to lead healthy and balanced lives. Modern research has proven that excessive eating and improper diet can increase the chance of diseases such as obesity, high cholesterol, heart diseases and diabetes. As with many other subjects in Islam, prevention is considered better than cure. Therefore, overeating has been strongly discouraged in the Qur’an and *Sunnah*. (Qur’an Al-A’raf: verse 31)

Islamic eating practices or manners consuming food in Islam are referred as *Sunnah* to ensure the good health of a Muslim is maintained. A Muslim should emulate eating habits or dining etiquette of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w as Muslims eat and drink to be healthy so that they can worship Allah s.b.t. This actually means that Muslims do not eat if they are full and do not drink if they are not thirsty. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said “We are a people who do not eat until we are hungry. And when we eat, we do not eat to our fill.”(Hadith Tarmizi:2380)

The general practise before eating and drinking is to wash one’s hands. Next is to recite the *bismillah* and kneel before the food. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w said “the devil considers food lawful for him when Allah’s name is not mentioned over it.” Similarly, it is not desirable to eat with the left hand. Only the right hand should be used for consumption and drinking purposes. This is because the left is reserved for unclean duties. It is reported by Ibn ‘Umar r.a that the Holy Prophet s.a.w said: “None of you must ever eat or drink with his left hand because the devil (*shaytan*) does so.” In addition to this, the Prophet s.a.w also advised Muslims to take food when they are hungry. This is to ensure easy digestion. Similarly, Muslims should not delay eating if food is already being served. Our Prophet s.a.w said: “It is not right to eat your food quickly, besides, one should eat from what lies nearest to one.” (Bukhari, 1979).

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w recommended that one should stop consuming while there

is still room for the stomach in order that food will be digested more easily. The Prophet s.a.w said: "If you must eat more, be sure that only one third of your stomach is filled with food, one third is left for water and the remaining one third for air." (Nurdeng, 2009). Muslims are discouraged to blow air on food to prevent transmission of bacteria via one's breath. After finishing his meals, the Prophet s.a.w always thank Allah for the food.

The eating practices are divided into three parts, which are before, during and after eating.

**Etiquette before eating:-**(etiquette scholar 2021)

A Muslim should consume only halal food and prepares his food from halal sources and free from any haram contamination. If he is eating outside his home, he should make sure that the food he is eating is halal. In this modern world now, one should look for halal logo on halal certified products and premises.

It is a religious obligation to all Muslims to look for halal food as instructed by Allah SWT in the Qur'an. In this modern world, food is packaged and displayed on shelves in the supermarket. The only way to select which food to be purchased is to look for the halal logo. Likewise, when we want to eat food outside our homes, look for food premises with the halal logo or an evident that it has been halal certified by the competent authority. We must not be misguided by a scanty claim "No Pork, No Alcohol" which does not prove that its chickens, cattle or lamb are halal slaughtered or not. We must take extra precaution by asking directly the owner of the food premise of the halal status of their food resources. Otherwise, it is better to buy halal sources and then cook and eat at home. The reason of eating should be to strengthen oneself and be healthy to worship Allah. The intention of eating is not "live to eat" but "eat to live". One eats like the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. who eats very little, just enough to survive and worship the Almighty, Allah SWT.

The person should wash his hands before eating to clean any dirt or harmful microorganism from his hands. This is in line with the first key messages of WHO for food handlers on food safety as "keep clean" is a priority in everything they do during food handling. While most microorganisms do not result in diseases, dangerous microorganisms are widely found in soil, water, animals and people. These microorganisms are carried on hands, wiping cloths and utensils, especially cutting boards, and the slightest contact can transfer them to food and cause foodborne diseases (WHO 2017a). The food should be served in proper containers on clean spread (cloth or mat) on the floor. Bukhari reported that Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. did not eat on a table or from a platter. The person should sit in a modest way by putting the right leg straight and sit upon the left leg. Bukhari reported that Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that "I do not eat while reclining. Instead, I am a servant (of Allah), so I eat like a servant eats and I sit like a servant sits."

The person should be satisfied with the food being served, if not, he should not eat it or just leave it nor comment about it. Bukhari reported that Abu Hurairah stated that "Allah's Messenger s.a.w. never found any mistake with any food. If he desired it, he would eat it. If he disliked it, he would leave it." (Muslim: 1334). Dining should be with a group of people or "jemaah", for example with guests, family members or friends. This is based on Hadith from Ahmad, which said, "Eat your food together, for you will thereby be blessed in it." Higgs, S. in 2014 reported that normative social influence on eating is very important and pervasive. The presence of other people at an eating occasion or when choices are made about food has a powerful effect on behaviour. This may be because humans have a highly developed capacity to learn from the behaviour of others and find the approval of others rewarding and disapproval aversive. Larsen, J.K. et al. in 2015 highlighted that parents may function as gatekeepers to his children and support them in attending to internal signals of satiety while simultaneously controlling healthy dietary behavior. They may do so by covertly avoiding (consumption of) 'junk-food', avoiding food for reward or emotional regulation, providing clear and healthy rules about when and what can be eaten, providing larger portions with a variety of healthy foods (and vice versa lower portions with less variety of unhealthy foods), and stimulating healthy intake by repeated exposure, rewarding the child for trying new and healthy foods, and active healthy food modeling (e.g., smiling when eating healthy food themselves). Swinburn et al., (2011), recommend that the most pertinent food parenting practices underlying the obesity epidemic are

those (e.g., rules, monitoring, structure, modeling practices) that directly influence the home food environment (i.e., food availability and modeling) compared to those food parenting practices (e.g., restriction, pressure, rewarding, encouragement) that act more directly on child appetitive traits.

### **Etiquette during eating:-**

A Muslim should start his dining by saying, “In the name of Allah” or “Bismillah”. (Muslim: 1305)

In case a Muslim forgets to say Bismillah, Abu Dawud reported that Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. stated that “If any one of you is about to eat, he should mention the name of Allah. If he forgets to mention the name of Allah at the beginning, he should say, “In the name of Allah over the beginning and the ending.”

The person should praise Allah at the end of every meal. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said “If a person eats any food and then says “Praise be to Allah who fed me this and provided for me without any strength or power on my part,” all of his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Al-Tirmidhi).

The person should eat with his right hand using three fingers, taking small portions and chew them well. He should eat the food that is closest to him and do not take any food from the middle of the plate. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said to Umar bin Salamah “O young man, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand and eat from what is close to you.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim 1301).

Shah, M. et al. in 2014 reported that eating slowly significantly reduced meal energy intake in the normal-weight but not in the overweight/obese group. It reduced eating rate and energy density in both groups. Consuming slowly led to lower hunger ratings in both groups and increased fullness ratings in the normal-weight group at 60 minutes from when the meal began. The same applies to a study by Andrade, A.M. et al in 2008 who reported that eating slowly may help to maximize satiation and lower energy intake within meals.

It was reported by Angelopoulos, T. et al in 2017, that chewing slowly increased fullness and decreased hunger ratings in overweight and obese participants with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM), without the improvement in gut hormone responses found in normal-weight participants. Chewing slowly may be a useful prevention strategy, but might also help curb food intake in those already suffering from obesity and diabetes. Al-Tirmidhi reported that Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said “The blessings descend from the middle of the food. So eat from the edges and do not eat from the middle.”

A Muslim shall chew his food well and should lick his fingers after eating. Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that “When one of you eats, he should not wipe his fingers until he licks them or has them licked.” (Muslim 1302). Zhu, Y. and Hollis, J.H. in 2014 highlighted that eating slowly influences to a lower risk of obesity, probably because it could modify appetite control. Chewing completely is an effective strategy to lower eating rate and increasing the number of chews before swallowing might be a behavioral strategy to lower food intake and potentially aid body-weight management. This study concurs with Li. J. et al. in 2011, who reported that interventions aimed at improving chewing activity could become a useful tool for combating obesity. Shah, M. et al. in 2014 also reported that chewing may also help you feel fuller longer, leading to less eating overall. The study showed that 70 normal and overweight or obese men and women eat a test meal two times: once eating slowly, and the second, eating quickly. When they ate slowly and chewed their food thoroughly, the participants reported feeling less hungry one hour after the meal compared to when they ate quickly.

If any food is dropped, it should be cleaned and eaten. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that “If a morsel of food from any of you, he should take it and wipe it clean of any dirt and then eat it. He should not leave it for the Satan (Evil).” (Muslim 1304). A Muslim should not blow over hot food. Instead he should wait until the food cools down. He also should not blow into a glass of water while drinking from it. Instead he should breathe three times outside the glass. More research should be conducted on this problem. A Muslim should not overeat. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that “A human does not fill any container worse than his stomach. It is enough for a human to have some

morsels to strengthen his back (keep his back straight). If he must eat more, then it should be one third of his stomach for food, one third for drink and one third for breathing". (Ahmad Tirmizi: 2380). Food and drinks should be served to the eldest in the gathering and then to those on the right. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that "(Begin with) the eldest. Start with those on the right, and those on the further right." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

#### **Etiquette after eating:-**

Muslims shall stop eating before he becomes full as showed by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. A person should lick his fingers, brush his teeth and rinse his mouth after eating to maintain oral health. Muslims must praise Allah for all the food he had eaten to show his gratitude.

### **3.3. The Malaysian Healthy Plate**

The Malaysian Healthy Plate is a single plate for any person to differ their food consumption according to his/her total recommended daily food serving. A balanced diet comprises of a combination of foods that will give all the nutrients required by our body. There is not one food that will give us all the needed nutrients whilst the body requires many types of food in various quantities to maintain health.

The Malaysian Healthy Plate was developed as a platform for better translation of the messages in Malaysia Dietary Guidelines 2010 and the Malaysia Food Pyramid 2010. Both Malaysian Healthy Plate and Malaysia Food Pyramid are promotional and educational materials which are used to deliver the same messages on healthy eating. However, the Malaysia Healthy Plate acts as a visual tool with the objective for easier implementation in planning a meal which helps in raising the consumption of fruits and vegetables, certain portion size of carbohydrate based foods, promoting the intake of whole grains food products, assuring adequate consumption of protein foods (fish, poultry, meat and legumes) and promote intake of plain water.

This Healthy Plate promotes rising intake of vegetables and fruits and assuring intake of carbohydrate and protein foods is within the recommended amount. To plan a meal, fill in the first quarter of the plate with either rice, bread, grains, noodles or potatoes which is preferably whole grains. Next, fill in the second quarter of the plate with protein rich foods such as fish, poultry, egg, meat or legumes. Next, fill the remaining half of the plate with vegetables and fruits. To complete the meal, it is encouraged to take a glass of plain water, milk, milk products, or non-sugary drinks. The concept is quarter plate of carbohydrate, quarter plate of protein and half plate of fruits and vegetables.

Key messages in the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (MDG) are as follows:

Key Message 1: Eat a variety of foods within your recommended intake

Key Message 2: Maintain body weight in a healthy range

Key Message 3: Be physically active everyday

Key Message 4: Eat adequate amount of rice, other cereal products (preferably whole grain) and tubers

Key Message 5: Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables everyday.

Key Message 6: Consume moderate amounts of fish, meat, poultry, eggs, legumes and nuts.

Key Message 7: Consume adequate amounts of milk and milk products

Key Message 8: Limit intake of foods high in fats and minimize fats and oil in food preparation

Key Message 9: Choose and prepare foods with less salt and sauces

Key Message 10: Consume foods and beverages low in sugar

Key Message 11: Drink plenty of water daily.

Key Message 12: Practice exclusive breastfeeding from birth until 6 months and continue to breastfeed until two years of age.

Key Messages 13: Consume safe and clean foods and beverages

Key Messages 14: Make effective use of nutrition information on food labels.



All these Key Messages are in line with the Prophet's diet and eating practices, so it makes logical sense that it is similar, but only difference lies with the food composition or food sources. In Islam, it is prohibited to consume carrion, blood, pork, halal animals slaughtered without the name of Allah and liquor.

### 3.4. The Halal Nutrition Model

Halal nutrition covers the Prophet's diet and his eating practices. Muslims eat to live and not live to eat. As basics in life itself, food is the center of our lifestyle and it makes up who we are from the inside out, reiterating the quip "You are what you eat".

**Table 1.** Cross Reference of Health Key Messages and the Prophet's Diet

Key Messages of MDG	Prophet's Diet
1. Eat a variety of foods within your recommended intake	Qur'an 7:31 "O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters."
2. Maintain body weight in a healthy range	Qur'an 2:168 "O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy".
3. Be physically active everyday	SalamWeb Browser: The importance of Fitness and Exercise in Islam.
4. Eat adequate amount of rice, other cereal products and tubers	Hadith Tarmizi: 2380 "I heard the Messenger of Allah (S.a.w) saying: 'The human does not fill any container that is worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat what will support his back. If this is not possible, then a third for food, a third for drink, and third for his breath.'"
5. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables everyday	Hadith Abu Dawood: 3836 "Narrated Aishah, Ummul Muminin: The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to eat melon with fresh dates, and he used to say: The heat of the one is broken by the coolness of the other, and the coolness of the one by the heat of the other".
6. Consume moderate amounts of fish, meat, poultry, eggs, legumes and nuts.	Qur'an 7:31 "O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters".
7. Consume adequate amounts of milk and milk products	Qur'an 16:66 "And verily in cattle (too) will ye find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it".
8. Limit intake of foods high in fats and minimize fats and oil in food preparation	Hadith Tarmizi: Al-Maqribi, Da'aim Al-Islam, 2380 "We are a nation who do not eat until we are hungry and when we eat, we do not eat to our fill"
9. Choose and prepare foods with less salt and sauces	Not applicable
10. Consume foods and beverages low in sugar	Not applicable
11. Drink plenty of water daily.	Al-Tarmizi Al-Maqribi, Da'aim Al-Islam, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 456 "Praise be to the God who, by His grace, quenched our thirst with clean and pleasant water, and did not give us bitter and salty water despite our sins.

	<p>According to another narration, when drinking milk, the Prophet would say, “O’ God, grant us abundance in this, and bestow us more from it.”</p>
<p>12. Practice exclusive breastfeeding from birth until 6 months and continue to breastfeed until two years of age.</p>	<p>Qur’an 2:233 “The mothers shall breastfeed their offspring for two whole years, if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child. Nor father on account of his child, an heir shall be chargeable in the same way. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. If you decide on a foster-mother for your offspring, there is no blame on you, provided you pay (the mother) what you offered, on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what you do”.</p>
<p>13. Consume safe and clean foods and beverages</p>	<p>Al-Tamimi Al-Islam, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 452 “In the narration, one day the Prophet saw a man who had dipped his mouth in water and drank from the middle of the pot as animals do. The Prophet said to him, “Do you dip your head in water and drink like animals? If you have no dishes, fill your palms with water since it is the cleanest dish”.</p> <p>The Prophet did not consume food or drink that was harmful. Imam Sadiq narrates from Imam Ali that once, when a very hot food was brought for the Prophet, he said, “Let it become cool. God has not fed us fire. And foods that are not too hot are blessed.”</p>
<p>14. Make effective use of nutrition information on food labels.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Table 1 shows that 11 out of 14 or 79% of the Key Messages of the MDG are in line with the Prophet’s diet. In view of the key elements of the Malaysian Healthy Plate is balance and moderation which is similar to the food of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., so it is proposed that the Halal Nutrition Model (Figure 2) is based on the Malaysian Healthy Plate with exceptions of carrion, blood, pork and liquor.



Fig. 2. Halal Nutrition Model

#### 4. Conclusion

The research found that the Prophet s.a.w. likes eating dates, grapes, olive, pomegranate and fig. Fruits contain high natural fibre (important to avoid constipation), vitamin A (important for vision), sugar, vitamins, minerals and water which are important for a healthy body. Besides that he likes to consume milk, honey and vegetables with limited amount of meat. The Prophet's diet is indeed very good for the humankind in preserving their lives.

The research concluded by recognizing the *Halal* Nutrition model is in parallel with the Malaysian Healthy Plate whereby it is actually a moderate and a healthy balanced diet, relevant and befitting the halal nutrition but the whole regime has to be without the haram elements which are blood, pork, carrion and liquor to provide proper nutrition guidelines for quality and better consumption of *halal* food for the future population. This is in line with the Maqasid Shariah.

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#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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