
The Qur'anic Statements on Blood and Flesh and Medical Science

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ABSTRACT:

The Qur'an has mentioned, among so many things, animal blood and flesh. It so appears that all of its statements on these two matters are invariably in agreement with the modern medical science. The Qur'an declares the dead-animal as forbidden for consumption. There are reasons for that. Medical science provides justification for non-consumption of dead animals' flesh and blood. This article discusses how medical science supports the Qur'anic injunction on animals' flesh and blood.

Introduction:

The citations appearing in Quran were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and were recorded during 7th century A.D. This was the time when science groped in darkness and assertive writings of the Greek experimentalist, the last of whom was Galen of Pergamos 130-200 A.D, had brought stalemate, because for centuries after them, people were scared of opposing the Greek school of thinking.

The Scientific ideas were, therefore, in a nascent form, there were many misconceptions, deep rooted among the scientific teaching of the time that would be totally untenable to modern thoughts this was the time

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when most people believed in superstitions and turned to speculations and mysticism for getting answer to their problems. ¹

This was the situation of the development of the scientific thoughts when Qura'n was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The Prophet himself was an illiterate person (Ōm̄mi) and was living among illiterate people who could neither read nor write². The following Hadith also, clearly states the situation about the state of literacy among the contemporary Arabs:

نحن أمة لا نقرأ ولا نحسب ³

It means, “We are illiterate people, who can neither write nor calculate”

“Aya'h” 2 of “ Sĕra'h Al-Juma I Qura'n also very clearly states the situation.

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

He it is who hath sent among the unlettered once a messenger of their own, to recite unto them his revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the scripture and wisdom.

Although Qura'n is not the book on science, one finds an abounding number of verses in it relating to many known scientific disciplines of the present age; many of these verses make a pointed reference to scientific facts while other verses give an oblique and indirect hint, the authenticity of which could only be verified after centuries of ignorance, and only when scientific tools and methods of research has achieved certain stage of development.⁵ Since we are dealing with “flesh and blood” in this article, some pertinent verses on the subject are reproduced with their meanings below:

Citations from Qur'an:

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَالْخَنِزِيرَ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ

اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ⁶

He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name hath been invoked, decides that of God” But if one is forced by necessity, Neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Lo! ALLAH is forgiving and Merciful.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَالْخَنِزِيرُ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَبِتَةُ وَالْمَوْفُودَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ

وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصَبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكَ

فَسَقٌ.⁷

“Forbidden unto you (for food) are carrion and blood and swine-flesh and that which hath been dedicated unto nay other than Allah, and the strangled and the dead through beating, and the dead through falling from a height, and that which hath been killed by (the goring of) horns, and the devoured of wild beasts. Saving that which ye make lawful (by the death stroke) , and that which hath been immolated unto adds. And (for bidden is it) that ye swear by the divining arrows.

This is an abomination.⁷

فُلْ لَّا أَحَدٌ فِي مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا

مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنِزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا

عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ⁸

Say I find not in the message received by me by inspiration any meat forbidden to eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be dead meat, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine, for it is an abomination or, what is impious, (meat) on which a name has been invoked, other than Allah's but (even so), if a person is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, thy Lord is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخُنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِعَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ⁹

He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and any (food) over which the name of other than God has been invoked. But if one is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then God is oft. Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁹

The divine revelation forbids devouring of dead meat and blood and pork in more than one Ayahs. Nothing is more emphatic in these verses than forbidding dead meat, blood and flesh of the swine. The question arises as to what usually is forbidden or disallowed under the norms of any society!

The inevitable answer is that all those acts would be forbidden which could cause any harm to the person or to the society, On this basis, one can argue that the above mentioned “Ayas” are clear pointers to some inherent hazards and dangers associated with eating of dead meat, blood and the flesh of the swine, although scientific information on the subject was absolutely silent on the possibilities for centuries after these verses were revealed. We shall take up each of the items mentioned above in the light of current scientific information.¹⁰

Discussion:**Meat as a Source of Parasitic Infection:**

Many parasitic infections are now known to be carried into the human body through raw and improperly cooked meat; although some parasites could be transmitted through other meat sources, Those which are dangerous and produce grave consequences to the health of individuals and even community, producing epidemics, are, however, transmitted exclusively by eating raw and improperly cooked pork (Swine flesh). Not to mention more, the two most deadly parasites are:

- Pork tape worm
- Trichinella Spiralis.¹¹

Both types of parasitic infections are widely distributed in the world, where swine flesh is commonly eaten, thus the larval infection with pork tape worm (taenia sodium) in human host is relatively common in population infected with the adult work and the incident is very common in India, Chine, Africa, Mexico and many other countries of the world. Similarly, Trichinosis (Trichinella Spiralis) has a cosmopolitan distribution¹² Virchow estimated the human incidence in Germany in his days to be as high as 90% Ransom estimated that 6% of American Pigs were parasitized, when analyzed, all found the incidence of Trichinosis in 16.1% of 5313 persons autopsied from 37 different states, Even today, the disease is widely spread throughout the world, with reports of epidemic appearing in different countries, in spite of applying modern techniques of prevention . Thus, there had been reported epidemics in Sweden in 1946;

in Greenland in 1948; in England in 1953, Alaska in 1961 and Poland in 1959 and 1961.¹³

There is no specific treatment for either of the above parasitic infections and the only hope of eliminating these deadly parasites from the human host lies in forbidding eating of the pig meat.¹⁴

The citation in Qura'n which forbade eating of the pork (swine flesh) were recorded in 7th century A.D when the scientific information about the modes of transmission of the disease were totally unknown and remained so till the middle of the 19th Century . A.D. Although some human parasites were known to the early Greeks their Pathogenicity, life cycles etc. we're not known instead, misconceptions, ignorance and mysticism prevailed in the field even upto the beginning of the 19th Century A.D When many prominent men of science went upto the extent of advocating usefulness of the human parasites. Thus, Goeze (1782) and Joerdens (1801) believed that endparasite helminthes were beneficial because they consumed the hosts excessive food and mucus which otherwise would purefy and produce diseases. They also believed that the intestinal worms stimulated peristalsis and hence were desirable.¹⁵

The Knowledge of pathologic effects of various parasites also remained very speculative even during the 18th century. The life cycle of the pork tape worm (*Taenia sodium*) was for the first time worked out by Huchemeister (1855) and Leuckart (1856), who demonstrated that eating of the raw and improperly cooked pork was the commonest cause of human infection, whereas in case of *Trichinella spiralis* (*Trichinosis*) etiological agents was discovered by Peacock in 1828, Hilton in 1833 and Paget in 1835 independently¹⁶. Investigations of Leuckart (1855) and Virchow (1856-60) enlightened upon the life cycle of the parasite. The

disease was actually recognized as an important public health problem only upon the turn of the century .Within the past several years the disease has again obtained a special place and consideration in the USA on account of occurrence of repeated epidemics and also a number of deaths.¹⁷

Dead Meat (Maytah) as the Source of Infection:

In the above citations from Qura'n dead meat is also strictly forbidden as an item of food and the word "Almaytah" (الميتة) is used. The literal meaning of this word is " the meat from the animal which has died on his own and has not been slaughtered for"¹⁸ Extended meaning of this word in " Fiqah" (Muslim religious law) included slaughtering the animal with pronouncing of the name of " ALLAH" and " TakbÊr" Moreover forbidden is meat form the animal who has died of accident, strangulation , violent blow, headlong fall or being gored, to death , that which had been partly eaten by a wild animal. The relevant part of the citation is reproduced below.

And the strangled, and the dead through beating and the dead through falling from a height, and that which hath been killed by (the goring of) horns and the devoured of wild beasts, saving that which ye make lawful (by the death-stroke) .⁷

What are the implications of having meat to eat from the animal which has died of his own? Possibly the animal is old and has died the natural death on account of some naturally occurring disease! This certainly would make the meat unsuitable for human consumption. Further, in these case there had been no bloodletting¹⁹ "Aya" 4 of "Sura'h Al Maida" also states certain conditions under which the animal has died

when its meat is forbidden for food. Analysis of these conditions under which death of the animal occurs as mentioned in above citation i.e strangulation, headlong fall, violent blow, goring or the left over by the wild animals, all are the conditions in which bloodletting has not preceded as condition to prepare the meat for food, evidently when the animal is killed without bloodletting, blood remain in the flesh and the chances of the growth of the pathogenic microbes which soon putrefies the meat, if it lies in slight neglect, and render it dangerous for human use.²⁰

Man's scientific knowledge about the causes of disease at the time when the above citations were revealed to the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was very limited, I was not clear, what role microorganisms played in disease transmission and most people believed that disease was a punishment sent from the gods for certain human indiscretions. It was only in the 15th century that the Italian Physician, Fracastorius (1485-1553) postulated that the disease was transmitted by invisible particles or seeds form one person to another or from contact with clothing or utensils of the infected. It took another two hundred years before some description of the micro-organisms was available; a further period of two centuries passed before "germ" theory of disease production and transmission could be put on a sound scientific basis. Louis Pasteur in 1857 formulated the theory of fermentation by micro-organisms and was the one who wrote the final obituary "abiogenesis" The road was then open to conceive, study and culture micro-organisms which can produce different disease. Methods were developed by the turn of the century to grow colonies of microbes in the laboratories, using different types of culture media. The enticed media contain basal growth promoting factors of muscle infusion and blood.²¹

It is now evident to the microbiologists that blood and meat provide an excellent, all-purpose growth factors for most microbes and provide optimum conditions for the germs to grow. So these optimum conditions will be met with in case the meat for food is not prepared by bloodletting and is handled with slight carelessness, this was particularly so in the year when food preservation techniques and refrigeration were not known to the man.

In Quran, “Allah” has very clearly forbidden eating of he dead meat, It is repeated nearly three times, (انما حرم عليكم الميتة) “He hath forbidden you dead meat.....” The above Ayahs were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) nearly 14 centuries ago, when the scientific knowledge on the subject was primitive and riddled with misconceptions, superstitions and mysticisms.

Blood Forbidden as Articles of Food:

The citations appearing in the beginning of the article very forcefully forbid eating of the blood and commands, (انما حرمة عليكم الميتة والدم)” Meaning that, “He hath forbidden you dead meat and blood” It was not an uncommon custom of the time that people of many primitive tribes in the world, used the flesh of the animal of prey as food, they used to drink blood as soup, the practice still continues in some places in the world, particularly among some primitive tribes in Africa

Hazards, which could possibly be associated about using blood for food were totally unknown at the time when the above verses were revealed, although it is quite clear now that blood is an excellent growth factor for many diseases producing, microbes and slight carelessness in handling it, may invite hosts of microbes to grow with inevitable

consequences. Further, some viruses carried by the blood of the animals may quite easily produce morbidity in the tissues of the human host.

It is not out of place to mention that scientific information related to blood were very preliminary, not even the way blood circulates was known to the scientists. Blood circulation was rediscovered by William Harvey in 1598²², which was partly described by Ibn-Al-Nafees (ابن النفيس). Lesuwenhoek discovered Red blood cells in 1673²³ and actual rapid strides in progress in the field started at the beginning of the 20th century, nearly 1400 years after the above citations were revealed to the Prophet.

Conclusions:

The foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that there are many inherent dangers in eating of dead meat, blood and swine flesh (pork). They are highlighted in the light of scientific information, which has only been acquired very recently, yet, above citations from Quran are more than assertive in forbidding eating of dead meat, blood and swine flesh. Certainly, the scientific instruments or methods available at the time of writing of Qura'n, could not possibly influence these writings. Further Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A) was himself an illiterate person (Ōm̄mi) and was living among illiterate people. The fact that abound with information related to different scientific disciplines of the day, including this topic, The above citations were recorded for the prophet more than 1400 years furnish a fairly strong evidence that the knowledge in Qura'n is God-sent and divine "Alla'h" and could not possibly, be obtained through other sources

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