



## Research Paper

## From Quranic Foods to Medical Applications

Mohammad Shahbazi\*

1. PhD Scholar. Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Email: [Shabe\\_vasl@yahoo.com](mailto:Shabe_vasl@yahoo.com)**Abstract**

The Holy Quran, the divine scripture of Muslims, is founded upon the principle of monotheism and the oneness of God; yet, interspersed within its verses are precise—and sometimes general—references to the created world and natural phenomena, including various foods and nutritional items. This research aims to conduct a comparative study of the foods mentioned in the Holy Quran from two perspectives: first, their nutritional and therapeutic properties; and second, their potential harms and adverse effects. The study employs a descriptive-analytical approach based on library research. Initially, verses related to foods in the Holy Quran were identified and categorized; subsequently, medical sources were consulted to extract information regarding their benefits and harms. The properties and adverse effects of each foodstuff were then examined and compared in light of the latest research findings in the fields of nutrition and medicine. Given the breadth of the subject and the constraints of the article's length, a single representative verse was selected for each food item, while other relevant verses were also noted. The results indicate that many Quranic foods possess significant nutritional and therapeutic properties that align with, or can be explained by, modern scientific evidence. Conversely, certain items require caution and consideration regarding potential adverse effects. The link between Quranic foods and modern medical evidence highlights the interdisciplinary potential of this field for further research as well as for clinical and nutritional applications.

**Keywords:** Holy Quran, Nutrition, Quranic foods, Therapeutic Propertie, Traditional Medicine.

## Introduction

The Quran is a divine miracle and a blueprint for human life, happiness, and well-being, addressing all dimensions of human existence. References to various foods and their nutritional value can be found throughout numerous Surahs and verses. Plants and fruits are among the food items that receive special attention in the Holy Quran; recent empirical research and studies have illuminated their effectiveness—and indeed their miraculous nature—in treating diseases and maintaining human health and well-being (Nasiri et al., 2014: p. 134). The Holy Quran places special emphasis on certain foods and fruits. Notable examples include pomegranates, apples, grapes, and dates. Religious and Islamic texts attribute numerous medicinal properties to these foods—properties that align with findings in modern nutritional science and medicine. For instance, figs and olives are mentioned in Surah At-Tin; figs are a source of fiber, potassium, and antioxidants, while olives contain beneficial fats and Vitamin E, both of which support cardiovascular health. Furthermore, these foods are recognized in religious texts for their preventive and therapeutic roles. From a medical perspective, the balanced consumption of fruits and vegetables can help prevent chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain types of cancer. Rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant compounds, these foods contribute to improve digestive function, a strengthened immune system, and reduced inflammation. Religious texts also highlight the impact of these foods on both physical and mental health. For instance, dates—rich in natural sugars, fiber, and potassium—can help provide energy and regulate blood pressure. Similarly, pomegranates, thanks to their polyphenolic and antioxidant compounds, are effective in reducing oxidative stress and improving heart health. Recent scientific research has validated many of the properties attributed to these fruits and foods in religious texts. For example, olives and olive oil, due to their beneficial fatty acids, play a role in lowering "bad" cholesterol (LDL) and raising "good" cholesterol (HDL). Pomegranates have also been shown to be effective in preventing heart disease and certain cancers, owing to their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Therefore, incorporating these foods into a healthy, balanced diet can aid in the prevention and management of chronic diseases. However, consumption should align with nutritional and medical guidelines, avoiding both excess and deficiency.

## Method and Material

This study employs a descriptive, library-based research method. The process begins with gathering source material from the Holy Quran and accessible, authoritative medical texts and articles. Subsequently, notes are taken from these sources and compiled; finally, the relevant data is analyzed.

## Results and Discussion

### Pomegranate (al-Rummān)

"And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and thereby We bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and from that We produce green stalks and branches, and from that We extract clustered grains; and from the spathes of the date palm, we produce low-hanging clusters; and [We bring forth] gardens of grapes, olives, and pomegranates—similar in some respects yet dissimilar in others. Observe its fruit when it bears fruit, and its ripening and maturation with contemplation; surely in these [matters] there are signs [of God's Oneness, Lordship, and Power] for a people who believe" (Quran, Al-An'am: 99). Reference is also made to it in Verse 141 of Surah Al-An'am and Verse 68 of Surah Ar-Rahman. The sour pomegranate possesses the property of eliminating bile and preventing the influx of harmful humors into the body. This fruit is beneficial for inflammation, ulcers, and headaches, while its juice is useful for the eyes. Sour pomegranate causes roughness in the chest and throat, whereas sweet pomegranate provides softening and strength

(Ibn sina, 1992, Vol. 2: pp. 306–307). One should not overconsume pomegranate; it is harmful for individuals suffering from constipation or gastric bloating, and consuming it as a dessert is not advisable (Taghizadeh, 2013: p. 10). An article titled "The Pomegranate: A New Look at the Fruit of Paradise" presents the following findings regarding the benefits of pomegranates: Today, pomegranate juice has been shown to contain polyphenol antioxidants (primarily ellagic acid and punicalagin) that may lower risk of heart disease and may slow cancer progress. The antioxidant content of pomegranate juice is among the highest of any foods" (Stover, W. Mercure, 2007, p. 1090). Culinary uses of the fruit include pomegranate paste in cooking, while sour pomegranate juice is consumed to reduce body fat and aid in weight loss. The pomegranate holds a significant, esteemed, and long-standing place in ancient Iranian traditions and ceremonies, serving as a symbol of fertility among Iranians (Babazadeh Chenarani, 2017, p. 175)

### Grapes (Inab)

"Then We produced for you thereby gardens of date palms and grapevines, in which there are abundant fruits for you [from the sale of which you sustain your livelihood] and [also] from which you eat" (Quran, Al-Mu'minun: 19). Grapes are mentioned several times in the Holy Quran, including in the following verses: Al-Baqarah 266, Al-Isra 91, 'Abasa 28, Al-An'am 99, An-Nahl 11 and 67, Ya-Sin 34, Al-Kahf 32, Al-Mu'minun 19, Ar-Ra'd 4, Yusuf 36, and An-Naba' 32. Regarding the consumption of grapes, Imam Reza (AS) narrates—citing his forefathers, who in turn cite the Messenger of God (PBUH)—that the Prophet said: "Eat grapes berry by berry, for it makes them more wholesome and easier to digest" (Ibn Babawayh, 1995, Vol. 2: p. 35). Grapes are among the most potent antiviral agents and possess alkalizing properties. Due to their sugar content, they serve as a source of energy. Consuming unripe grapes (ghureh) is generally not recommended, except for the purpose of suppressing sexual desire; it is written: "Drinking the juice of jujube, lentils, unripe grapes, sour pomegranate, and vinegar... causes a reduction in semen" (Arzani, 2014, Vol. 2: p. 313).

### Fig (al-Tīn)

The name of this sweet and highly beneficial fruit appears only once—in the Surah named after it (al-Tīn). God bestows honor and value upon the fig by swearing an oath by it: "By the fig and the olive" (Quran, al-Tīn: 1). Extensive discussion regarding the properties of the fig (tīn) can be found in \*Tafsir-e Nemouneh\*; here, we cite a few examples: "The fig possesses great nutritional value; it is a nourishing morsel, free of skin, pits, or waste matter... Athletes and those suffering from weakness or the infirmities of old age can use figs for nourishment... A mixture of equal parts fig and honey is highly beneficial for stomach ulcers, while consuming dried figs strengthens the mind and balances the body's faculties and blood" (Makarem Shirazi, 2008, Vol. 27: p. 163).

### Olive (Zaytun)

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is like a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp is within a glass, and the glass is as though it were a glittering star—lit from a blessed olive tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light! God guides to His Light whom He wills, and God sets forth parables for the people [so that they may understand the truths], and God is All-Knowing of all things (Quran, An-Nur: 35). (The word "Zaytun" (olive) appears six times in the Quran; it is also mentioned indirectly once in Surah Al-Mu'minun (Verse 20) as an oil-bearing tree—a topic in itself that we shall not delve into here. In addition to the aforementioned surahs, references to it can be found in Al-An'am (99 and 141), An-Nahl (11), Al-Mu'minun (20), 'Abasa (29), and At-Tin (1–4). The primary region for olive cultivation is the Mediterranean coastal area. It is believed

that the olive originated in Phoenicia around 2000 BCE and subsequently spread westward to Europe and Africa, and eastward to Afghanistan and Iran. Experts have offered various opinions on this matter. Some state that the olive belongs to the entire world—not merely the East or the West—and suggest that the terms "East" and "West" refer to the orientation of the trees; others argue that the taste and quality of the olive fruit depend on the tree's orientation relative to the sun. Olives possess significant medicinal properties and high nutritional value. They act as a sedative and a laxative, and are effective in treating indigestion and duodenal ulcers. Olives can form part of a suitable diet during the treatment of kidney diseases. The oil has emollient properties; when applied externally, it softens the skin in cases of eczema and psoriasis (Mousavi, 2007: p. 55). Fresh herbs/greens; garlic; lentils; cucumbers; onions And [recall] when you said: "O Moses! We will never be content with a single type of food; so ask your Lord to bring forth for us from what the earth grows: its herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 61). Each of these foods is mentioned only once—in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 61—and we shall explain each of them below:

### **Fresh Herbs (Baqaal)**

Since fresh herbs are a staple of daily consumption and hold a special place in the food pyramid, people are well aware of their valuable properties. Notable examples include leeks (which lower blood pressure and cholesterol), radishes (which eliminate cancer cells), basil (a sedative and sleep aid), watercress (which stimulates kidney function), parsley (which aids blood formation and treats anemia), tarragon (a suitable salt substitute), and coriander (which lowers blood sugar and treats skin blemishes). However, due to their high fiber content, excessive consumption of vegetables can lead to abdominal cramps, diarrhea, constipation, poor nutrient absorption, intestinal gas, and even bowel obstruction. Fresh herbs are consumed raw in various salads and pickles, or cooked in a wide array of dishes; they are also a key component of the healthiest weight-loss diets.

### **Garlic (Fūm)**

Regarding this pungent yet highly beneficial foodstuff, a cough remedy known as "Garlic Paste" (\*Angosht-pich-e Sir\*) is prescribed in Ibn Sina's \*The Canon of Medicine\* as follows: "Take one \*ratl\* of choice garlic and one \*ratl\* of animal fat; heat them over a fire until the garlic disintegrates. Strain the mixture and thoroughly mash the cooked garlic. Then, add two \*ratls\* of skimmed honey and simmer gently over a low flame until the mixture thickens and sets. Remove from the heat, allow it to cool, and consume by licking" (Ibn Sina, 1992, Vol. 7: p. 337). Furthermore, it possesses numerous health benefits, including the prevention of infections, fungal and bacterial diseases, breast cancer, and cardiovascular ailments.

### **Lentils (Adas)**

Ibn Sina recommended lentils for treating a "hot" temperament: "In this condition, the patient's diet should consist of lentils, mung beans, \*kashk\* [dried yogurt], and the like" (Ibn Sina, 1992, Vol. 3: p. 45). However, due to the property of generating \*sauda\* (black bile) in the body, lentils are not recommended for cancer patients. Regarding their harmful effects, Muwaffaq al-Harawi writes: "They thicken the blood within the body, cause dimness of vision, and are detrimental to the stomach" (Muwaffaq al-Din al-Harawi, 1967: p. 224).

### **Cucumber (Qithā)**

Cucumbers alleviate heat and fever and quench thirst; the long cucumber (\*Khiyar-e Chanbar\*) cleanses the intestines and stomach and is beneficial for treating jaundice (Mowaffaq al-Din al-Harawi, 1967: pp. 250, 133). Ibn Sina considers the long cucumber effective in balancing the temperament of bodily humors

(Abu Ali Sina, 1992, Vol. 5: 123). Cucumbers are consumed in salads and various dishes; other uses include pickling, reducing body fat, aiding weight loss, and promoting skin health.

### Onion (Başal)

In *\*Al-Abniyah ‘an Haqā’iq al-Adwiyah\** (The Foundations of the True Properties of Remedies), the properties of the onion are described as follows: "It stimulates the appetite, provokes thirst, causes headaches, and softens the bowels" (Muwaffaq al-Dīn al-Harawī, 1967: p. 52). Onions cause a sharp drop in blood sugar levels; they are allergenic and lead to gas formation and heartburn in pregnant women (Taghizadeh, 2013: p. 10).

### Gourd (Yaqtin)

"So We cast him onto a barren, plantless land while he was sick. And We caused a plant of the gourd variety to grow over him" (Quran, As-Saffat: 145–146). The gourd is mentioned only in Surah As-Saffat, verse 146. This verse and the preceding ones recount the story of Prophet Jonah (PBUH); after a lapse in judgment (*\*tark-e-awla\**), and in accordance with God's command, a great fish swallowed him. Following his glorification of God and repentance, he emerged from the fish's belly onto a barren land while ill. There, God caused a type of gourd plant to grow for him. There are various types of gourds, including winter squash, hulless-seed pumpkin, zucchini, and others. In our view, the type of gourd mentioned in the Quran was the "hulless-seed" variety; research indicates that this specific type grows in tropical regions and serves as a remedy for urinary tract disorders. Given that the Quran mentions Prophet Jonah's illness, it is highly probable that he suffered from a urinary tract issue caused by the ingestion of water—either in the sea or within the fish's belly (Shahbazi, 2026: 31). Evidence supporting our claim comes from the following research: "Researchers believe that this plant originated fifty years ago due to a spontaneous mutation. It grows in tropical and subtropical regions of the world... Between 1863 and 1936, the seeds of this plant were first used as a medicinal agent to treat intestinal parasites (tapeworms and roundworms)." "Later, with advancements in medical science, it was used to treat urinary tract disorders, bedwetting in children, and bladder inflammation and stones" (Moradi et al., 2015: pp. 8 - 4).

### Date (Fresh Date/Rutab)

"And shake the trunk of the date palm toward you; it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you" (Quran, Maryam: 25). In summary, the benefits of dates as described in the words of the Prophet (PBUH)—which suffice for our purposes here—are ninefold: they ward off Satan, increase vitality, strengthen hearing and vision, fortify the back, draw one closer to God while distancing one from Satan, aid digestion, eliminate ailments, and sweeten the breath (Tabarsi, 1992, Vol. 1: p. 350).

### Meat (Laḥm)

God has forbidden you—[to protect you from physical and spiritual harm]—only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and any animal over which a name other than God's has been invoked [at the time of slaughter]. Yet, whoever is compelled [by necessity to save their life] to consume them—without seeking pleasure and without exceeding the necessary limit—bears no sin; for God is Most Forgiving and Merciful (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 173). In addition to the blessed Surah Al-Baqarah, it is mentioned in Surahs Al-An‘am (145), An-Nahl (14 and 115), Al-Ma‘idah (3), and Al-Waqi‘ah (21). A discussion regarding meat—its various types, benefits, and harmful effects—is extensive and beyond the scope of this article. We shall limit ourselves to a few examples: Among the benefits of meat are: providing energy and protein, preventing stroke and anemia, maintaining skin health, and supplying vitamins B1, B2, and B12 as well as phosphorus—all of

which are beneficial for health. Its harmful effects and adverse consequences include: obesity, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, and an increased risk of diabetes, among others.

### Fish (Hūt)

So when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish [which they had prepared for a meal], and the fish took its way [downward] into the sea (Quran, Al-Kahf: 61). This creature (\*hūt\*) is mentioned directly in verses 61 and 63 of Surah Al-Kahf, verse 142 of Surah As-Saffat, and verse 48 of Surah Al-Qalam, and indirectly in verse 14 of Surah An-Nahl. The properties of this aquatic animal are well known; for instance, to treat jaundice caused by a hot temperament affecting the entire body, fish can be cooked with vinegar and steeped in unripe grape juice (\*ghūreh\*) or sour pomegranate juice (Arzani, 2014, Vol. 2: 101). Fish fried in oil with spices is beneficial for those with strong stomachs. Regarding salted fish, the fresher it is, the better. As for the properties and adverse effects of fresh fish: it generates watery phlegm and weakens the nerves; it is suitable only for a very hot stomach, producing blood that is thin in consistency (Avicenna, 1992, Vol. 2: 275). In the country's northern and southern provinces, a variety of dishes are prepared using fish, such as stuffed fish, \*Qaliyeh Mahi\* (fish stew with herbs and tamarind), fish rolls, \*Mahi-ye Gerd-Pich\* (fish wrapped in herbs and spices), fish stew, \*Mahi-Polo\* (fish with rice), and others.

### Milk (Laban)

"And indeed, for you in the livestock there is a lesson: We give you to drink from what is in their bellies—from amidst digested fodder and blood—a pure and wholesome milk that is agreeable to those who drink it" (Quran, An-Nahl: 66). God explicitly refers in this verse to the wholesomeness of drinking milk. Milk consumption is an ancient practice dating back to 6,000–8,000 BCE. In ancient Egypt, only the very wealthy could consume milk and other dairy products. Among the many benefits of milk, the following examples may be cited: it promotes bone health due to its content of Vitamin D, calcium, and Vitamin K; B vitamins present in milk are essential for cardiovascular health and energy production; it helps prevent osteoporosis and migraine headaches; and it contributes to physical fitness in children (Sabbaghian, 2005: pp. 42, 48). Applying milk and \*surma\* (kohl) to the eyes together cures all eye ailments; as it has been written: "Milk is beneficial for all sores within the eye when used in conjunction with \*tutiya\* (zinc oxide/collyrium)" (Muwaffaq al-Din al-Harawi, 1967: p. 279).

### Honey (Asal)

"And your Lord inspired the honeybee, saying: 'Take for yourself dwellings in the mountains, in the trees, and in the structures [trellises] that [people] erect. Then eat of all manner of produce and fruits, and follow the paths of your Lord that have been made smooth for you [leading back to the hive].' From their bellies emerges a drink [nectar/honey] of varying colors, containing a cure for the people. Indeed, in this [fact] there is a sign [of God's power, grace, and mercy] for people who reflect" (Quran, An-Nahl: 68–69). It is also mentioned in Verse 15 of the blessed Surah Muhammad, in the description of Paradise and its rivers. Honey possesses properties that treat anemia, lung diseases, and osteoporosis. It is effective in the growth of bodily organs, acts as a disinfectant for the urinary tract, and has a significant impact on treating rheumatism. The sugar it contains strengthens the heart and helps treat lung ailments, stomach ulcers, duodenal ulcers, and high blood pressure. From a scientific perspective, consuming honey increases the risk of infant botulism in children under two years of age; furthermore, consuming raw honey can lead to food poisoning, allergies, and elevated cholesterol levels in individuals with diabetes (Tabarsi, 1992, Vol. 1: 407).

### Ginger (Zanjabil)

"And therein they will be given a cup to drink whose mixture is of ginger" (Quran, Al-Insan: 17). This aromatic, heavenly food—which is entirely curative—is effective for stomach pain; indeed, Avicenna wrote that a mixture of pepper and ginger serves as a remedy for the stomach (Avicenna, 1992, Vol. 4: p. 65). On subsequent pages, he identifies a compound remedy made of quince juice, honey, white pepper, and ginger as beneficial for stimulating the appetite (Ibid.: p. 93). Furthermore, ginger is effective for warming the temperament, boosting sexual potency, and treating abdominal cramps. Experienced elders often recommend consuming ginger infusion before eating pomegranate or pairing pears with ginger.

### Bread (Khubz)

"And two young men [servants of the King of Egypt] entered the prison with Joseph. One of them said: 'I keep seeing in a dream that I am pressing [grapes] for wine,' and the other said: 'I see myself carrying bread upon my head [and] birds are eating from it; inform us of its interpretation, for we consider you to be among the doers of good'" (Quran, Yusuf: 36). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) states: "Bread is blessed; for the sake of bread, God caused the heavens to pour down rain and made vegetation grow; by means of it, you perform prayers, observe fasts, and undertake the pilgrimage to the House of your Lord" (Al-Kulayni, 2016, Vol. 8: p. 75). Bread is a highly nutritious food; it prevents obesity by inducing a sense of satiety, inhibits the production of harmful blood fats (thereby lowering blood cholesterol), regulates digestive system activity, and lowers blood sugar. Furthermore, due to its Vitamin B content, it helps maintain skin freshness and beauty, strengthens memory, and prevents rickets in children.

### Conclusion

Research on this subject demonstrates that the religion of Islam pays special attention to human health in every respect, conveying its teachings—including guidelines on consumption—to humanity through the Holy Quran and the Noble Prophet (PBUH). The health and longevity benefits associated with consuming these foods have been scientifically proven. For instance, regarding the creation of the olive, God has highlighted not only the fruit itself but also its oil. Furthermore, the benefits of many such foods are detailed in the traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet and the Infallible Imams—insights derived from deep reflection and contemplation upon divine verses. Poets, both past and present, have also drawn upon these fruits—using them as symbols or employing them in similes and metaphors—to address various social themes. It is hoped that, by the grace of God, nutritionists and researchers in our beloved country will—through the study and contemplation of these verses and traditions—gain a deeper understanding of the benefits and therapeutic properties of these foods, thereby enriching Islamic Iran with this valuable Islamic knowledge.

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