

Spirituality and Sustainability

EXPERIENCES OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Edited by
Abdul Rashid Moten

With a foreword by Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak,
Rector, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)



IIUM



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CHAPTER 15

**Feeding Tomorrow:
Promoting Islamic Dietary
Laws as a Source of Good
Health and Well-Being**

Haruna Babatunde Jaiyeoba,
Azura Amid &
Mohammad Aizat Jamaludin

The Feeding Tomorrow programme of the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART, IIUM) is an initiative to demonstrate to secondary school students that consuming lawful and good foods are vital for good health and overall well-being. Under the feeding tomorrow programme, a series of short courses were conducted, without any financial implications, to disseminate relevant information on the physical, mental, emotional, social health and spiritual benefits of consuming healthy food in accordance with Islamic prescriptions on *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (unlawful). The objective of this programme was to support the Malaysian government and school leaders in providing best possible nutritional exposures for secondary school students in various communities in Malaysia.

Exposing students to the physical and spiritual benefits of healthy food consumption should be a collective effort of helping them achieve their true potential. Such exposures motivate students to maintain their health, prevent diseases, reduce risky behaviours and earn the pleasure of Allāh (SWT). Accordingly, this programme was introduced to expose participants to the theoretical and practical aspects of *ḥalāl* and *ṭayyib* (wholesome) quality foods with respect to meat and poultry, *halal* slaughtering, and why it is essential to consume or use *ḥalāl* certified products. This programme concerned not only health, safety, and nutritional implications of consuming or using *ḥalāl* certified products but also emphasised the spiritual implications of such actions, that is, to earn the pleasure of Allāh (SWT) and to obey His command:

Therefore eat out of what Allāh has provided you with, lawful and pure (*ḥalālān ṭayyibān*); and give thanks for the Favours of Allāh, if you worship Him alone. (Al-Qur'ān 16:114).

Therefore, it is of utmost importance for Muslims to have an in-depth understanding of the concepts of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, particularly with respect to what they eat and use (Asa, 2017).

The Feeding Tomorrow programme of the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART, IIUM) is an initiative to demonstrate to secondary school students that consuming lawful and good foods are vital for good health and overall well-being. Under the feeding tomorrow programme, a series of short courses were conducted, without any financial implications, to disseminate relevant information on the physical, mental, emotional, social health and spiritual benefits of consuming healthy food in accordance with Islamic prescriptions on *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (unlawful). The objective of this programme was to support the Malaysian government and school leaders in providing best possible nutritional exposures for secondary school students in various communities in Malaysia.

Exposing students to the physical and spiritual benefits of healthy food consumption should be a collective effort of helping them achieve their true potential. Such exposures motivate students to maintain their health, prevent diseases, reduce risky behaviours and earn the pleasure of Allāh (SWT). Accordingly, this programme was introduced to expose participants to the theoretical and practical aspects of *ḥalāl* and *ṭayyib* (wholesome) quality foods with respect to meat and poultry, *halal* slaughtering, and why it is essential to consume or use *ḥalāl* certified products. This programme concerned not only health, safety, and nutritional implications of consuming or using *ḥalāl* certified products but also emphasised the spiritual implications of such actions, that is, to earn the pleasure of Allāh (SWT) and to obey His command:

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Therefore, it is of utmost importance for Muslims to have an in-depth understanding of the concepts of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, particularly with respect to what they eat and use (Asa, 2017).

This chapter explains the various facets of the programme. It begins with a focus on the promotion of good health and well-being as a national and an international agenda. This is followed by an elaboration on the method and procedures adopted in conducting the Feeding Tomorrow programme in selected secondary schools and the analysis performed on the responses received from the participants. The chapter ends with a discussion on the findings followed by the conclusion.

The Promotion of Good Health and Well-being as a National and an International Agenda

The need and the importance of consuming healthy and nutritional foods for individuals' good health and general well-being are discussed locally and internationally. Locally, the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (MDG) were developed to materialise the National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia (Ministry of Health, 2010; 2016). The guidelines have recently been revised to educate Malaysians on the appropriate means to enhance healthy eating and active living through sound dietary practices. The revision was based on the habitual dietary and nutrient intakes of Malaysians. The Ministry of Health places great importance on consuming healthy and nutritional foods in order to prevent chronic non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, cancers, and the like.

As clearly stated in the dietary guidelines, the Ministry of Health Malaysia notes that educating the masses is one of the effective ways to promote good health and quality lifestyles. This is so since creating awareness and inculcating healthy lifestyles among the masses will prevent undesirable habits, such as poor diet, sedentary living and cigarette smoking (Dima-Cozma et al., 2014; Şemin and Tengiz, 2016). As such, healthy and nutritional foods have constantly been promoted in Malaysia to ensure that a majority of the population adopts a life-time of healthy eating practices to avoid preventable diseases that could hinder mental and physical growth of the citizens, as well as the nation's continued development.

The need to consume wholesome and nutritional foods has also received due attentions from notable international organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO). These institutions have emphasised how awareness could lead to good health and well-being, as well as how good health is essential to sustainable development. For example, among several goals to

be achieved by the year 2030, the well-thought-out initiatives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3, emphasises the need to improve sanitation, hygiene, and better medical care that ensure physical and mental well-being of all (United Nations, 2015). In addition, the United Nations, through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has been promoting the need for everyone to have access to enough high-quality food to lead active and healthy life.

With the help of FAO, the United Nations has been assisting in promoting various food-based dietary guidelines developed by national expert committees from different countries. Additionally, the United Nations has been offering advice on foods and dietary patterns, particularly to promote overall health and prevent chronic diseases. In addition to efforts of the WHO towards malnutrition, good health, and well-being, in May 2018 its member states approved the world organisation's new General Programme of Work 2019–2023. This programme covers three strategic priorities – universal health coverage, health security, and improved health and well-being – designed to help countries stay on track in fulfilling SDG 3 and the other health-related targets (Mohammed and Ghebreyesus, 2018; World Health Organization, 2018).

While good health and well-being has been promoted locally and internationally, the Feeding Tomorrow programme has demonstrated the commitment of the International Islamic University Malaysia, through its International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART). This programme is in conformity with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as well as sustainable development goals. As stated earlier, this programme has been promoting the consumption of lawful and good foods for good health and overall well-being to students of a number of secondary schools. With this programme, the IIUM contributes to the national struggles for achieving National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia and Global Action Plan for Healthy Living and Well-being for All.

Students' Awareness of Lawful and Good Foods in Schools

Islamic dietary law distinguishes between food and drink that are lawful (*ḥalāl*) and wholesome (*tayyib*), and those that are prohibited (*ḥarām*) for the benefits of human beings in this world and hereafter. As stated in a *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (SAW) reportedly said that Allāh is pure and He accepts only what is pure.

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[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a list of names and affiliations of contributors, but the specific details cannot be discerned.]

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EXPERIENCES OF

THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

The International Islamic University Malaysia has, since 2018, redoubled its struggle to restore its wisdom, strengths, and dignity and promote comprehensive excellence. Hence, the University adopted the United Nations' sustainable development agenda as a complement to the University's vision and mission of Islamisation, Integration, Internationalisation and Comprehensive Excellence.

The book explains the ways in which the SDGs will provide a new strategy to apply the concept of Islamisation, which has long been the foundation of the IIUM. Consequently, the university's operations and facilities have been adjusted so that they become mediums in applying and showcasing a lifestyle that is sustainable. Everything in the university i.e. the curricular and extra-curricular courses, the research activities, and everyday operations in administrative offices and other places are geared towards sustainable development in line with the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Elements of sustainability are integrated in every aspect of the university's administration and, indeed, in teaching, research and community engagement. Consequently, the IIUM has adopted "Humanising Higher Education through maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and SDGs" as its official strategic mission.

ABDUL RASHID MOTEN served as Senior Professor in Political Science at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Currently, he is Guest Writer at IIUM, and has published 24 books and monographs and contributed more than 200 articles to peer-reviewed journals and encyclopedias.

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