



RESEARCH ARTICLE



Halal and Tayyib as an Integrated Dietary Ethic the Quranic Concept and Its Contemporary Scientific Relevance

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Abstract

This article advances a comprehensive framework for understanding food ethics in Islam by integrating the Qur'anic concept of Halalan Tayyiban with classical juristic reasoning, Maqasid al Sharia, and contemporary scientific and regulatory perspectives. It argues that reducing halal to formal ingredient permissibility is insufficient in modern food systems characterized by industrial processing, complex supply chains, biotechnology, and globalized markets. The article shows that halal establishes the boundary of permissibility through revelation and juristic method, while tayyib functions as a qualitative and ethical threshold requiring safety, wholesomeness, cleanliness, and protection from harm and deception. By situating these discussions within a maqasid framework, the study highlights how food ethics serve the preservation of life, intellect, wealth, and religion, while also extending to public health, consumer protection, and sustainability. Scientific methods are treated as essential verification tools rather than independent norm setters, complementing revelation by identifying contamination, adulteration, and risk pathways in complex production environments. The article further evaluates halal certification and governance, using Pakistan as a case study to illustrate regulatory strengths and gaps. Ultimately, it proposes an integrated halal tayyib assessment model that bridges revelation and science, resists logo reductionism, and provides a principled basis for policy, industry practice, and consumer responsibility in contemporary Muslim societies.

Keywords

Seerah, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Islamic Leadership, Amanah (Trust), Justice, Shura (Consultation), Tarbiyah (Character Building), Quran, Hadith, Accountability, Islamic Governance



Introduction

The modern food dilemma (industrial processing, additives, biotechnology, and global supply chains): Contemporary food systems routinely separate consumers from sources, processes, and intermediaries. In such conditions, halal practice cannot remain a simple question of what is eaten; it becomes a question of how foods are sourced, processed, handled, verified, and communicated. Modern halal discourse therefore increasingly operates at the intersection of law, ethics, and technical assurance; because ingredients may be derived from multiple origins and processed through complex industrial pathways that are not visible at the point of purchase.

Reduction of halal to ingredient legality: limitations and risks: A narrow “ingredient only” approach fails to address hidden inputs (processing aids, shared lines, cross contamination), ambiguous origins (animal or plant derived additives), and the limits of consumer knowledge. This is one reason certification systems emerged, yet certification itself is globally fragmented, with standards often confined to national acceptance and disputed points (such as stunning) intensifying market complexity.

Quranic insistence on halalan Tayyiban as a dual normative command: The Quran does not frame consumption merely as permitted versus prohibited; it repeatedly links lawful to wholesome, morally and materially sound. This pairing establishes an integrated ethic: permissibility (halal) remains necessary, but wholesomeness (Tayyib) demands attention to purity, benefit, and harm. Contemporary scholarship in your uploaded sources similarly emphasizes that Muslims are directed to be particular not only about what is lawful but also what is good and beneficial

يا ايها الناس كلوا مما في الارض حلالا طيبا ولا تتبعوا خطوات الشيطان انه لكم عدو مبين¹
“O people, eat of what is in the earth, lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is an open enemy for you”

فكلوا مما رزقكم الله حلالا طيبا واشكروا نعمة الله ان كنتم اياه تعبدون²
“So, eat of the provision Allah has given to you, lawful and good, and be grateful for the bounty of Allah, if it is Him you worship”

Research Objectives and Scope

This study develops a tightly integrated account of halal and Tayyib as a single dietary ethic. It aims to

1. clarify the conceptual distinction and linkage between halal and Tayyib,
2. ground the framework in Quranic guidance and Prophetic ethics,
3. connect classical legal reasoning about purity, harm, and transformation to contemporary food realities, and
4. Present a contemporary relevance argument using modern safety logic and governance debates, including certification and standardization challenges.

Methodological Approach

Textual, juristic, Maqasid, and scientific synthesis: The approach is layered. First,

1. A Quranic thematic reading of halalan Tayyiban establishes normative foundations.
2. Prophetic guidance is used to operationalize dietary ethics as lived practice.
3. Juristic reasoning and legal concepts (purity, impurity, harm prevention) are treated as analytical tools for modern cases.

4. Scientific and regulatory literature is used to evaluate practical conditions of safety, hygiene, traceability, and verification, because halal assurance increasingly depends on technical review and competent oversight, not consumer perception alone

Conceptual Foundations: Defining Halal and Tayyib

Halal as legal permissibility in Islamic law: Halal denotes what Islamic law permits for consumption and use. In modern halal discourse, this permission must be demonstrable in practice because numerous ingredients can be derived from either animal or plant sources, or the permissibility of the final product depends on origin and process, not labels or assumptions.

Haram as prohibition grounded in harm, impurity, or moral corruption: Haram is what Allah has prohibited. In food, major prohibited categories typically include swine and its derivatives, carrion, blood, alcohol and intoxicants, and improperly slaughtered animals. Modern food processing complicates this in two ways: first, prohibited sources may appear as hidden derivatives; second, products that come into direct contact with prohibited substances can also become impermissible within many halal frameworks.

حرمت عليكم الميتة والدم ولحم الخنزير وما اهل لغير الله به³

“Forbidden for you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that upon which a name other than that of Allah has been invoked”

Tayyib as purity, wholesomeness, benefit, safety, and ethical soundness: Tayyib extends beyond legality into quality and consequence. In your uploaded literature, Tayyib is presented as a practical condition of being safe, not harmful, and aligned with human wellbeing; halal is framed as the normative boundary set by Allah, while Tayyib is strongly connected to human selection based on quality, safety, and benefit. Distinction between Tayyib and mere edibility: Something may be edible yet not Tayyib if it is contaminated, harmful, deceptive, or inconsistent with ethical integrity. Tayyib therefore functions as an evaluative demand: it asks whether consumption promotes wellbeing rather than merely avoiding explicit prohibitions. Halal and Tayyib as a two tier evaluative framework: A contemporary operationalization of halalan Tayyiban may be framed as a two tier test. Tier one establishes permissibility through source and lawful acquisition. Tier two evaluates wholesomeness through safety, cleanliness, health impact, and integrity across the supply chain. Your uploaded study articulates this directly: halal can be assured by knowing sources and method of acquiring, while Tayyib emphasizes safety, cleanliness, and healthiness, and must be considered throughout the supply chain. Relationship between Tayyib and khabith: The Quranic moral vocabulary contrasts pure and wholesome with what is filthy, harmful, and corrupt. This contrast supports the principle that ethical consumption is not neutral; it shapes character, health, and society.

Quranic Foundations of Halalan Tayyiban

Core Quranic directives on lawful and wholesome consumption: The Quran repeatedly directs believers to eat what is lawful and good, establishing that food ethics begins with divine permission and is completed by wholesomeness. This is reinforced in modern scholarship that reads halalan Tayyiban as a driver of both physical and spiritual development, not merely a dietary restriction .

يا ايها الذين امنوا كلوا من طيبات ما رزقناكم واشكروا لله ان كنتم اياه تعبدون⁴

“O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship”

يا ايها الرسل كلوا من الطيبات واعملوا صالحا⁵

“O messengers, eat of the good things, and do righteous deeds”

Ethical logic of food in the Quran: gratitude, discipline, and restraint: Quranic guidance places food within worship: gratitude disciplines desire, and restraint prevents excess. This ethical framing directly challenges modern consumption culture, where marketing and abundance can encourage overconsumption and disregard for consequences.

وكلوا واشربوا ولا تسرفوا انه لا يحب المسرفين⁶

“Eat and drink, and do not be extravagant. Surely, He does not like the extravagant”

Food and spiritual moral formation: Food is not treated as morally indifferent. In Quranic reasoning, what enters the body influences spiritual life, moral strength, and social responsibility. This is why “lawful” is paired with “good”: the goal is not only compliance but purification of life. Quranic harm prevention paradigm: The Quran repeatedly closes doors that lead to harm, corruption, and self-destruction. This paradigm supports the broader Tayyib requirement: what damages health, mind, or social order cannot be considered wholesome even if it appears superficially permissible. Rejection of excess, waste, deception, and self-harm in consumption: Waste and moral negligence in consumption are rejected. This extends to consumer deception and harmful market practices, because they violate the Quranic demand for integrity and justice in human dealings.

Prophetic Guidance: Dietary Ethics and Preventive Health

Moderation and portion control: The Prophetic model treats moderation as protection of body and soul, and as a policy against harm. It is a core practical meaning of Tayyib in everyday life.

ما ملا ابن ادم وعاء شرا من بطنه بحسب ابن ادم اكالات يقمن صلبه فان كان لا محالة فثلث لطعامه وثلث لشرابه وثلث لنفسه⁷

“A human being fills no vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for a son of Adam to eat a few mouthfuls that keep his back straight; but if he must, then one third for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath”

Cleanliness, hygiene, and public health implications: Prophetic instruction places purity and cleanliness at the center of religious life. This has direct contemporary relevance: hygienic practice and contamination control are essential components of Tayyib, especially in mass production contexts.

الطهور شطر الايمان⁸

“Purification is half of faith”

Avoidance of intoxication, impurity, and deception: The Prophetic framework bars intoxication and moral corruption at the root. This not only protects intellect but also anchors modern policy discussions on harmful substances and deceptive consumer practices.

كل مسكر حرام⁹

“Every intoxicant is unlawful”

Eating manners as applied ethics: Sunnah-based etiquette shapes how Muslims eat, share, and restrain desire. These manners cultivate discipline, gratitude, and social cohesion, and they prevent the slide from lawful eating into harmful patterns of excess.

Prophetic lifestyle as a preventive medical and ethical model: Taken together, Prophetic guidance functions as preventive ethics: it structures daily life to reduce harm, build resilience, and preserve wellbeing. This is a practical bridge between revelation and contemporary concerns about chronic disease, food safety, and consumer vulnerability in modern markets.

Classical Fiqh and Tafsir Perspectives on Food, Purity, and Harm

Classical jurists framed food rulings through clear legal taxonomies (halal, haram, makruh, mubah), but they did not treat legality as a purely formal label. The operative questions were: does the substance originate from a lawful source, is it acquired by lawful means, and does it carry a recognized cause of prohibition such as explicit textual forbiddance, inherent impurity (najasah), intoxication, or verified harm. This is why classical fiqh repeatedly ties dietary rulings to protection of religion, life, intellect, and market integrity, even when those terms were not yet systematized as Maqasid.

Concepts of taharah and najasah: Purity in Islamic law is not only ritual; it is also a civilizational hygiene ethic that shapes what can enter the body, what can be traded, and what can be processed. The fiqh of taharah and najasah becomes directly relevant to contemporary ingredients because industrial production often blends animal derivatives, alcohol carriers, enzymes, and additives into a single supply chain. Modern research on impurity issues highlights that Quranic concepts of Tayyibat and khabaith and juristic rules of harm prevention remain the backbone for solving modern ingredient disputes.

Istihalah in classical jurisprudence

Istihalah (substantial transformation) is one of the most important classical tools for modern food technology because it asks whether the original impure or prohibited substance has changed into a new substance with different properties and legal description. Contemporary writing on impurity problems explicitly identifies “metabolism” (i.e., transformation/istihalah) as crucial for assessing components like gelatin and alcohol in processed foods, while also noting that the method cannot be applied mechanically without attention to source and degree of transformation.

Madhhab differences on transformed substances: The practical significance of madhhab differences is not theoretical; it directly shapes how halal bodies treat gelatin, emulsifiers, and alcohol traces. Contemporary comparative discussion summarizes that Hanafi and Maliki jurists are generally more open to impurity removal through transformation, while Shafii and Hanbali approaches are more cautious, especially where the transformation is disputed or partial. This diversity is not a weakness; it is a legal resource that requires disciplined tarjih (reasoned preference) and transparent standards. (Akram ul haque and Iqbal, 2025, p. 9)

Application of classical tools to modern ingredients such as gelatin, enzymes, alcohol traces, and emulsifiers

A functional halal-Tayyib method uses classical fiqh tools in a sequence rather than selecting one tool to force a desired outcome:

1. confirm source (animal, microbial, synthetic, plant),
2. confirm process (slaughter, fermentation, chemical conversion),
3. confirm contamination risk (shared lines, carriers, cleaning protocols),
4. evaluate transformation (istihalah/istihlak where relevant), and
5. apply harm prevention and consumer protection rules.

Contemporary analysis lists enzymes, gelatin, ethanol, and animal-derived inputs among the recurring sources of impurity concerns in modern nutrients and additives, and links solutions to studying transformation principles and tracing sources.

“There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.”

Maqasid al Shariah and Food Ethics

Preservation of life and food safety: Maqasid reasoning becomes indispensable when the halal label is technically satisfied but safety is uncertain. The halal-Tayyib pairing makes safety a religious concern, not a secondary preference. A Maqasid-based framework connects lawful consumption with protection against harm, and modern Maqasid literature explicitly links welfare protection (maslahah) to the entire concept of halalan toyyiban as guidance for consumers, producers, and products.

Preservation of intellect and avoidance of intoxicants and addiction
Protection of intellect is not limited to classical intoxication. It extends to habitual harms that impair judgment and well-being (addiction pathways, dependence, and chronic exposures). The Maqasid perspective therefore treats intoxicants as a floor, not a ceiling: anything that reliably degrades intellect, self-control, or mental welfare triggers ethical scrutiny under Tayyib.

Preservation of wealth and prevention of fraud and market deception: Food ethics in Islam treats fraud as a direct assault on public trust and economic welfare. Modern halal markets amplify fraud risks through complex supply chains, making Maqasid-based governance (verification, auditability, truthful labeling) a religious necessity, not a bureaucratic add-on.

Preservation of religion through ethical consumption: Diet is a daily ritual of obedience; repeated negligence in consumption corrodes moral seriousness. This is why Maqasid-based writings frame halalan toyyiban as a comprehensive guidance that sustains obedience and gratitude to Allah across consumer life, industry behavior, and institutional governance.

Contemporary expansion of Maqasid to public health, environment, and sustainability
While the classical five necessities remain central, contemporary scholarship increasingly treats public health, food security, and ecological stability as direct extensions of maslahah and harm prevention. This is especially relevant to ultra-processed foods, chemical load, and industrial waste, where the harm is systemic rather than immediate.

Tayyib as a Maqasid aligned quality threshold: Tayyib functions as a quality threshold that sits above technical permissibility: it asks whether the product is clean in sourcing, safe in process, beneficial in outcomes, and ethically credible in market behavior. It is a structured way to prevent “halal logo reductionism” by making welfare protection operational.

Conclusion

Halalan Tayyiban as a comprehensive Islamic food ethic: Halal and Tayyib form a single integrated ethic rather than two unrelated labels. Halal secures the boundary of permissibility through revealed guidance and juristic method. Tayyib completes that boundary by requiring wholesomeness in source, process, safety, and consequences, so that lawful consumption does not become a pathway to harm, impurity, or deception. In contemporary markets, the halalan Tayyiban ethic therefore demands more than ingredient legality; it demands integrity across the supply chain, scientific verification where needed, and governance that protects people from contamination and fraud.

Relevance for modern health, governance, and sustainability: The contemporary significance of this framework lies in its ability to speak to current public health and market realities without reducing religion to slogans. Tayyib provides an Islamic vocabulary for food safety, contamination control, harmful product avoidance, and consumer protection, while Maqasid reasoning supplies

a principled basis for policy choices where harms are systemic rather than immediate. Scientific methods strengthen this by enabling detection of adulteration and verification of origins, yet they remain tools within the moral-legal frame established by revelation and juristic reasoning.

Policy and educational recommendations: A halal-Tayyib strategy should be translated into enforceable governance and practical literacy. At policy level, this means standard clarity, accreditation of certifiers, rigorous audits, laboratory testing for high risk products, and strong penalties for fraud and mislabeling. At educational level, it means teaching a simple integrated method: lawful source, clean process, verified integrity, and harm-aware choice. This is particularly urgent in environments where consumers rely on logos while supply chains remain opaque, and where “lawful ingredients” coexist with unsafe handling, adulteration, or harmful formulation. Pakistan’s case shows that halal regulation is most credible when it governs the chain, not only the final label, and when it is integrated with food safety and consumer protection aims.

Directions for Future Interdisciplinary Research

Future research should strengthen the halal-Tayyib framework in three directions.

First, develop clearer scholarly consensus tools for emerging ingredients and processes by combining madh’hab resources with disciplined contemporary ijtiḥad. Second, expand empirical work on how halal certification systems actually prevent contamination and fraud, and where they fail in enforcement. Third, deepen the interface between Maqasid and public health by identifying Tayyib indicators that are both sharia-aligned and scientifically measurable, especially regarding ultra-processed foods, long-term toxicology, packaging migration, and novel food technologies. This is the most credible path to protect consumers, uphold Islamic integrity, and prevent the reduction of halal to a market logo without moral substance. Greater attention is also needed to identify institutional weaknesses, inconsistent standards, and gaps in regulatory enforcement across jurisdictions. Further research should strengthen the halal-Tayyib framework in three directions. First, clearer scholarly consensus tools should be developed for emerging ingredients and processes by combining madh’hab resources with disciplined contemporary ijtiḥad. Greater consideration should be given to differences among classical legal opinions and their application to modern food ingredients, additives, enzymes, and processing technologies. Such an approach can provide more consistent guidance for assessing novel ingredients whose origins, composition, or processing methods may be uncertain. It can also help address contemporary questions arising from increasingly complex global food supply chains. Second, empirical work should be expanded to examine how halal certification systems actually prevent contamination, adulteration, and fraud, as well as where weaknesses occur in monitoring and enforcement. Particular attention should be given to certification procedures, laboratory testing, traceability mechanisms, supply-chain monitoring, and regulatory oversight.

Data Availability

The data will be made available on a fair request to the corresponding author.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable.

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