

## Are GMO's Halal to Eat?

### بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

فَإِنْ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَأَحْسَنُ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا وَكُلُّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

There has been a lengthy and rather heated debate surrounding the acceptability of eating genetically modified foods (GMO's). The supposed health risks associated with genetically-modified foods, like golden rice, are now debunked due to better designed studies; however, fears surrounding these foods have not settled down entirely. Added to this discussion, is the obvious question of the permissibility of eating these foods from an Islamic perspective. A lot of the discussion on GMO's have been concentrated on the health issues, but very few times has the Islamic ruling been factored in, especially for Muslims who happen to be large consumers of these products. In the *Magazine For Islamic Research* published in 1433 Hirji (2012), Dr. Khalid al-Muslih wrote a research on the issue

of genetically modified foods. The following is an excerpt from his work on the permissibility of eating such foods:

#### “The Ruling on Eating Genetically-Modified Foods

The on-going debate between the supporters and opposers on genetically-modified foods has preceded and the debate is not settled. Anyone searching for the legislated ruling on these foods can not escape from the established origin in regards to foods. The the origin for all foods and vaccinations is permissibility as the evidences indicate<sup>1</sup>. From those evidences is the statement of Allah, the Exalted:

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنْزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say (O Muhammad): "I find not in that which has been inspired to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be Maytatah (a dead animal) or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork, etc.) for that surely is impure, or impious (unlawful) meat (of an animal) which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But whosoever is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, (for him) certainly, your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. [6:145]

And similar to that is the statement of the Exalted:

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

He has forbidden you only the Maytatah (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful [2:173]

<sup>1</sup> See: Ahkam ul-Quran by Jasaas (3/29), Ahkam ul-Quran of Ibn 'Arabi (3/124), adh-Dhakira of al-Qaraafi (4/100), Umm of Imam Shafiee (2/269), Bahr al-Muheet (8/9) and al-Fataawa al-Kubra of Ibn Taymiyyah (1/371)

So everything that benefits is good and everything that harms is filthy. The proper opinion, according to everyone who has understanding, is that beneficial things should be permissible and harmful things should be prohibited. For verily prohibition revolves around harms that are found in [for example] in dead meat, or blood, or pork or animals that have fangs or birds with claws or alcohol or other than that from the things that harm the souls of mankind. The absence of that is found [for example] in cattle, milk, and other than that”<sup>2</sup>

So like that, the people of knowledge have agreed that everything that is harmful to the soul or intellect in terms of foods is prohibited<sup>3</sup>. The Shariah is built upon negating harms and removing them. So verily genetically modified foods are impermissible if it is certain that they are harmful to the health of the body or intellect or genetics. However, this level of affirmed harm for these foods is not verified. So the harms of these foods continue to be suspicious at best, so like that, a researcher is not able to prohibit these foods. So the statement of prohibition is daring and is not based on proof or evidence, especially if that is against the origin, which is soundness<sup>4</sup>. That is: the soundness of the genetically-modified foods from sickness and alleged harms. At the very least, its soundness is such that it outweighs its harm. What makes these foods remain in the bounds of permissibility is the affirmation of the benefits of these genetically-modified foods and its increased production. As for the harms, then they do not cease to be under research and investigation and do not justify the preemptive results and research. In regards to the affirmation of that harm, then it does not necessitate the ruling of prohibition for [genetically-modified] foods. Rather, it is necessary to balance the harms and benefits and look at the their volume and the extent of their strength in order to move the ruling from permissible to prohibition. And Allah knows best”.

[Taken from:

<http://www.alifta.net/Fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?languagename=ar&View=Page&PageID=13694&PageNo=1&BookID=2>]

Inshallah the above-mentioned passage will clear the conscience of Muslims far and wide. I ask Allah that He benefits the Muslims by this work.

Written by

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<sup>2</sup> al-Fatawaa al-Kubra of Ibn Taymiyyah (1/3 )

<sup>3</sup> Majmoo' Sharh al-Muhathab (9/29) and Mowsoo'ah al-'Ijma' (1/110-111)

<sup>4</sup> Qaaidah al-Yaqeen La Yazool bi Shakk by Baahisayn pg. 92