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CHAPTER 1

Prevention through Islamic lifestyle

Islam is a comprehensive system of life, which provides the best forms of balance between the mundane and the spiritual. Islam strongly believes in good human health, physical, spiritual, mental and psychological. Therefore, it has provided the mankind with a lifestyle that guarantees the prevention of diseases.

Islamic life style consists of seven major elements:

- i. Spiritual activities.
- ii. Moderate eating.
- iii. Physical labour.
- iv. Tension control and contentment.
- v. Elimination of selfishness and greediness.
- vi. Abstention from forbidden acts, foods and drinks.
- vii. Adoption of certain recommended acts, habits and eatables.

If Islamic lifestyle is completely followed, the man may find himself capable of overcoming the causes of various diseases. It makes the man free of stress and tension and enables him to maintain the enthusiasm of life. Islam has placed maximum stress on removing the strains and providing the man with a pleasant life. It is stated in holy Qur'an:

The God-fearing men are those who spend in ease and in adversity; those who control their wrath and those who are forgiving towards mankind.^[1]

The holy Prophet (saw) said:

Anger comes from the devil who was created from fire, which is extinguished by water. Should anyone of you get angry, let him make ablution.^[2]

Control of wrath and anger, helps man to control strains and tensions, that is an essential requirement in prevention of the heart problems. In the same way, spending money for the betterment of the poor and the needy and act of forgiving others, provides man with a spiritual pleasure and happiness, which enhances the enjoyment of life.

Jealousy is the origin of various mental worries, Islam has strongly condemned and forbidden it. The holy Prophet (saw) said:

Abstain from jealousy, indeed, jealousy finishes all the good acts and their rewards as the fire does away with the firewood.^[3]

Similarly, greediness and selfishness also create a lot of mental strains and worries. These are in the same way prohibited; contentment and satisfaction have been commended in their place.

This Islamic attitude of thinking becomes the basis of a pleasant life, which certainly helps in prevention of heart diseases.

Moreover, moderation is required to be observed in every respect and not extremism and over indulgence. The Qur'an says:

Allah desires ease for you and He does not desire hardship for you.^[4]

The holy Prophet (saw) said repeatedly:
Ruined are those who insist on hardships.^[5]

Islam commands that one should not overburden oneself, as stated in the holy Qur'an in the form of a prayer:
And (Our Lord!) do not lay on us a burden that we are unable to bear.^[6]

Although the physical labour is strongly recommended by Islam, but under the principle of moderation and balance.

These are some of the instances of Islamic lifestyle, just to elaborate and substantiate the idea of a **tension-free and balanced life** that Islam has commended to adopt.

This tension-free and balanced lifestyle provides the man with a very profound basis for prevention of heart diseases.

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1. Qur'an (*Al 'Imran*) 3:134.
 2. Abu Dawud, *Sunan*.
 3. Abu Dawud, *Sunan*.
 4. Qur'an (*al-Baqarah*) 2:185.
 5. Muslim, *as-Sahih* 2:339.
 6. Qur'an (*al-Baqarah*) 2:286.

CHAPTER 2

Prevention through prayers

Islam has given a very special attention towards health of the heart, both spiritual and physical. The Qur'an denotes the significance of a healthy heart through the words, peaceful heart. The holy Prophet (saw) explained the same question, stating:
Indeed there is a muscle in the body; if it remains healthy, the whole body becomes healthy, and if it is diseased, the whole body becomes diseased. Beware, it is heart.^[1]

Therefore, Islam has placed a remarkable stress on prevention of heart diseases through its teachings and practices.

Prayer is the most important and fundamental practice of Islam which possesses the highest spiritual and physico-medical significance having positively an effective role in care and treatment of many ailments particularly the heart diseases.

Giving identification of the hypocrites, the Qur'an states:
When they stand up for prayer they perform it languidly.^[2]

It means that hypocritical manner of prayer is based on lethargy and carelessness as they get neither any spiritual benefit from the prayer nor any physical good is done to their state of health.

The Quranic injunction is further elucidated by the holy Prophet's tradition:
Verily the prayer has cure in it.^[3]

The constant praying habit resultantly lessens the hazards of heart diseases through the following methods:

1. Regular prayer habit with real cordial interest and spiritual concentration removes or minimizes the strains and provides mental relaxation and contentment which helps in prevention of heart diseases. The holy Qur'an says:
Surely the heart strains and tensions are removed through remembrance of Allah.^[4]

2. There are two main categories of fat in the diet: saturated fats and poly-unsaturated fats. Saturated fats tend to raise blood cholesterol levels and poly-unsaturated fats tend to lower them. Raised blood cholesterol may lead to obstruction of the coronary arteries with coronary thrombosis and occurrences of heart attacks.

Normal cholesterol level ranges from 150 to 250 mgs with the intake of food its level registers abrupt increase in our blood. One of the ways to obviate this threat is that cholesterol should be made to dissolve before it gets deposited in the arterial wall.

Islam has prescribed five mandatory prayers a day. The three of them Fajr (morning), 'Asr (afternoon) and Maghrib (sunset) coincide with times when the human stomach is normally empty. So these prayers comprise less number of cycles, which involves less quantum of exercise. On the other hand, 'Isha (night prayer) is normally offered after having the dinner; that's why it consists of 17 cycles. 17 cycles of exercise which facilitates the dissolution of excess cholesterol. This quantum of cycles has been fixed by the special addition of *sunan* (non-mandatory) and *nawafil* (voluntary) prayers.

In the month of Ramadan, the whole day is spent in thirst and hunger. So naturally at the time of *iftar* (breaking of the fast) there is comparatively more intake of foods and drinks, therefore Isha (night prayer), consisting of 17 cycles, is further added with 20 cycles of *tarawih* prayer. There is a very significant tradition of the holy Prophet (saw) in this respect, reported by Imam Abu Nuaym:

Dissolve your dietary cholesterol through the process of remembrance of Allah and offering of Prayers.^[5]

Immediately after the meals neither the sleep is recommended nor any hard exercise. Both can be harmful for heart. Only a soft kind of exercise like the prayer activity is said to be useful. The holy Prophet (saw) said:

Don't go to bed immediately after the meals; it will harden your heart. Avoid any hard or large quantum of exercise immediately after meals, it will also cause a damage.^[6]

That's why a very balanced and soft physico-spiritual exercise has been prescribed in the form of prayer activity.

3. Function of two types of calf muscles called gastric anemias and soleus is also worth consideration. These muscles function as muscular pump for conveying back the veinal blood to the heart. As the heart pumps out fresh oxygenated blood into the body, the blood that passes through arteries to legs is returned to the heart through veins. When the calf muscles become weak and inert, the return flow of the veinal blood is affected, whereas the strong calf muscles render a considerable help in backward flow of the deoxygenated veinal blood to the heart.

The prayer that provides 5-times mandatory and another 4 to 5 times non-mandatory routine of light exercise is of appreciable assistance in accelerating the action of the muscular pump in the calf region. Every time standing up from prostration or sitting for a new cycle a sort of pressure is exerted on the calves. Owing to this process of contraction of calf muscles, the flow of the obstructed veinal blood is

restored and it rushes back rapidly to the heart. This helps a good deal in decreasing the pressure on heart and its pumping action is somewhat reinforced.

- [1.](#) Bukhari, *as-Sahih* (1:13).
- [2.](#) Qur'an (*an-Nisa'*) 4:142.
- [3.](#) Ibn Majah, *Sunan*.
- [4.](#) Qur'an (*ar-Ra'd*) 13:28.
- [5.](#) Abu Nuayrn.
- [6.](#) Abu Nuaym.

CHAPTER 3

Prevention through moderate eating habits

Medical research has revealed that most of the heart diseases originate from the stomach. The more one eats the more diseases he contacts, whereas abstention from excessive eating is of paramount importance in prevention of heart diseases. The diet and eating habits have a direct effect on the heart itself. That's why Islam has strongly prescribed the moderate eating habits. Intake of a large quantity of food or having a full breakfast, a full lunch and a full dinner daily, is much more than that is essential for good health. Full three meals a day, specially consisting of foods high in calories and saturated in fats, are not only excessive but are highly harmful and surely risky for heart diseases and other serious ailments such as hypertension, atherosclerosis and diabetes mellitus etc.

Islam believes in the prevention of diseases more than their treatment. Therefore overeating has been vehemently condemned and prohibited in the Qur'an and *sunnah*. The Qur'an has strongly commanded to avoid excessive use of foods and drinks to keep a balance in dietic habits. It is stated: *Eat and drink and be not immoderate. Verily Allah does not like the transgressors.*^[1]

The holy Prophet (saw) has been reported saying metaphorically: *An unbeliever eats and fills seven intestines while a believer uses only one.*^[2]

It means, one may eat seven times more than what is required. It is nearly an act of disbelief and highly condemned by the holy Prophet (saw). It is further reported by Prophet Muhammad (saw): *Allah hates those who eat excessively.*^[3]

The holy Prophet (saw) further said: *No man fills a vessel worse than his stomach. A few mouthfuls that would suffice to keep his back upright are enough for a man. But if he must eat more, than he should fill one third (of his stomach) with food, one third with drink and leave one third for easy breathing.*^[4]

Islamic principle is therefore neither too little nor too much should be eaten. Moderation is the key to health.

The holy Prophet's own practice in this connection is narrated in the words *The Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his family never took a stomachful meal throughout their life.*^[5]

This is an ideal model of moderate eating, and if perfectly followed by the people, many heart diseases can be prevented normally.

1. Qur'an (*al-A'raf*) 7:31.
2. Bukhari, *as-Sahih* (2:812).
3. Daylami, *Musnad-ul-Firdaws*.
4. Ibn Majah, *Sunan*.
5. Hadith.

CHAPTER 4

Prevention through certain foods

An adequate daily diet needs following ingredients to be fulfilled with below-mentioned requirements:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| a. calories | 2900 calories for an average man.
2200 calories for an average woman. |
| b. carbohydrates | 400 grams. |
| c. minerals | in the forms of sodium chloride, calcium, potassium, iron, sulphur, phosphorous, iodine and fluorine. |
| d. proteins | 45 grams (minimum) |
| e. vitamins | A, BI, B2, B6, B12, C, D, E. |
| f. fats | only that amount, which can be burnt up as energy. |
| g. water | pure and bacteria-free. It contains about 66% of the body's weight. |

The basic thing for upkeeping of the health is not the amount and quantity of the food; it is the kind and quality that may fulfil the requirements. If this principle is adopted for intake of the food, most of the heart diseases can easily be prevented. The miraculous aspect of Islamic teachings is that out of many permissible foods, the Qur'an and Prophet's *sunnah* have especially recommended a few. These recommended foods have a significant and remarkable effect in prevention of heart diseases.

The holy Quran recommends the fig and the olive in the words:
By the fig and by the olive!^[1]

1. Fig

It essentially provides calcium, phosphorous and quite high content of iron, but it is specially rich in fibre. It gives strength to the lungs and chest and is useful in the treatment of mental and heart diseases. Being rich in fibre, it tends to lower the cholesterol level due to its poly-unsaturated fat value. Thus its use is considerably fruitful for a heart patient.

2. Olive

Being a Qur'anic fruit it has also a very significant role in prevention and treatment of heart diseases. Those who want to cut down on cholesterol in their diet, olive oil is the best alternative of all the oils, as 100 grams of olive in brine contain:

82 calories
0.7 grams of protein
1.2 grams of saturated fat
1.0 gram of poly—unsaturated fat
35 grams of dietary fibre
8.8 grams of total fat and
cholesterol content is NIL.

Italy has a lower incidence of heart diseases, apparently because the Italians use the valuable olive oil instead of butter and other animal fats. It is reported by Zayd bin Arqam that the holy Prophet (saw) recommended the use of olive (oil) for the heart patients.^[21]

3. Garlic

The Qur'an refers it in *surah al-Baqarah* in the words "and its garlic." It is one of the spices, which provides strength to heart, brain, eyes, and other parts of the body and especially enhances the body's power of killing injurious germs. Recent medical research has revealed that garlic is also useful in treating paralysis, asthma, tuberculosis and pain of the joints. Moreover, it possesses antibiotic and antiseptic properties. Due to its special function in control of hypertension, it is also useful for prevention of heart attack.

4. Onion

The Qur'an has also referred it in the same verse: "and its onion." It is a major source of proteins, calcium, potassium, sodium, sulphur and iron. 100 grams of raw onion contains:

1.3 gms of dietary fibre
23 calories
0.9 gms of protein and
5.2 gms of sugar

It specially contains B6 and FO. It is useful in killing worms and eliminating the bacteria causing tuberculosis and ulceration of the lungs. Its most important property is that it helps in dissolution of blood cholesterol and its constant use tends to prevent heart attacks.

5. Grapes

The Qur'an refers it as "a fruit of paradise" saying:
There shall be gardens and grapes.^[3]

Grapes as per recent medical research, in addition to be a source of carbohydrates, phosphorous, potassium, calcium and especially of vitamin A, are essentially useful for heart, liver and stomach. It is specially beneficial for mental and heart diseases and for intestinal ailments.

6. Meat

There are three kinds of meat:

(i) Beef (discouraged): Although beef and mutton are declared to be lawful, but Shariah has preferred the white meat (fish and birds etc) which is very low in fat and thus possesses no harm for heart. The holy Prophet (saw) has said in respect of red meat:
There is a curative quality in cow's milk, a medicinal value in cow's butter and disease in cow's meat.^[4]

Cow's meat, being red meat, is essentially very high in cholesterol but modern research has further verified the Prophet's saying that it contains a worm in it, called taenia saginata which also causes various abdominal diseases. 100 grams of beef contains:

	Calories	Fat (g)
1. Minced (ground) cooked	229	15.2
2. Rumpsteak fried	246	14.6
3. Grilled (broiled)	218	12.1
4. Sirloin roast	284	21.1

(ii) Mutton (lamb): It is also high in fat, as it can be known through the following table. 100 grams of lamb contains:

	Calories	Fat (g)
1. Leg roast	266	17.9
2. Loin chops (broiled)	355	29
3. Grilled (broiled) lean only	222	12.3
4. Roast, lean only	191	8.1

Neck is the only part of the lamb that is low in fat and hence not rich in cholesterol, That's why the holy Prophet (saw) recommended the meat of lamb's neck to eat, as related by Ibn-ul-Qayyim in *Zad-ul-maad*. Diet Specialists have also recommended to eat only the lean, to get reduction in saturated fat from the meat.

(iii) White meat (encouraged): Fish and birds' meat, being comparatively low in fat and tending to cut down the cholesterol levels, has been preferred by the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. The Qur'an has declared the bird's meat as one of the paradise meals, saying:

And they will get the meat of the birds as per their desire.^[5]

Moreover the holy Prophet (saw) gave a special permission of meat of the fish, due to its dietary and medicinal usefulness. White fish is very low in fat, whereas the oily fish contains a lot of poly-unsaturated fat, which itself lowers the cholesterol levels. Hence its use is remarkably helpful in prevention of heart diseases.

7. More fiber consumption

Medical research has established that increase in fiber consumption in various forms, plays a vital role in prevention and cure of heart diseases. For higher fiber intake, "whole grains" are highly recommended. Brown and whole grain-bread, made from whole-meal flour is the best natural form of fibre consumption. The holy Prophet (saw) himself always used and preferred the use of whole-grain bread.

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- [1.](#) Qur'an (at-Tin) 95:1.
 - [2.](#) Tirmidhi, *al-Jami'*.
 - [3.](#) Qur'an (an-Naba') 78:32.
 - [4.](#) Ibn-ul-Qayyim, *Zad-ul-maad*.
 - [5.](#) Qur'an (*al-Waqi'ah*) 56:21.

CHAPTER 5

Prevention through Prohibition of pork and alcohol

The holy Qur'an has strongly forbidden the use of pork, saying:

He has only forbidden you carrion, blood and the flesh of swine and the animal, which is slaughtered other than on the name of Allah.^[1]

Islam protects the larger and long-term interest of man. Islam approves the ultimate benefits and disapproves the ultimate harm. All the unclean items which are detrimental either to human body or soul, have been forbidden.

Pork

As per modern medical research, there are two worms in pork called:

- i. Taenia solium
- ii. Trichinella spiralis

The former causes epilepsy and the latter trichinosis. Patients who suffer from acute trichinosis, may develop high body temperature, their blood stream may be affected by poisonous substances, resulting in paralyzing of their heart and respiratory system. It also causes inflammation of brain and other body tissues and may affect the muscles of tongue, neck, eyes and throat etc. But major harm of the Pork is that all forms of its meat are most fattening, containing the largest amount of calories and fat. None of the other meats (beef, lamb, chicken and fish) contains such an enormous amount of fats and calories. Moreover, pork has a very high level of cholesterol.

- 100 grams of beef contains a maximum of 284 calories whereas the maximum number of calories in bacon is 496.
- Certain varieties of bacon contain 44.8 gms of fat per 100 gms whereas the maximum amount of fat in beef is 21.1 gms.

Now Islamic wisdom of the prohibition of pork and bacon is becoming popular in America and Europe, because the health-conscious people are reducing the intake of pork drastically. Greater preference is being given to those forms of meat, which are permitted by Islam, particularly fish and chicken.

Alcohol

The Qur'an declares alcohol (even every kind of wine, liquor and intoxication) absolutely forbidden, saying:
O believers, indeed wine, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination. These are the Satanic acts, so avoid it completely so that you may prosper.^[2]

The holy Prophet (saw) has put a final end to all possible discussions and controversies on this subject through his two wise sayings:

- iii. *Every intoxicant is a wine and every wine is forbidden.*^[3]
- iv. *If a large quantity of anything causes intoxication, then its small quantity is also forbidden.*^[4]

The basic medical problem of alcohol is that it provides the human body with calories, but fails simultaneously to supply either the essential vitamins or the necessary amino acids. Hence, metabolism of the body is badly affected, which results in large number of physical diseases and mental disorders.

Alcoholism is highly harmful and damaging to liver, stomach, intestines, spleen, oesophaegus, brain and heart. In addition to numerous diseases, it specially causes cardiomyopathy and ischemic cerebral infraction. Moreover, the regular intake of alcohol creates blood pressure problems and affects the cardiovascular system. Heart attack risks gain higher level due to alcoholism, because alcohol increases the amount of HDL cholesterol, without undermining the overall cholesterol level in the blood. As a result, HDL-LDL ratio slightly shifts, which improves the total risk. That's why a tendency of reducing alcohol consumption is also developing in the US amongst the health-conscious people and most of heart associations are also considerably stressing the same.

It is definitely a scientific and moral victory of Islamic Injunctions, being established through the west, day by day.

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- 1. Qur'an (*al-Baqarah*) 2:172.
 - 2. Qur'an (*al-Maidah*) 5:90.
 - 3. Muslim, *as-Sahih* (2:168).
 - 4. Tirmidhi, *al-Jami'* (2:9).