



Halalan Tayyiban Concept from the Perspective of Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis: Identifying the Main Themes

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ABSTRACT

The consistent use of the “*halalan tayyiban*” phrase, which appears four times in different chapters with four different backgrounds of revelations, indicates a serious conceptual idea revealed in the Qur'an. Therefore, the *halalan tayyiban* concept requires holistic and interconnected data to be analysed. Otherwise, the outcome will overlook some pertinent elements, ultimately affecting the concept's overall structure. This article used the Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis in developing a holistic *halalan tayyiban* concept, in which all related verses were analysed to identify the essential divine themes revealed, they are: al-Baqarah (verse 168), al-Ma'idah (verse 88), al-Anfal (verse 69), and al-Nahl (verse 114). These related verses were systematically analysed to examine the contextual circumstances of revelation, identify thematic connections between related verses, and investigate exegetical interpretations relevant to the study. This study adopts a qualitative research design based on document analysis of authoritative Qur'anic exegetical works, ranging from the third century Hijri to contemporary twenty-first-century commentaries. The result reveals four main divine-based themes that are critical in the present halal industry requirements. They are; securing the belief system of Islam, emphasis on role of the divine law, the role of Islamic: social, economic and political injunction, and the role of prophet hood. These main themes have reflected most of the existing halal standard requirement within all processes, activities and practices of halal governance in Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

In most of the existing academic discourses on the *halalan tayyiban* concept, the analysis often refers to the sound-legal verses with rampant use of Qur'anic verses, which normally comprise one or two verses. In contrast, the total complete data on the topic shows otherwise. The four verses from various chapters, with different focuses and revelation backgrounds, have always been quoted separately (Akbar, A. F. R., Rifaannudin, M., & Nurhasanah, S., 2022; Sirajuddin, Sahri, Khalid, Yaakub, & Harun, 2013). Such analysis is always conducted by focusing on the shariah (*fiqh*) aspect, aiming to obtain the Islamic ruling on halal matters without considering the pertinent elements in developing the “*halal*” concept at the first stage. This defective approach has induced an isolative conclusion of the verses and indirectly led to a narrow conceptual comprehension of *halalan tayyiban* (Sirajuddin, et al., 2013), overlooked in its scope and focus, and eventually affecting holistic *halalan tayyiban* understanding (Bakar & Man, 2025), conceptual formation (Mohd Dasuqkhi, 2020). Meanwhile, the requirement of the existing Malaysian halal standards, extends beyond critical ingredients and materials used, to include the prohibition of; non-Islamic religious emblems in branding and labelling, worshipping tools and elements in processing areas, ritual activities, promotion of goods or services that are directly connected to religious purposes, the ineligibility to apply halal certificate for goods or services that trigger negative implications towards Muslims society (JAKIM 2020), are among

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other pivotal importance aspects that need specific divine injunctions to be referred to. In this sense, the thematic analysis of the Qur'anic verses on the subject is believed to be the best approach to explore the divine articulation (Nasir, Hussin, Ahmad, & Qadafy, 2023) on *halalan tayyiban* concept.

Halalan Tayyiban From Divine Perspective: The Thematic Approach

Etymologically, “*halal*” is derived from the Arabic root word, “*ha-la-la*” (هـ – ل – ل), or “*halla*” (ه – ل – ح), which originally means, “to untie [the knot]” (al-Razi, 1993; Ibn Manzur, n.d), to dissolve, to be lawful, permissible (William, 1984), to decompound, to discharge and to become legitimate (al-Ba’albaki, 1995). Depending on their morphological structure, both words can convey several meanings. If the word “*halla*” is used, it means, “it has become lawful” [*sara mubahan*] as pointed by the chapter 2:230 and also means “descends” [*nazala*] as evidently shown in chapter 20:83 (Ibn Manzur, n.d; Ibrahim Unays, n.d). If the word, on the other hand, is “*ahhalla*”, it means “turning away from unlawfulness, and thus, it is permissible for him on whom that had forbidden before” [*kharaja min ihramihi fa jaza lahu ma kana mamnu’an ‘anh*] as in chapter 2:275 (Ibn Manzur, n.d; Ibrahim Unays, n.d). All of these instances proves the word “*halal*”, which derives from the root word of “*ha-la-la*” or “*halla*” is basically conveys a few meanings including “untie” a knot, “release” from a strict condition, “descend” and “turn away” from the state of unlawful, turning away from something which is forbidden, and moves to something unrestricted, legitimate, free, and permissible. These etymological meanings show how a simple application of Qur’anic Thematic Exegesis on the word “*halal*” is carried out, or, in Arabic, known as *tafsir al-mawdu’i*.

The English word “exegesis” originated in the 17th century from the Greek word, which means interpretation of text dedicated to the text of the scriptures (Oxford Dictionaries, 2020), while “*al-mawdu’i*”, on the other hand, is an adjective form of the word that means objectivistic (Ba’albaki, 1995). It is derived from the root word of “*wa-da-’a*” (Wehr, 1976), which means “laying down” or “putting down” something and the form of “*mawdu’*”, which literally means object, topic, subject or theme (Wehr, 1976). The term “*tafsir al-mawdu’i*” was coined in the 20th century at the Faculty of Usuluddin (Theology) of al-Azhar University in 1967 (el-Mesawi, 2005), in a doctoral thesis that studies the thematic unity of the Qur’an (Hijazi, 1970). Among the most comprehensive definitions to describe *tafsir al-mawdu’i* is that which, offered by al-Farmawi (1977):

“The [process] of compiling Qur’anic verses, which hold the unified aim through specific theme...where the researcher explains the topic selected deeply, and (this method) assists him easily to reach his objective and equipped him with extensive knowledge (on the topic)...”(al-Farmawi, 1977, p.52)

As for the classifications of thematic exegesis, Muslim (2000), Ghazali (2000) and Rasywani (2002) suggest that there are basically three main types, where some modern scholars consider that it is also closely related to the hermeneutics exegesis domain (Ichwan, Moh., & Salisu, 2024). The exegesis that is concerned with any chapter of al-Qur’an (CH-Q); the method that is concerned with any terminology of al-Qur’an (TE-Q), and the one that is based on any theme or topic of the Qur’an (TH-Q). The analysis in this article employed a combined method of the second and third categories, i.e., the method concerned with any terminology of the Qur’an (TE-Q) and the one based on any theme or topic of the Qur’an (TH-Q), as explained in the methodology section of this article. The analysis focuses on the exact “*halalan tayyiban*” phrase appears four times in the Qur’an through these chapters: al-Baqarah, 2:168-169; al-Ma’idah, 5:87-88; al-Anfal, 8:67-69; and al-Nahl, 16:114-115 and all of them were revealed with their own focus and background of revelation.

The thematic method plays a significant role in Qur’anic exegetical analysis (Farhan, R. L., Himam, A., & Ghofur, M. A., 2024). This method’s critical role is its ability to provide a cohesive and holistic disclosure of Qur’anic data (Nasir, Hussin, Ahmad, & Qadafy, 2023). In this context, scholars rely on their ability to explore the connectivity of Qur’anic data on the selected subject to be analysed. Once the proper methods are followed, it will lead the scholar to extensive discoveries on the topic, offering a more comprehensive idea throughout the coherence of Qur’anic verses, as has been conducted by Arwani, Jaelani, Firdaus, & Hanim (2022) for “*halal*” and “*tayyib*”. In the context

of *halalan tayyiban*, this method of analysis has led to cohesive and reliable conceptual formation, including the scope, elements, width and depth of the concept, and thus will assist in the development of any standard, regulation or even law related to the management of the halal industry. Furthermore, the thematic method is widely regarded as one of the best ways to develop a theory or to address modern issues from a Qur'anic perspective. By analysing all relevant Qur'anic data on the subject, the scholar's exegetical works will further offer valuable information and facilitate the development of any Qur'anic theory or conceptual development. Having a specific focus on a topic before the Qur'anic analysis has always been a special feature of this method. In the context of the halal industry, the formation of Qur'anic "*halalan tayyiban*" criteria offers a more structured and organised approach, where the formation process begins with the problem and issue, followed by searching for the solution or guidance in the Qur'an. Throughout the analysis, the "problem" and all "related issues" on halal will assist in extracting Qur'anic themes on halal.

Methodology

In this article, the content analysis technique is employed, as it is usually applied to "textual" data to identify "specified characteristics of messages". In this context, content analysis is used to identify the presence of words, phrases, or concepts in a text to comprehend their meanings and relationships (Matthew and Ros, 2010). By this method, the verses related to the Qur'an and hadith were analysed to explore their exegesis and to seek a holistic understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept. In dealing with Qur'anic data, the thematic analysis method is used to describe, understand, explore, connect, and explain the data in a better perspective (Matthew and Ross, 2010), which typically involves the process of segmentation, categorisation and relinking of the aspects of the data before the final interpretation (Grbich, 2007). The thematic exegesis in this article focused on the four main verses, i.e., al-Baqarah: 2:168-169, al-Ma'idah: 5:87-88, al-Anfal: 8:67-69, and al-Nahl: 16:114-115. Aiming at investigating the scope and criteria that constitute "*halalan tayyiban*", the analysis is done by referring to fifteen selected Qur'anic commentators' masterpieces as listed in Figure 1. For this analysis, the combined thematic exegesis between the method concerned with any terminology of the Qur'an (TE-Q), and the one based on any theme or topic of the Qur'an (TH-Q) is employed. The analysis begins with investigating the main components of exegetical information on those four main key-verses, which consist of: a glance at the grammatical structure, the background of revelation, the exegetical information, which includes: the linkage of the verses with their prior and the verse after; the legal issues involved, and the proposed theme from each of the key-verses. Both forms of analysis will enable the process of identifying the main scope of *halalan tayyiban* and the essential criteria that constitute the notion.

Using the TE-Q and TH-Q types of thematic exegesis, the analysis draws on the following fifteen Qur'anic exegetical masterpieces. These *tafsir* works according to some modern scholars, are essential references because they integrate transmitted (*riwāyah*) and rational (*dirāyah*) methodologies, addressing linguistic analysis (Laila & Ochviardi, 2024), jurisprudence, theology, historical (Noviandi, Hakim, Masruhan, & Rokhman, Mokh., 2024) and applicative context (Ridho, 2024) and contemporary concerns. Collectively, they reflect methodological diversity, intellectual continuity, and authoritative scholarship crucial for rigorous Qur'anic interpretation (al-Farmawī, 2002; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995; Mustafa Muslim, 2000).

Table 1. The List of Fifteen Selected Qur'anic Exegetical Masterpieces

No.	Book of <i>Tafsir</i>	Author
1.	<i>Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Aya al-Qur'an</i> , n.d., Maktabah Ibn Taimiyah, Qaherah.	Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari (310H)
2.	<i>Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an wa al-Mubayyin lima Tadammanahu min al-Sunnah wa Aya al-Qur'an</i> , 2006, Mu'assasah al-Risalah, Beirut	Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abi Bakr al-Qurtubi (671H)
3.	<i>Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim</i> , 2000, Muassasah Qurtubah, Qaherah.	Muhammad Isma'il bin Kathir (774H)
4.	<i>Ma'alim al-Tanzil</i> , 1997, Dar al-Taybah li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi', Riyad	Muhammad al-Husayn bin Mas'ud al-Baghawi (512H)

5.	<i>Al-Bahr al-Muhit</i> , (n.d.) Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Beirut.	Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Andalusi (745H)
6.	<i>Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-‘Aziz</i> , 2001, Dar al-Kutub ‘Ilmiyah, Beirut,	Muhammad ‘Abd al-Haqq bin Ghalib bin ‘Atiyyah al-Andalusi (546H)
7.	<i>Ahkam al-Quran</i> , 2003, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Beirut	Abi Bakr Muhammad bin Abdillah Ibn al-‘Arabi (543H)
8.	<i>Al-Kasyaf ‘an Haqa’iq wa Ghawamid min al-Tanzil wa ‘uyun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Ta’wil</i> , 1998, Maktabah al-‘Abikan,	Mahmud ‘Umar al-Zamakhshari (538H)
9.	<i>Ruh al-Ma‘ani fi Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim wa al-Sab’ al-Mathani</i> , n.d, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut.	Mahmud al-Alusi (1270H)
10.	<i>Fath al-Qadir: al-Jami’ Bayn Fanniy al-Riwayah wa al-Dirayah min ‘Ilm al-Tafsir</i> , 1994, Dar al-Wafa’, n. p.	Muhammad bin ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Syawkani (1250H)
11.	<i>Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir</i> , 1984, Dar Tunisiyah li al-Nasyr, Tunis.	Muhammad Tahir Ibn ‘Asyur (1973M)
12.	<i>Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Hakim (al-Manar)</i> (1353H), Dar al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, Misr	Muhammad Rasyid Rida (1935M)
13.	<i>Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Kalam al-Mannan</i> (2002) Dar al-Salam li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi’, Taba’ah Thalithah, Saudi.	‘Abd al-Rahman bin Nasir al-Sa’dy (1956)
14.	<i>Zahrah al-Tafasir</i> , 1987, Dar al-Fikr, Dimasyq.	Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Abu Zahrah (1973)
15.	<i>Tafsir al-Munir: fi al-‘Aqidah wa al-Syari’ah wa al-Manhaj</i> , 2009, Dar al-Fikr al-Mu’asir, Beirut.	Wahbah bin Mustafa al-Zuhaili (2015)

Source: Author, 2026

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

The first verse is from the chapter *al-Baqarah* (The Cow):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ
 ١٦٨ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْأَسْوَاءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ١٦٩

“O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy. For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge.”

Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 168-169

a) Background of Revelation

Al-Qurtubi (2006) and al-Baghawi (1997) explain that this verse was revealed on the tribe of Bani Thaqif, Bani Khuza‘ah, Bani Mudlij and ‘Amir bin Sa’sa‘ah (Al-Wahidi, 2015) when they forbid themselves from consuming a few types of cattle [*al-an‘am*] even though they are lawful. They named those animals as *bahirah* (female camel: its milk spared for idols), *al-sa‘ibah* (female camel: for idols), *al-wasilah*, and *ham*, which they believed were to be harmful if eaten (Ibn Kathir, 2000). The prevalence of this pagan self-made law, therefore, has triggered the revelation to clarify that the law of the Lord SWT is not as the pagan Quraisy did to fit their beliefs (Syahputra, Faizin, Safik, & Ma’ali, 2023).

b) Exegetical Discussion

Ibn. Kathir (2000), in his commentary on those verses, highlights the most crucial message concerning the “*halalan tayyiban*” concept, i.e. the legality [*halal*] to consume and “*tayyib*” which is described as “good by itself” and “not harmful for one’s body and intellect” [*mustataban fi nafsihi ghayr mudar*]

li al-abdan wa la li al-'uqul] (Ibn Kathir, 2000). Al-Qurtubi (2006) adds to the definition of halal as "the untied from the knot of caution" [*inhilal 'uqdat al-hazr 'anh*]. When commenting on the word "tayyib", he shares al-Syafi'i's view, which uses the word delightful [*al-mustaladh*] to describe the meaning (al-Qurtubi, 2006). Ibn 'Atiyyah (2001) agreed with Malik and al-Syafi'i, who both suggest wholesome [*mustatibin*] for "halal" and delightful [*mustaldhdh*] for "al-tayyib". Al-Tabari (n.d), on the other hand, uses the word "tilq" or permissible to denote the word "halal", which, according to him, is synonymous with "al-hill" or lawful. As for "al-tayyib", he underlines three main points to illustrate the meaning, i.e. "tahir" or hygiene, "ghayr najis" or non-filthy and "ghayr muharram" or non-unlawful (al-Tabari, n.d). Al-Baghawi (1409H) is of the view that "halal" means permissible by Shariah (*ma ahalla al-syar'*), and "al-tayyib", on the other hand, means delightful and wholesome (*yustaladhdh wa yustatab*) and also hygiene (*tahir*).

Al-Alusi (n.d.) for this verse, quotes the views of Malik and al-Syafi'i. Malik, according to al-Alusi (n.d), opined that "halal" and "tayyib" are in fact the same, and he describes *halalan tayyiban* as "delightful and irreprehensible" (*ladhidhan la yukrah*), whereas al-Syafi'i describes it as "enriching the righteous desire" (*tastatib syahwah al-mustaqimah*). The same idea is expounded by Ibn 'Asyur (1984), where he interprets "tayyiban" as "the food which enables the righteous conscious" (*ma tastati'hu al-nufus bi al-idrak al-mustaqim*). Al-Zamakhshari (1998) highlights the idea of what al-Tabari (n.d) has said but with some additional crucial point i.e. "tahiran min kulli syubh" or "hygiene from any doubtfulness". Al-Razi (1981) on the other hand shares that the word "halalan" means, "untied the knot of cautiousness" (*inhalla 'uqdah al-hazr*), which is the same of what al-Qurtubi (2006) said and "tayyiban" means delightful (*al-mustaladhdh*). Abu Hayyan (1993) also insists some pertinent point on "tayyib" instead of "halalan" where he just offers an antonymous idea of it (*muqabil al-haram*) or "the opposite meaning of haram". As for "tayyiban", he emphasises more on the idea of *non-syubhah* i.e. "hygiene from doubtful" (*al-tahir min al-syubhah*). For "tayyiban", he shares the view of al-Shajawandi (d.560H), which insists the idea of "naturally delightful" (*mustaladhdh tabi'an*) (al-Andalusi, 1993). Al-Syawkani (1996) perceives "halalan" as al-Qurtubi i.e. "unfastened the knot of cautiousness" but for the "tayyiban" he agreed with al-Syafi'i and Malik.

As for the contemporary commentators, there are few new ideas on how the modern exegetes interpret "halalan tayyiban". Rida (1353H), for instance, interprets "halalan" as "non haram" (*ghayr al-haram*) and "tayyiban" as "non repulsive" (*ghayr al-khabith*). Al-Zuhaily (2009), on the other hand, claims that "halalan" are things that are permitted by the law of *syar'* (*ma abahahu al-syar'*) and "tayyiban" as delightful (*al-mustaladhdh*). Abu Zahrah (1987), however, offers a very pertinent idea to describe the relation between "halal" and "tayyib". In his "Zahrah al-Tafasir", he explains that "tayyib" is that which enriches the righteous soul, developing and nourishing it piously (Abu Zahrah, 1987). He adds that something is not considered "tayyib" except obtained from that which lawful (*halal*) and not from the prohibited and it is not considered lawful (*halal*) if it is for example from bribery, fraudulence, or cheating where all of those act leads to *khabith* (repulsive), even though they are originally "tayyib" (Abu Zahrah, 1987). He also emphasises that "tayyiban" cannot be attained through this notion except through the "halal". However, in explaining "halal", Abu Zahrah (1987) mentioned some instances to depict the "way" which distinguishes "halal" from the "tayyib", where the standard of "tayyib" depends on its physical-substance originality and "halal" relates more to the way it is gained. In other words, halal deals with the ethical aspect, and "tayyib" is more inclined to cater to the physical aspect. Al-Sa'diy's (2002) interpretation of "halalan tayyiban" seems to contradict what Abu Zahrah has offered. "Halalan", according to him, is lawful and for "tayyib"; al-Sa'diy (2002) uses the word "*laisa bi khabith*", which means non-repulsive. All of these contemporary exegetes, from Rida (1353H), to Abu Zahrah (1987), al-Sa'diy (2002), and al-Zuhaily (2009) agreed upon the different criteria of "halal" and "tayyib" where all of them seem standardising the former (*halal*) more from the aspect of the way of gaining things and the latter (*tayyib*) relies more on the physical and substance of them.

c) The Proposed Theme

Although most of the commentators focus on the legal aspect to discuss the meaning of “*halalan tayyiban*”, the verse still needs to be analysed in the context of its background of revelation (al-Qurtubi, 2006; al-Baghawi, n.d; Ibn Kathir, 2000). Most of them have disregarded the connectivity between the notion of “*halalan tayyiban*” and the background of revelation, except Ibn Kathir and Rida (1353H), who clarified it before elaborating the meaning of “*halalan tayyiban*”. The background of revelation indicates that the central idea of these verses (168-169) is more emphasising on safeguarding the belief system of Islam (i.e. *tawhid*), where faith in a standard of dietary other than what Allah SWT has ordained is totally prohibited. In other words, the notion of “*halalan tayyiban*” in this chapter appears in the central theme of guarding this belief system by prohibiting any attempt to create a new system of belief as had been innovated in Quraishy’s pagan culture on the issues of *al-sa’ibah*, *al-wasilah* and *al-ham* (i.e. a few types of animals dedicated for idols, al-Qur’an: 5: 103). The verse clearly elucidates those acts as following the footsteps of Satan. This divine mandate requires avoiding any attempt to associate halal elements with *syirk* (polytheism). By rectifying the historical misconceptions of polytheists who equated sacred animals with idols, the verse establishes a theological imperative to safeguard the *aqidah* of a believer, manifested in food standards, production, and regulation. This ensures that dietary compliance is not merely technical adherence but a profound expression of *tawhid*, in which only divine law dictates the parameters of permissibility and consumption.

The Second Main Key-Verses (2): al-Ma’idah Verse 87-88

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ٨٧
وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِءَ مُؤْمِنُونَ ٨٨

“O ye who believe! Make not unlawful the good things, which Allah hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for Allah loveth not those given to excess.
(87) Eat of the things, which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good: but fear Allah, in Whom ye believe”

Surah al-Ma’idah, 5: 87-88

This verse clearly begins with “*O ye people who believe...*” which affects the target and therefore, only for the believers. In terms of scope, “*halalan tayyiban*” in this passage is presented in a way that expresses how a believer should perceive the concept of sustenance in their daily life.

d) Background of Revelation

Almost all of the classical exegetes share the same narration for the background of revelation, which refers to the incident that took place among the companions of the Prophet SAW, i.e. ‘Uthman bin Maz’un and Abdullah bin ‘Amru and some of them mentioned Ali bin Abi Talib R.A (Ibn Kathir, 2000; al-Tabari, n.d.; al-Baghawi, 1997; Ibn al-‘Arabi, 2003; al-Qurtubi, 2006; al-Suyuti, 2003; Abu Hayyan, 1999; and al-Zamakhsyari, 1998). Al-Qurtubi (2006) explains that there are many narrations with the same meaning, and the most authentic is the one recorded by al-Bukhari (al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah, bab: al-Targhib fi al-Nikah, no. 5063). The narration states that the three companions had once prohibited themselves from having sexual relations with their spouses, eating, and even having a nap, with the argument that such daily routines would distract their attention from having full commitment to performing their worship. Therefore, this overacting decision has triggered the revelation and clarified for them the righteous way of life that Muslims should observe. It exposes the connection between the concept of *halalan tayyiban* and the act of “*al-mu’tad*,” or overindulgence, and the most pertinent message is that a Muslim should not engage in such an act of changing the law of God, whether by prohibiting the lawful or by legalising the prohibited (al-Tabari, n.d.). The *halalan tayyiban*, through this notion, clarifies that what Allah has permitted Muslims to do or consume is for their benefit, if it does not exceed the limit. Thus, the sin of “*al-mu’tad*” here refers to the act of omitting all the lawful for the sake of asceticism (*al-taqasyuf*) and monasticism (*al-tarahhub*) (al-Zuhaili, 2009).

e) Exegetical Discussion

Most of the exegetes quoted for the previous chapter (al-Baqarah) offer the same opinion for “*halalan tayyiban*” in this chapter. Al-Tabari (n.d), for instance, explains that “*halalan tayyiban*” here means anything that Allah permits (*ma ahalla Allah*). At the same time, al-Qurtubi (2006) further describes the scope of “*halalan tayyiban*” for what he has defined in the first chapter of al-Baqarah where he highlights it as a sustenance (*rizq*) including victuals, clothes and vehicles. Ibn Kathir (2000) again insists that the phrase means “in the state of halal” (*fi kawnihi halal*), al-Baghawi (1997) states “anything permissible for you” (*ma ahalla lakum*). Al-Alusi (1270H) offers an idea that differs from what he provided in al-Baqarah, i.e., “lawful and good” (*halla wa taba*). The exact meaning is opined by al-Zamakhshari (1998), who attempts to address the verse's context by describing sustenance. According to him, *halalan tayyiban* means the lawful things in sustenance (*hall min al-rizq*) (al-Zamakhshari, 1998). Ibn ‘Atiyyah (2001) is of the same view as al-Qurtubi (2006). Contemporary exegetes, such as Rida (1353H), highlight the difference between “halal” and “*tayyib*,” where halal, according to him, concerns the way victuals, garments, or means of transport are obtained, such as not from sources of theft, bribery, or fraud. In contrast, “*tayyib*,” on the other hand, concerns more with the physical aspect that must exclude any element of repugnance or filth (*al-mustaqdhar*) within or from contamination. The same idea is shared by al-Zuhaili (2009), who simplified the meaning of “*halal*” to lawful (al-Zuhaili, 2009).

The most pertinent issue in this chapter is that the notion of “*halalan tayyiban*” is conveyed after Allah SWT declares the prohibition on any act of altering His law, by prohibiting the good sustenance (*tayyibat*) endowed for His servants. Thus, the overruled act of Muslims denying this standard (*tayyibat*) is called “*al-mu’tad*” or “*tajawaz al-hadd*,” “which exceeds the limit (al-Baghawi, 1997; al-Alusi, 1270H; Ibn Asyur, 1984; Rida, 1353H). All these interpretations lead to one conclusive point: Allah, through this passage, prohibits all means of overrule, whether denying the lawful or the prohibited, which has been clearly stated by His own words or His Prophet’s SAW. The contemporary exegetes, such as Ibn ‘Asyur (1984), insist that the word “...and commit no access...” in verse 87 refers to the act of “*al-i’tida*” or aggression, which demonstrates the act of hostility and oppression to the law of God (Ibn ‘Asyur, 1984). Al-Zuhaili (2009) emphasises more on the law of oath in its connection with the verse 87 and Rida (1947) in this respect elaborates that the command of God here -to consume only that which halal and *tayyib*- is not simply to justify permissibility, but rather conveys a command of obligatory (*al-amr li al-wujub*) for a Muslims to observe the prohibition of forbidding the “*tayyibat*” which has been made lawful by God Himself SWT (Rida, 1947).

f) The Proposed Theme

The background of revelation on this verse reveals the attempt to alter the law of God by prohibiting what Allah SWT has made lawful, as discussed by most of the commentators. The incident involving three companions of the Prophet SAW triggered the revelation. The verse 87 begins by prohibiting the act of altering the God’s law with unequivocal statement and associating it with the sin of over-excess (*al-mu’tad*) and the command on eating and consuming “*halal*” comes afterward, embedded with pertinent points from the verse 89, which regulates the law of oath specifically, has formed up the very central theme of “*halalan tayyiban*” in this passage i.e. emphasising on the role of divine law. It seriously underscores the ruling prohibiting any attempt to amend God's law, even when done verbally, as regulated in verse 89 of the passage. Therefore, the central theme of this passage is that Allah SWT has clearly highlighted the role of God’s law in securing the divine injunction for the benefit of human beings, and any attempt to alter it is strictly prohibited. This aligns with Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s foundational principles of halal and haram, which assert that the authority to legislate permissibility belongs exclusively to Allah (al-Qaradawi, 2013). Consequently, making prohibited things lawful—or vice versa—is considered a form of *shirk* (polytheism) (al-Qaradawi, 2013), as it involves ascribing divine legislative rights to human authority.

The Third Main Key-Verses: Chapter 8 (al-Anfal: 67-69):

The third verse is from a chapter called al-Anfal or the “spoils of war” (Ali, 2008), a Medinan chapter (al-Zuhaili, 2009) and was revealed during the Battle of *Badr*, where Allah says:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أُسْرَى حَتَّى يَنْجَنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ
الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٦٧ لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ٦٨
فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ٦٩

“It is not fitting for a prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looketh to the Hereafter: And Allah is exalted in might, Wise. “Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe penalty would have reached you for the (ransom) that ye took. Therefore (now) enjoy what ye took in war, lawful and good: but fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. O Prophet! Say to those who are captives in your hands: “If Allah findeth any good in your hearts, He will give you something better than what has been taken from you, and He will forgive you: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

Surah al-Anfal: 8:67-69

g) Background of Revelation

There are a few narrations recorded, such as those from Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Ibn Marduwayh, and Ibn al-Mundhir (al-Zuhaili, 2009), which depict the same incident that took place during the Battle of *Badr*. All of these narrations were also shared by all the classical exegetes, such as Ibn Kathir (2000), al-Tabari (n.d), al-Baghawi (1997), and Ibn al-‘Arabi (2003), where the narration from al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Marduwaih and al-Baihaqi offers the clearest storyline (al-Zuhaili, 2009). After asking His companions’ opinions, the Prophet Muhammad SAW eventually said:

“...today, you are dependent, you are today dependent...” The verse then revealed.”

Reported by al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an ‘an Rasulillah*, 3364

The narration states that the “*halalan tayyiban*” notion is presented in the context of war and specifically addresses how the spoils of war and prisoners should be managed. It argues that the concept of “*halal*” here is meant to guide Muslims in obtaining their goods and sustenance through the spoils of war, thereby suggesting that the personal-human view of a prophet is also subject to errors and faults (al-Zuhaili, 2009). The revelation, therefore, takes place to guide and flourish the divine wisdom behind it.

h) Exegetical Discussion

The prior verses, the sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth, connote the ruling implication regarding the permissibility of having a war prisoner. Ibn al-‘Arabi (2003) explains that the first verse (67) implies the obligation of *al-jihad* for all prophets except that they are not permitted to have any prisoners or spoils of war. He also expounds that in the context of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the permissibility of having prisoners is only legitimate if Muslims have already subdued the land and are respected by the enemies both sovereignly and militarily (Ibn al-‘Arabi, 2003). The verse sixty-eighth, on the other hand, states the permissibility of having spoils of war (*al-ghanimah*) for Muslims (Ibn al-‘Arabi, 2003 and al-Zuhaili, 2009), also with a condition that the Muslims had already conquered and restrained the power of the enemy.

The focus in this article, however, is on the verse sixty-ninth, which reads as “...so enjoy (eat) what you have taken in war, lawful and good...”. Ibn Kathir (2000), al-Tabari (n.d), Ibn al-‘Arabi (2003), al-Zamakhshari (1998), and Abu Hayyan (1999) insist that “*halalan tayyiban*” here referred to the ransom (*al-fida*) while al-Baghawi (1997), al-Alusi (1270H), Ibn ‘Atiyyah (2001), and al-

Qurtubi (1964) are more inclined to describe it as the spoils of war (*al-ghanimah*). Al-Syawkani (1994) and most contemporary exegetes offer a more dynamic interpretation of this verse. For instance, they describe “*halalan tayyiban*” in its practical sense, which, in parallel with the injunction conveyed by the passage, was meant to urge Muslims not to do anything before it is divinely permitted (al-Shawkani, 2004). The exact comprehension is also offered by Rida (1947), who claims that the passage emphasises that a Muslim should not ever take the property of non-Muslims or other Muslims before it has been made lawful by the lawgiver or when the situation is suitable and convenient. Therefore, both al-Shawkani (2004) and Rida (1947) perceive the passage, in the context of the objective of the prohibition, and emphasise the process of deciding within the proper context, suitable, and appropriate with the specific needs and by taking into account the effect of the decision towards the society, its security, political mileage and the future of Muslims.

i) The Proposed Theme

The *Halalan tayyiban* notion in this verse concerns the concurrent social, economic, and political injunctions embedded in its divine command. The command was revealed when the Prophet SAW and a few of his companions disagreed over the treatment of Badr’s captives, as mentioned in the background of the revelation. The plot begins with verses 67 and 68, where both clearly describe how those captives should be treated, the improper decision made before the revelation, and the implications on Muslim society due to the wrong political decision if no divine interference takes place. The specific passage on “*halalan tayyiban*” comes later, connected to the prior verse (al-Alusi, 1270H), and it ties all the mentioned issues to the notion of *halalan tayyiban*. Therefore, it indicates that the central theme for *halalan tayyiban* in this passage is that God Himself highlights the role of Islamic, social, economic and political injunctions in advocating the “*halalan tayyiban*” notion. This divine guidance ensures that the act of acquiring resources—even those acquired through conflict—must strictly adhere to the collective welfare of the community. Consequently, anything that triggers negative implications towards Muslim society is prohibited, as the essence of *halalan tayyiban* is intrinsically bound to the preservation of life, intellect, and faith, aligning with the higher objectives of the Shariah (*maqasid al-syariah*).

The Fourth Main Key-Verses: Chapter 16 (al-Nahl: 114-115)

The fourth main verse is from the 16th chapter. The verses are:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ۝١١٣ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُون ۝١١٤ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلٌ لِّغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ۚ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝١١٥

“And there came to them a Messenger from among themselves, but they falsely rejected him; so the Wrath seized them even in the midst of their iniquities. So eat of the sustenance, which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good; and be grateful for the favours of Allah, if it is He Whom ye serve. He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and any (food) over, which the name of other than Allah has been invoked. But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits,- then Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

Surah al-Nahl, 16:113-115

j) Background of Revelation

According to Ibn Kathir (2001), these verses (112-116) constitute a Qur’anic parable (*al-mathl*) depicting the arrogance of the pagan Quraysh towards the Prophet Muhammad SAW at the beginning of His prophethood. The word “Town” (*Qaryah*) in verse 112 referred to Mecca (Ibn Kathir, 2001). The verse says:

“And Allah puts forward the example of a township (Mecca) that dwelt secure and well content; its provision coming to it in abundance from every place, but it (its people) denied the Favours of Allah (with ungratefulness). So Allah made it taste the extreme of hunger (famine) and fear, because of that (evil, i.e. denying Prophet Muhammad SAW) which they (its people) used to do.”

Ibn Kathir (2001) also agreed that the passage refers to Mecca as narrated by Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, and al-Zuhri.

k) Exegetical Discussion

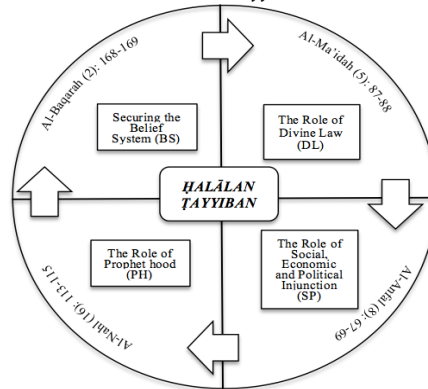
Al-Zuhaili (2009) has concluded at least four legal injunctions deduced throughout these verses, most of which have already been stated by the classical commentators. Firstly, he states that this passage urges Muslims only to consume that which is only lawful (*halal*) and wholesome (*tayyib*) and also to stay away from the outlawed-repulsive (*khathath*) and detrimental (*mudar*). Secondly, the passage also highlights four forbidden things, which are the carcass or dead body, flesh, blood, flesh of swine, and those which are slaughtered for other than Allah SWT. Thirdly, the passage also permits committing all the prohibited things when extreme necessity (*al-darurah*) prevails. Fourthly, which is the actual message of the whole passage, is where Allah SWT forewarns the Muslims to not act like the pagan Arabs in altering the law of God by prohibiting the lawful or otherwise, as such autonomy is exclusively for God Himself SWT. This ultimate injunction of the passage is also emphasized by other prominent exegetes of the past, such as Ibn al-‘Arabi (2003), Ibn Kathir (2000), al-Tabari (n.d), al-Qurtubi (2006) and others. However, the primary focus of this article is on verses 114 and 115, where al-Tabari (2001) insists that the verse, which mentions “*halalan tayyiban*” in this passage, refers to the law regarding the procedure of slaughtering, which is distinguished from the sinful act of the pagan Arabs prohibiting those cattle (i.e. the *sawa’ib*, *wasail* and *bahirah*), albeit Allah Himself has permitted them. He further explains that the only thing prohibited is that which is mentioned in the latter verse (116) where Allah clearly underlines four types of related victuals, i.e. the dead body or carcass, blood, flesh of swine, and all animals that are slaughtered for other than Himself SWT to become prohibited. In other words, the standard of *halalan tayyiban* here, according to al-Tabari (2001), significantly refers to the slaughtered animals from the types that are lawful for Muslims to consume.

l) The Proposed Theme

As argued by al-Tabari (2001) and al-Zuhaili (2009), the notion of “*halalan tayyiban*” here is a divine reflection on what has been described in verse 115 about the prohibition of swine, carcass, flesh, blood and slaughtered animals other than for Allah, followed by the curse upon those who commit blasphemy in verse 116. Ibn al-‘Arabi (2003), Ibn Kathir (2000), al-Tabari (n.d), and al-Qurtubi (2006) agreed on the fact that the sin of inventing lies against Allah here refers to the issue of classifying animals for sacrifice according to the pagan Arab culture, where al-Qur’an had considered such an act as part of polytheism (*syirk*) towards Allah SWT. The connection between the ideas in verses 112 and 113 and those in 114, 115 and 116 is that they clearly highlight the advent and the role of Prophet SAW in the middle of pagan Arab culture and how their rejection resulted in God’s punishment. Therefore, the *halalan tayyiban* notion, which appears thereafter, has clearly emphasised the role of the Prophet hood of Muhammad SAW in establishing the divine standard of consumption. The mission of Prophethood serves as the ultimate authority in dietary law, where the Prophet SAW clarifies the boundaries between the permissible and the impure (*al-khaba’ith*). By establishing these Prophetic standards, the Shariah ensures that consumption is not merely a physical act, but a spiritual practice rooted in divine guidance, free from the distortions of human innovation.

The Main Themes of *Halalan Tayyiban*

Referring to Figure 2.0, the first verse from chapter al-Baqarah acts as a divine response to the issue of pagan Arab culture that contradicts the Islamic belief system. The target, however, is all human beings, suggesting that the central message here is to insist on security for the belief system of Islam.

Figure 2.0: Illustrates the Main Themes of *Halalan Tayyiban* Derived from the Four Main Key Verses

Source: Author (2026)

The second verse is from chapter al-Ma'idah, where the target of this passage is Muslims. It was explicitly stated that the issue was attempting to refute and alter the law of God. This passage, therefore, insists on the importance of abiding by the law of God, and any attempt to dispute by any means will lead to the sin of transgression (*al-i'tida*). The third verse, which appears in chapter al-Anfal, is considered the most complicated and covers the extensive scope of the *halalan tayyiban* notion. Revealed on the issue of the battle of Badr's captives and their spoils of war, this passage insists on the idea of *halalan tayyiban* in the context of the decision-making process, involving social-interaction, economic, and political constraints faced by the Prophet and his companions on that occasion. The final passage is from chapter al-Nahl, where the target is specifically for the people of Mecca during their rejection of the Prophet SAW. It therefore illustrates the critical role of the prophetic injunction for the people of Quraysh in the context of dietary law. These foundational Quranic verses delineate the four primary dimensions of the *halalan tayyiban* construct, establishing a comprehensive theological and practical framework for Islamic consumption. This conceptual paradigm (refer fig. 3.0) is structured around four essential thematic domains: the preservation of the Islamic belief system and *tawhid* (BS) for al-Baqarah (168–169), the reinforcement of the primacy of divine legislation over human innovation (DL) for al-Ma'idah (87–88), the integration of socio-economic and political injunctions to ensure collective welfare (SP) for al-Anfal (67–69), and the validation of the Prophetic mission as the final authority in defining dietary standards (PH) for al-Nahl (113–115). It therefore serves as an integrative principle, in which dietary compliance is inextricably linked to spiritual integrity and the broader, higher objectives of the Shariah (*maqasid al-syariah*).

Table 2. *Halalan Tayyiban* Main Themes from TE-Q and TH-Q Methods

Halalan Tayyiban Main Themes from TE-Q and TH-Q Methods			
(BS)	(DL)	(SP)	(PH)
Securing the belief system & <i>tawhid</i>	Emphasis on the role of divine law	Emphasis on Islamic social, economic and political injunctions	Emphasis on the role of prophet hood
Emphasis on Islamic social, economic and political injunctions			
Any law/regulation of securing the <i>aqidah</i> . Avoid any attempt to dismantle the belief system of Islam.	Any law/regulation shall conform to the divine law on halal and haram. Ensure the divine law rules and dominates.	Any law/regulation shall consider the effect on the social, economic and political environment of the ummah.	Any law/regulation shall consider the prophetic authority and guidance.

Source: Author, 2026

CONCLUSION

The *halālan tayyiban* themes derived from Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis demonstrate that halal extends beyond mere legal permissibility (lawful) to encompass purity (non-*najs*), epistemic certainty (non-*syubhah*), ensure security for religion and social stability, and prophetic exemplarity. These constructive themes collectively reinforce food and product integrity across ingredients and processes, reflecting the ethical foundations of Islamic consumption (Hassan et al., 2021; Rohman & Che Man, 2023). The emphasis on securing the belief system (*'aqidah*) situates halal within a theological worldview rather than a value-neutral market practice, while prioritising divine law emphasises the normative authority of Shariah in regulating halal and haram (Khan et al., 2022). The inclusion of social, economic, and political considerations highlights that halal governance is inherently societal, aligning consumption practices with public welfare and the objectives of Shariah (*maqāsid al-Shari'ah*) (Zailani et al., 2020). Moreover, grounding halal practices in prophetic authority reinforces ethical exemplarity and moral accountability beyond procedural compliance (Ab Talib et al., 2020). In terms of implementation, these *halālan tayyiban* themes imply that contemporary halal regulations should protect Islamic belief, ensure the dominance of divine law, and assess broader societal impacts. This signals a shift from product-centric certification toward a values-based halal ecosystem, integrating sustainability, governance ethics, and consumer trust within the global halal industry (Hassan et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis has demonstrated a significant ability to offer a comprehensive understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept, thereby demonstrating the reliability of this approach in shaping the concept. Rooted in Quranic divinely inspired themes, this holistic understanding dictates the necessity of food not only being permissible but also salutary, beneficial, and free of adverse effects, thereby promoting a comprehensive approach to health and well-being. It is imperative that global regulatory bodies and certification authorities institutionalise these thematic dimensions within international standards and operational procedures to safeguard the multifaceted integrity of halal. Such systematic integration is essential for elevating the quality of global halal consumerism and facilitating the sustainable socio-economic development of the *ummah*. The author agrees that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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