

Modern food Biotechnology from Islamic law perspective

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Early modern biotechnology applications in health, agriculture, environment, industry are today increasingly found in food production. As consequence, new food sources are obtained by replacing traditional ones. Religious and ethical concerns influence individual consumption preferences, therefore, consumers want to know what they eat and make their preferences accordingly. Unveiling the benefits and harms of modern biotechnological foods, which require interdisciplinary study, is a necessity not only for Muslims, but for all humanity. For this reason, different aspects of these foods need to be investigated by the related disciplines including Islamic law for especially halal nutrition in the great benefit of all humanity. As individuals and as a society, Muslims are responsible for producing, consuming and trading their food not according to their wishes, but within the halal boundaries provisioned by Islam. The legitimacy of halal nutrition is thus based on the provisions of the Qur'an and Sunnah that aim at protecting five essential universal values, namely life, reason, religion, generation and property. We outline how the Islamic law methodology can be applied to the issues of modern food biotechnology in an interdisciplinary framework, by combining the pillars of Islam and scientific knowledge, and thus promoting what is morally, legally and economically beneficial for halal nutrition for all humanity, Muslims and non-Muslims. We reach the conclusion that there are no definitive provisions set by Islamic law about these issues but they can be resolved within the scope of maslahah and maqasid, which is to achieve the righteous and eliminate the harmful. Halal nutrition that Muslims particularly should respect has potential benefits for all humanity. The similarities between halal and other ethical practices in the context of universal values concerning both Muslims and non-Muslims will provide an opportunity for global recognition of healthy nutrition.

Biography

Ayten Erol studied Islamic Sciences at Ankara University, Turkey and obtained my PhD degree in Islamic Law with the thesis titled 'Conflicts of Foreign Element in the Islamic International Private Law' in 1996. My thesis is an Islamic reflection on the Conflicts of Law, a core subject of International Private Law, in comparison with the Contemporary Law. He has two recent books titled Comparative Islamic International Private Law (in Turkish) and Social Protection in Islamic Law (Peter Lang GmbH). Besides Islamic and Comparative Laws, He has academic and practical experience in women and family education, social protection, poverty prevention and halal nutrition and services. He has recent editorials on social protection and halal nutrition and lifestyles from Islamic Law perspectives. He has been active in the family and women researches and legislative works at the Ministerial and Congressional levels in Turkey and at international organizations