

ISLAM AND SCIENCE

Eating Manners According to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W)

Islam is the religion of nature. It guides us in each and every aspect of our life. Similarly, it teaches us many etiquette's of eating and drinking. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) made a point of developing remarkably clean and healthy eating habits among his followers. He asked the companions:

- ✓ to wash their hands before and after
- ✓ to start eating with the praise of Allah
- ✓ to eat using the right hand
- ✓ not to eat until they really felt hungry
- ✓ not to eat and drink excessively

Finally, by praising and thanking Allah for the food and drink, for making it easy to swallow and for producing an exit for it.

Eating, like any other act of a Muslim, is a matter of worship when performed according to the Islamic guidelines. The following are **SOME** of the many food habits that had been practiced and performed by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W):

Never Criticize Any Food:

Food should not be criticized for any reason, despite personal disliking. *"The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) never criticized any food (he was invited to) but he used to eat it if he liked the food, and leave it if he disliked it."* (Sahih Bukhari)

Supplication Before Each Meal:

Since eating, like any other act of a Muslim, is a matter of worship, it begins with the name of Allah. Muslims are to start their meal by making the following supplication:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى بَرَكَاتِهِ

Translation:

"In the name of Allah and with the blessings of Allah I begin (eating)". (Mustadrak)

If someone forgets to recite this dua in the beginning of meal, he/she is required to say:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَوَّلِهِ وَآخِرِهِ

Translation:

"In the name of Allah, in the beginning and end" (Mishkat)

Supplication After Each Meal:

After completing the meal, Muslims praise and thank Allah for the blessing that He bestowed upon them. After finishing their meal, Muslims say the following supplication:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Translation:

"All praise belongs to Allah, who fed us and quenched our thirst and made us Muslims". (Tirmidhi)

Eating Less:

One of the main principles of good health is a balanced diet. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) emphasized the habit of eating less as a method of preventing sickness and disease. He said: ***“Nothing is worse than a person who fills his stomach. It should be enough for the son of Adam to have a few bites to satisfy his hunger. If he wishes more, it should be: One-third for his food, one-third for his liquids, and one-third for his breath.” (Tirmidhi & Ibn Maajah)***

Eating Slowly:

Eating slowly is recommended for health. Slow eating reduces the consumption of food, as it postpones much of the meal to a time when the absorption of nutrients begins to produce physiological signals of satiety. Slow eating helps in chewing the food well. This results in the exercise of the jaws and mixing of the saliva with food. Hence, efficient digestion takes place because the food particles are cut into smaller pieces, not requiring as much churning in the stomach or intestine. (Less **Heartburn**)

Moderation:

The religion of Islam laid down the basis of dietary regulations as well as the limits within which Islam teaches man to enjoy the pleasures of life, including food, in a moderate way, not becoming a slave to his desires and not losing sight of his ultimate spiritual goal. A Muslim is advised to avoid extremes and to choose a moderate course in all his affairs, including his eating habits. ***“eat and drink, but waste not by excess. For Allah loves not the wasters.” (7:31)***