

Regarding the Prophet's ﷺ Akhlaq and Adab in Eating

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The Prophet ﷺ would eat whatever was available to him, and the food that was shared amongst many hands was most beloved to him. Whenever the *dastarkhan* (dining cloth) was spread, there is a report that suggests he would supplicate:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا نِعْمَةً مَّشْكُورَةً تَصِلُ بِهَا نِعْمَةُ الْجَنَّةِ

"I start with the name of Allah. O Allah, bring such bounty to this food that shukr (gratefulness) is shown for it, and that it becomes a means for the bounties of Jannah."

However, in volume 7 of *Ithaf al-Sadah*, it is written that Allamah Murtadha Zabidi and Allamah Iraqi could not find this *riwayah* in detail (115).

When the Prophet ﷺ would eat, he would sit most of the time and keep his knees and feet together the way one sits for salah. He would say, "I eat as a slave eats, and I sit as a slave sits." He would not eat hot food, saying, "Leave the food to cool, for hot food has no blessing."

He would take from what was close to him and eat using three fingers. Sometimes he would take help from a fourth finger. He wouldn't eat with two fingers, saying, "This is the way Shaytan eats." Sometimes he would utilize two hands; once, he ﷺ was eating fresh dates with his right hand and collecting the seeds with his left hand, when a goat came close. The Prophet ﷺ gestured to it, and the goat began eating the seeds from his left hand while he continued eating using his right hand.

Once, Uthman ibn Affan رضي الله عنه brought *faludhaj* (a sweet dessert) to Rasulullah ﷺ, who asked him what it was. Uthman رضي الله عنه replied, "May my parents be sacrificed for you! We poured honey and butter into a pot and added wheat flour, mixing and stirring with a spoon until it cooked." Rasulullah ﷺ exclaimed: "This is a delicious dish" (Tabarani, 336). The Prophet ﷺ would never call any food bad; if he liked something, he would eat it, otherwise, he would leave it without criticizing it and expressing his dislike in front of others.

The Prophet ﷺ would eat bread made from unrefined barley flour, and fresh cucumbers with dates. From fresh fruits, he liked watermelons and grapes. He would even eat melons with bread and with dates. Sometimes, he would place a cluster of grapes in his mouth and eat one occasionally. The grapes would seem like pearls on his beard. Most of his diet consisted of water

and dates; sometimes, he would take one sip of milk with a date. He ﷺ would consider milk and dates as good and nutritious food.

The Prophet ﷺ used to love meat and gourd. He is reported to have said, "Meat increases a human's strength in hearing and sight, and it is superior to all the foods in this world and the next. If I had asked my Lord to give me meat daily, He would definitely provide so." He would eat *thareed* (a dish) with meat and gourd, and he used to particularly like gourd (pumpkin/squash). He said, "The gourd plant belonged to my brother Yunus عليه السلام." Aisha رضي الله عنها narrates that he said, "When you cook a dish, add a lot of squash in it, as it gives strength to the sorrowed heart."

When eating meat, he would not lower his blessed head; rather, he would bring the meat to his mouth and bite it with his teeth. The shoulder and foreleg of the sheep were his favourite; from pot-cooked dishes, he liked squash, and from dates, he liked *ajwa*. In regard to dates, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that *ajwa* dates are blessed, from the foods of Paradise, and a cure for black magic. He liked greens like *raihaan* (basil) and *rijlah* (purslane). He would also eat game birds. He wouldn't hunt or follow game himself, but if presented with hunted game, he would appreciate it and eat it.

He disliked the meat of reservoir of urine (bladder). There were seven parts of the goat he wouldn't eat: male and female genitals, testicles, bladder, gallbladder, prostate gland, and blood. He would dislike eating the spleen, but he did not prohibit it. He disliked raw garlic, raw onion, and foul-smelling foods.

He would not wipe his hands until he licked his fingers clean first, saying, "One does not know in what portion of the food the blessing lies," as well as: "The most blessings are in the remnants of the food (towards the end)."

His du'a after eating included the following supplication:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَطَعَمْتَ فَأَشْبَعْتَ وَسَقَيْتَ فَأَرَوَيْتَ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ غَيْرَ مَكْفُورٍ وَلَا مُودَّعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ

"All praise and thankfulness to you O Allah, who fed me until You made (me) full, and gave me water to drink until You quenched (my thirst). To You is all praise that cannot be denied, abandoned, or done without."

When he ate meat and bread, he would wash his hands thoroughly afterwards. Instead of drinking water in one big gulp, the Prophet ﷺ would drink water in three small sips, reciting "Bismillah" and "Alhamdulillah" thrice (i.e. with every sip). Sometimes, he would suffice on one sip. He would not swallow in big gulps, nor would he breathe into the water container he was drinking from, rather he would take breaths outside of it. Whatever was left, he would share by passing to those on his right. If someone on his left side were older in age or greater in status, he would seek permission from the one on his right to start from the one on the left.

The Prophet ﷺ disliked eating in a way that demonstrated pride and extravagance, and would emphasize moderation. Once, a bowl of milk mixed with honey was served to him. He refused to drink it, saying, “Two drinks are in one bowl and two curries are together (while one was enough)!” He clarified, “I do not forbid this, but I am wary of pride and worldly extravagance in the face of rendering accounts on Qiyamah. I love humbleness. Whoever shows humbleness before Allah, Allah is pleased with them.” Our Prophet ﷺ was more modest than a maiden in her home. He would not demand food from his family at home; he would accept and eat whatever was in front of him, and he would drink whatever he was offered to drink.