

Eating – The Islaamic way (part 2 of 2)

Article taken and slightly adapted from: newmuslims.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Blessings in food

The comprehensiveness of Islaam allows us to send and receive blessings while eating and drinking however we must not forget that God provides blessings in the food itself. Prophet Muhammad, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), advised us to pick up, dust off and eat any pieces of food that fall on the floor, to be certain not to miss any blessings or to leave the food for Satan.

“When any one of you drops a mouthful he should pick it up and remove any of the filth on it, and then eat it, and should not leave it for Satan. One should not wipe his hand with a cloth until he has licked his fingers, for he does not know in what portion of the food the blessing lies.”¹

If possible, in order to receive even more blessings, a Muslim should try to share his meals and not eat alone. Sharing meals with family, friends, loved ones, and neighbours creates bonds between believers. It should never be a problem if the amount of food seems too small, for the blessing extends to the amount of food required.

“The food for two people is sufficient for three, and the food of three people is sufficient for four.”²

“Eat your food together, for there are further blessings when you eat together.”³

Eating in moderation

The etiquette of eating includes eating in moderation and not overindulging no matter how appetising the food is. Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) reminded us that keeping the body light and healthy is better than being overweight, lazy and idle.

¹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

² Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

³ Aboo Daawood, At-Tirmidhee

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“A man does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Aadam to eat what is enough for his body. But if he must do more than that, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink and one-third for his air.”⁴

[“And eat and drink, but waste not in extravagance, certainly He (Allaah) likes not those who waste in extravagance.”]⁵

From the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) we learn to avoid eating or drinking from vessels of silver or gold.

“Do not wear silk and do not drink from vessels of gold and silver, or eat from plates thereof. They are for them (disbelievers) in this world and for us in the Hereafter.”⁶

After eating

In part 1 we learnt to mention the name of God before eating and now we finish by praising and thanking Him in a manner that suits His majesty. We say Alhamdulillah (all praises and thanks are due to God) to acknowledge that God is the one who provides all our sustenance. Whether it is a little or a lot, we thank Him and we praise Him.

[“And no moving (living) creature is there on earth but its provision is due from God.”]⁷

Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said that

“God is pleased when one of His slaves eats something and praises Him for it, or drinks something and praises Him for it,”⁸

And that is what a true believer is trying to achieve; the ability to please God in all of our deeds.

Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) advised us all to wash our hands before and after eating regardless of whether we are in the state of ritual purity or not. It is acceptable to rinse with water, but it is preferable to use soap or a cleaning liquid. It is also recommended to rinse the mouth after eating.

Once on an expedition Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) led the afternoon prayer and then asked for food. The food was brought and everybody ate. It was then time for the evening prayer, Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and*

⁴ Ibn Maajah

⁵ Qur'aan [7:31]

⁶ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, Saheeh Muslim

⁷ Qur'aan [11:6]

⁸ Saheeh Muslim

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blessings of Allaah be upon him) rose, rinsed his mouth with water, as did his companions. He then prayed without renewing his wudoo (ritual ablutions).⁹

From this account we learn two things, that it is preferable to rinse the mouth after eating and that the act of eating (unless under very specific circumstances) does not break a person's wudoo.

Oral hygiene

Although it is not obligatory to clean the teeth after eating, Islaam attaches great importance to oral hygiene. Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) recommended using a tooth stick called a miswaak or siwaak. He informed us that it purifies the mouth and pleases God. Miswaak is a natural twig fortified with minerals; it cleans the teeth, prevents the gums from bleeding, kills bacteria, and freshens the breath. If miswaak is not available one may use a toothbrush, toothpastes and mouth washes for they are acceptable. The Prophet, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), said:

“Use miswaak, for it purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord. Had it not been for fear of making things too difficult for my Ummah (nation), I would have commanded them to use the miswaak before every prayer.”¹⁰

Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) also suggested ways for the believers to drink water. He advised that water should be drunk in three breaths rather than gulping water in one mouthful, and cautioned against breathing into the drinking vessel because it contaminates the water with spittle. And it is better for one to drink while sitting.

Finally, as we have mentioned, Islaam is a complete way of life; even mundane acts such as eating or drinking can be considered as great chances to worship God.

⁹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

¹⁰ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree