

# SHAMĀ'IL TRADITION: THE INFLUENCE OF ORIENTALISM ON SĪRAH WRITING

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to study the development of the *Shamā'il al-Muhammadiyah* (description of the character and appearance of the Prophet Muhammad -peace be upon him-) in the larger Muslim Sirah (biographical study of the Prophet) tradition. It further explores European scholarly reception of these texts, and twentieth-century Muslim revision of the Sirah material in response to the criticism of the "Orientalist" scholars. It has been established that the Shamā'il genre gained a significant position in Sirah and *hadith* literature from the third century, especially since al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892) composed his *magnum opus Al-Shamā'il al-Muhammadiyah*. Subsequent Muslim Sirah-writers joined traditionists (*muhadiththin*) and historians in devoting considerable space to the Shamā'il in their works. Historically, the objective of Shamā'il literature has been to establish the pre-eminence and perfection of the Prophet by portraying his physical appearance and spiritual beauties. It has been observed that the subject drew a wider attention and receptivity among scholars and believers. Moreover, various allied subjects were gradually incorporated, such as the Khasā'il (habits), Fada'il (merits) and Akhlāq (manners). By the same token, adding Khasā'is (specialities or special attributes), Dalā'il (signs and evidences) and the debate of *Huquq* Mustafa (the obligations towards the Chosen Prophet) increased the importance of Shamā'il within the larger field of Sirah literature. However, both Orientalists and Muslim Modernists focused on the social and humanistic facets of the Prophet's life, ignoring the devotional and spiritual aspects of the Shamā'il, which had been central in medieval traditional Sirah-writings.

**Key words:** *Sirah-writings, Shamā'il, Orientalists, Muslim historiography and Modernists.*

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“It was narrated by Ibn Abbas that the prophet (SAW) said: When one of you eats food let him not wipe his hands until he has licked it or someone else to lick it.”

Similarly, if after the meal, hands and mouth are not washed, food particles will remain attached to these, which will be cause of germs' growth and spread. Likewise, if a person goes to bed without washing his hands after meal, then oily food particles will be cause of attraction for various other creatures like the ant. During the sleep, such things may cause a great trouble to the person.

The wiping of hands and the bowl has been called the cause of blessing by the Holy Prophet(SAW).

عَنْ جَابِرِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَرَ بِلَعْقِ الْأَصَابِعِ وَالصَّخْفَةِ وَقَالَ إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ فِي أَيِّهِ الْبَرَكَةُ (٥٢)  
“Jābir(r.a) narrales that the Holy Prophet(PBUH) ordered to lick fingers and the container and further said one didn't know which grain of food contained Barakah (blessing).”

### Conclusion:

The supraquoted literature clarifies that Prophetic manners and eatables, both have their efficacy regarding human health. Being Muslims, everyone has close affiliation with the Prophetic diet. For believers, scientific effectiveness is a secondary thing, but this worth of eatables strengthens the belief of the followers. While using the Prophetic food items, one should be aware of his own body temperament and the effect of the food item on human body. Without having this knowledge, one cannot get its benefits. Specifically, the Prophetic manners before and after eating prevent man from the harmful germs, the diseases and also the harmful arthropods. Ever increasing scientific research in this perspective will unveil more dimensions of efficacy and the human being will acknowledge “There is the best example is in the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW)

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### III) Prophetic Manners after the Meal:

#### a) Washing the Bowl :

The bowl in which things are eaten should be washed well after eating. If it is left unwashed, it would contain food particles which will attract microbes. The petrifying bacteria will become the cause of disease if the bowl remains unwashed.

حَدَّثَنِي جَدِّي أُمُّ عَاصِمٍ قَالَتْ دَخَلَ عَلَيْنَا نُبَيْشَةُ مَوْلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَنَحْنُ نَأْكُلُ فِي قَصْعَةٍ فَقَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَكَلَ فِي قَصْعَةٍ فَلَجَسَهَا اسْتَعْفَرَتْ لَهُ الْقَصْعَةُ (٤٩)

“It was narrated that Umm `Āsim Said, Nabaishah, The freed slave of the messenger of Allah entered upon us when we were eating from a bowl He said that Messenger of Allah said, whoever eats from a bowl and cleans it, the bowl will pray for forgiveness for him.”

The bowl's prayer of forgiveness is that it is prevented from disease spreading germs and becomes useful for next usage.

#### b) Wiping Hands with Handkerchief:

It is a common practice that people use handkerchief to wipe their hands. If it is dirty with food particles, hands are swabbed with handkerchief, then these oily food particles will be transferred from hands to the handkerchief. It will make the clothes dirty to which it touches. Secondly, it will become a medium for the growth of germs. The best way is to either wash the hands before smearing with the handkerchief or to lick the hands. The Holy Prophet(SAW) has given:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا أَكَلْنَا أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَا يَمْسَحَنَّ يَدَهُ بِالْمِنْدِيلِ حَتَّى يَلْعَقَهَا أَوْ يُلْعَقَهَا (٥٠)

“Ibn Abbas(r.a) narrated: The Messenger of Allah said that when one of you eats food, let him not wipe his hands with a handkerchief until he licks it or has it been licked.”

Not only wiping hands with handkerchief is unacceptable but wiping with other things is also prohibited.

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا أَكَلْنَا أَحَدُكُمْ طَعَامًا فَلَا يَمْسَحْ يَدَهُ حَتَّى يَلْعَقَهَا أَوْ يُلْعَقَهَا (٥١)

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ لَيْسَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الصُّوفَ وَاخْتَذَى الْمُخْصُوفَ وَقَالَ أَكَلِ  
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَشِيعًا وَلَيْسَ خَشِينًا فَكَيْلٌ لِلْحَسَنِ مَا الْبَشِيعُ قَالَ غَلِيظُ الشَّعِيرِ مَا كَانَ يُسِيغُهُ  
إِلَّا بِمِزْجَةِ مَائٍ (٤٢)

“It was narrated from Ḥasan that Anas bin Mālik said: the Messenger of Allah wore wool, and his dress were sandal. He said; The Messenger of Allah ate coarse food and wore rough garments, It was said to Ḥasan: what is coarse food? He said: coarse barley which cannot be swallowed except with a mouthful of water.”

Barley is used in many ways. Its course meal is commonly used. Its baked powdered is used both dry and in water and it is very delicious and energizing. Ibn Sīnā says it soothes the heart and dispels the heat of stomach and liver.(43) Old Olympic players were always given the barley flour as it gives more energy as compared to other foods.(44)

h) Gourd:

Gourd is a common vegetable naturally grown in the summer season. It bears too many benefits. It has been mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān.

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّفْطِينٍ (٤٥)

“And We caused to grow over him a gourd vine.”

The Prophet(SAW) liked to eat this vegetable:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُحِبُّ الْفَرْعَ (٤٦)

“It was narrated that Anas(r.a) Said: The Prophet(SAW) liked gourd.”

Seeing the Prophetic inclination to it, the companions also liked to eat it:

أَنَّسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ إِنَّ خِيَّاطًا دَعَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِبَطْعَامٍ صَنَعَهُ قَالَ أَنَسُ فَدَعَبْتُ مَعَ  
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَأَيْتُهُ يَتَّبِعُ الدُّبَائِ مِنْ حَوَائِي الْقُصْعَةِ قَالَ فَلَمْ أَزَلْ أُحِبُّ الدُّبَائِ مِنْ  
يَوْمِئِذٍ (٤٧)

“Narrated Anas bin Malik: A tailor invited Allah's Apostle to a meal which he had prepared. I went along with Allah's Apostle and saw him seeking to eat the pieces of gourd from the various sides of the dish. Since that day I have liked to eat gourd.”

Imām Dhahbī is of the view that the use of gourd is anti-constipation and it dispels the inflammation of eyes.(48)

“Abu Hurairah says: The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) said: 'Eat (olive) oil and anoint yourselves with it, for it is blessed.’”

Ibn Qayyim calls it a cure against Luke worms and the itching.(37)Imām Dhahbī reports that it reduces the effects of aging and good for the stomach diseases.(38)It kills acidity and protects inner lining of stomach. Above this, some Arab doctors have titled it as Hafiz and Amin (preserver) for these qualities. It prevents things from being decomposed. Sardines are packed in tins with olive oil. Despite being soft plush, it is neither decomposed till two to three years nor is decayed.(39)

In Germany an injection was prepared for the treatment of all the diseases of joints. It proved wonder in this regard. The manufacturing company admitted that the science used for this was gained from the Quran.(40)A research of German Medical Specialists concludes that finger tips containsuch protein which protects one from diseases like motions, vomiting and cholera. According to them, they are not bacteria but are called E.Coli. They kill bacteria on tips and prevent human body from harmful germs. Especially when the body sweats, this protein is activated. The experts think that if the protein had not been, the diseases like cholera would have been more common among children.

#### f) Dipping the Fly:

It is a common observation that house flies come when a person starts eating. There is a possibility that it may fall in the eatables or drinks. Fly is a filthy arthropod, so commonly people assume that the eatable has been polluted. But the Prophet(SAW) unveiled the fact that one of its wings carries valuable germs:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا وَقَعَ الدُّبَابُ فِي شَرَابٍ أَخَذِكُمْ فَلَئِمَّعِيسُهُ ثُمَّ لِيَنْزِعَهُ فَإِنَّ فِي إِخْدَى حَنَاحِيهِ دَائِيٌّ وَالْأُخْرَى شِفَائِيٌّ (٤١)

“If a fly is dropped in any one`s food container, he should dip it first then take it out because one of its wings contains disease and the other one health.”

#### g) Barley:

Barley is a common staple food. Sometimes people use its flour for eating. The Holy Prophet(SAW) used to eat the bread of its flour.

Honey, perhaps, has worldwide fame for its nutritional and medicinal significance. Ḥakīm Kabīr al-Dīn has denoted the significance of honey in these words:

“Honey is mildly laxative, antiseptic and sedative, generally used in Ayurvedic and yūnānī system of medicines. It is preventive against cough, cold and blood purifier, curative for ulcers, useful after severe heart attacks. Typhoid germs are killed by honey within 48 hours.” (33)

Dr. Khālid Ghaznawī has reported his personal experience about honey:

“Once, during the spread of cholera epidemic in Lahore, I (Dr. Khalid Ghaznawi) also suffered from it. It was our duty to control the epidemic. So, could not take complete bed rest. I placed a glass of water with two spoons of honey on the table. I kept on taking it while working with patients. Another glass came after this. Thus three glasses of honey mixed water were taken from 12pm to 5pm. At the start of second glass, I felt the need to go toilet and then there was relief. The sickness of stomach went away as soon as first glass was finished. When we came out of hospital there was neither physical tiredness nor any weakness after ailment.”(34)

Honey may be used solitary, mixed with water or with any other thing. Some people prepare a drink by mixing with water. Above quoted literature depicts that physicians admit the efficacy of honey in various ways and for various purposes.

e) Olive:

Olive has been mentioned in the Holy Qurān:

وَالزَّيْتُونَ (۳۵)

“By the fig and the olive.”

Besides this, it has been mentioned in Surah al-an`ām, 6:99, al-an`ām, 6: 141, al-Nahl, 16:11 and al-Mu`minūn 23:2.

Olive has also been referred to in the Prophetic traditions:

أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كُلُوا الزَّيْتِ وَأَدَّهِنُوا بِهِ فَإِنَّهُ مُبَارَكٌ (۳۶)



Talbīnah is not only a useful food but also a remedy against so many diseases. It is useful in controlling high blood pressure, high cholesterol level, and complications in heart valves, the acidity of the stomach, constipation, and weakness during pregnancy, kidney infection and also a tonic for older people and young babies.(28) Modern sciences call it useful to control sugar and cholesterol level in blood.(29)

So, the intake of Talbīnah will last very good effects on the body of a person.

c) *Hays* : Mixture of Dates, Butter and Cheese

It is a compound meal whose constituents are date, butter and cheese. It is very energizer and moderate in efficacy. All of its constituents are much useful. It repairs the damages of the body and keeps the body healthy. Being moderate in effectiveness, it can be used by all people.

It has been quoted on the authority of Anas bin Mālik about the Prophet's *walima*:

أَنَّسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -- وَأَقْبَلَ بِصَفِيَّةَ بِنْتِ حُيَيٍّ -- صَنَعَ خَيْسًا فِي نِطْعٍ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَدَعَوْتُ رِجَالًا فَأَكَلُوا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ بِنَاءَهُ بِهَا (٣٠)

“He had *Hays* (a special dish prepared from dried yogurt) prepared and placed on a dining sheet. Then he sent me to invite some men, who (come and) ate: and that was his and Safiyya`s wedding feast.”

d) Honey :

Honey was the Prophet's favourite food. He liked it and often used. Honey bee and honey is mentioned in the Holy Qur`ān and it has been called cure for the people as follows:

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ (٣١)

“There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men.”

The Holy Prophet used to take honey as a favourite drink:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَشْرَبُ عَسَلًا عِنْدَ زَيْنَبِ بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ وَيَتَكَلَّمُ عِنْدَهَا (٣٢)

“Narrated 'Aisha (r.a): Allah's Apostle used to drink honey in the house of Zaynab(r.a), the daughter of Jahsh(r.a), and would stay there with her.”

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْكُلُ الرُّطَبَ  
بِالْفَيْئَاءِ (١٨)

“Narrated by Abdullah ibn Ja ‘far: I saw the Prophet eating dates with cucumber.”

Cucumber has been cultivated for hundreds of years. It is a beneficial food which is also mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān.(19) It is commonly used as salad. Some people use the decoction of cucumber to become slim. It is used as pickle in America and other countries.(20)Imām Dhahbī is of the view that cucumber opens strangury, it empowers the body and removes inflammation of stomach and intestines.(21) Ibn Qayyim says it is useful in the pain of bladder.(22) As 95% of its content is water, its regular use in summer prevents from dehydration. A research of Harvard University has unfolded the fact that cucumber contains necessary hormones for the production of insulin.(23) It is evident that both the new and old literature admit the efficacy of cucumber for human health.

Similarly, ‘dates’ are also valuable for human health. Besides their use as a staple food in the desert life, it has its medicinal importance as well. In 1927, a conference was held in Columbia which concluded that the dates are a source to create fresh blood. It controls the cholesterol level and does not allow the blood to coagulate.(24) Its regular use increases the haemoglobin level and the red blood cells in the blood.(25) They are used in jams and pastries. Its decoction is effective in sore throat. The kernel of the date catalyses the intestinal functioning and dispels the heat of the stomach.(26)

If used together, the hot effects of date are neutralized by the cold effects of cucumber.

#### b) Talbānah: Mixture of Barley and Milk

Talbānah is a compound food. It is made of barley, milk and honey. It is cooked in milk and honey is used for sweetness. It is moderate in its efficacy. It is very refreshing food item. The Prophet(SAW) used to eat this. It is quoted:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ -فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ تَلْبِينَةُ مِحْمَةَ لِفُؤَادِ الْمَرِيضِ تَذْهَبُ بِبَعْضِ الْحُزْنِ (٢٧)

“Ayesha narrated: I heard the Prophet saying that the Talbānah soothes the heart of the patient and releases him of his sorrow.”

ready, it stimulates the secretions necessary for food digestion. The Holy Prophet(SAW) has given:

أَبَا جُحَيْفَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا أَكُلُ مُتَكَبِّئًا (١٥)

"Abu Juhayfah told that the Messenger of Allah said: I do not eat while reclining."

If some simple food items are being taken even in squatting position will work as the narration below shows:

أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُقْعِبًا يَأْكُلُ تَمْرًا (١٦)

"Anas bin Mālik said: I found the Prophet (peace be upon him) squatting and eating dates."

### c) Checking the food before eating:

One should check what is being eaten by him. If he would eat unchecked food, then spoiled food may be taken in which would affect the health of a person. The Prophet (SAW) himself has set an example in this regard and he always used to check food before eating it as the narration says:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ أَبِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَمَرٌ عَتِيقٍ فَحَعَلَنْ يُفْتَشُّهُ يُخْرِجُ السُّوسَ مِنْهُ (١٧)

"It was narrated that Anas bin Mālik said: Some old dates were brought to the Messenger of Allah and he started to check them and removing worms from them."

## II) Some Eatables of the Prophet:

Since his life on this earth, man is living with animals and plants. His body remains in sound health if his all secretions are moderate. The food items he takes might possess some qualities which are suitable to the body of that person. While in other cases, they might not go with the temperament of that person. The nature of the eatable should be kept in mind and if it harms the body in one way some other thing should also be taken to nullify its effect.

### a) Cucumber and Dates:

Cucumber naturally has the effects which are opposite to that of the dates. When they are taken singly, they might not be so beneficial. Therefore, the Prophet(SAW) sometimes used to eat them together:

عَنْ زَادَانَ عَنْ سَلْمَانَ قَالَ قَرَأْتُ فِي التَّوْرَةِ أَنَّ بَرَكََةَ الطَّعَامِ الْوُضُوءُ بَعْدَهُ فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ بِمَا قَرَأْتُ فِي التَّوْرَةِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَرَكََةُ الطَّعَامِ الْوُضُوءُ قَبْلَهُ وَالْوُضُوءُ بَعْدَهُ (١٢)

“Narrated by Salman: He said I read in the Torah that the blessing of food is wuḍū after it. I told this to the Messenger and informed him about what I read in the Torah. He replied: the blessing of food is wuḍū before it and wuḍū after it.”

A person daily uses his hands for various purposes. They may become dirty and have germs attached. If they are washed, they become free of germs and can be employed to take food into the mouth without contaminating it. Therefore, the Prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ نَامَ وَفِي يَدِهِ غَمَرٌ وَمَا يَغْسِلُهُ فَأَصَابَهُ شَيْءٌ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ (١٣)

Narrated AbuHurayrah(r.a): “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If anyone spends the night with grease on his hand which he has not washed away, he can blame only himself if some trouble comes to him.”

The same is given in another tradition:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ بَاتَ وَفِي يَدِهِ رِيحٌ غَمَرٍ فَأَصَابَهُ شَيْءٌ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ (١٤)

Narrated AbuHurayrah: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If anyone spends the night with the smell of grease on his hand which he has not washed away, he can blame only himself if some trouble comes to him.”

#### b) Body’s position while eating:

Eating and drinking may be carried out during various positions of the body i.e. sitting, reclining, laying and walking. However, the best way is to eat while one is in the sitting position because if someone is eating while walking, it seems the person is in hurry and he will not chew the food well before engulfing it. If a person is eating while laying, the possibility is there that the food would enter in his wind pipe. If a person is reclining with wall or something else, he may eat more than his capacity. Proper sitting position portrays the person’s mental readiness to have food. If mind gets

cannot do so. So, after death trillions of germs who have started the autolysis process will bring a great harm to the consumer. Maḥmūd Nāzīm al-Nasīmī is of the view that it causes Hepatitis.(4)

Likewise, blood is also detrimental to the human body if it's taken in as food or drink. It carries the wastes of the body.(5) So, if it is consumed, it will disrupt the body functions. Dr. Mohammad Nazer Aldekar opines that it increases the level of waste particles in the body. It is the best medium for the reproduction of microbes.(6) It can't be digested by human body and stops the digestive system. Consuming blood may cause colic pain.(7)

In the same way, swine flesh is also detrimental to health. It carries a toxic protein 'Stoxin' which is the cause of allergy, arthritis and nervous diseases. It enhances the fat and cholesterol level. It becomes the cause of skin and eye diseases.(8) It causes blood pressure and heart diseases.(9) Parasitology literature has unfolded that it carries the dangerous microbes like *Trichinella Spiralis*, *Taenia Solium* and *Ascaris Lumbricoides*.(10) Nasīmī calls it a cause of high cholesterol level, heart diseases, thickening of arteries and hair fall.(11)

Prophetic teaching regarding eating can be divided into three parts:

1. Prophetic manners before eating meal
2. His diet and some eatables
3. His manners after eating meal

### I) Prophetic Manners Before Eating Meal:

Prophetic manners before eating meal include cleaning of hands before taking meal, taking care in the body's position while eating and checking the food before eating it.

#### a) Washing hands before eating:

All living beings need to eat food and in human beings hands are the medium to carry it to the mouth. If the food is ingested directly through the mouth, there is no need to wash hands before starting the meal, as the mouth contains saliva which digests the food taken in. If hand or some other article is used to take the food in, that very part of body or article should be clean. Every open thing is vulnerable to microbes present in the atmosphere. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has given importance to this issue as follows:

Allah Almighty warns human beings:

فلينظر الانسان الى طعامه (١)

“Then let mankind look at his food.”

To have an eye on the eatables has two aspects:

1. Man should see the purity and cleanliness of food.
2. Whether the food is useful or harmful to the person having the meal. Man should avoid the things which do not suit his body.

Human beings use various types of food which produce different effects on human body. Likewise, bodies vary in their nature and their response to the food taken by them may vary. One of the causes of abrupt changes in human body and its habits is eaten and drunk things. (2)

That's why every person should be very careful in his choice of food.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) is the best of all human beings in his humanly nature. Among his responsibilities was to teach human beings wisdom and selection of good food items is also a part of wisdom. He used various foods at various times of life, suggested his companions some food and also prohibited various food items, sometimes for specific people and sometimes for whole humanity. This prevention ensures the health of a person. Let's consider the sagacity behind the prohibition.

**Unlawful Things:**

Islam has divided the eatables into lawful and unlawful things. There is some sagacity behind this division.

Islam is very keen regarding the health of its followers. It enjoins upon the believers the things that are healthy. It prohibits the things unbefitting for their health. As an example, the following Qur'ānic verse may be discussed here:

انما حرم عليكم الميتة والدم ولحم الخنزير (٣)

“Allah has made unlawful, the dead, the blood and the flesh of swine”

Death of a living animal without being slaughtered will be under the definition of 'dead'. When a living being dies, there may be certain reasons for that: Aging factor, physical disease and some poison, etc. Whatever the cause of death may be, the dead body carries dangers. Unlike a living body which can give resistance to the germs entering the body, the dead body

# TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SAW) REGARDING MANNERS OF EATING AND BENEFICIAL EATABLES

Muhammad Abid Nadeem \*  
Sultan Sikandar \*\*

**Abstract:** Human beings use various types of food at various times to fulfill their basic need of existence. Being a human, the Prophet (SAW) also used various eatables at various occasions. He exhibited a healthy set of manners regarding eating and his selection of food was based on keeping their beneficial value in mind. Like other matters, his manners in this regard provide guidance for humanity and constitute a special branch of knowledge, called Tibb-i-Nabawī (The Prophetic Medicine). Besides having some medical benefits, the eatables of the Prophet (S.A.W.) had their territorial value. As all medicines are not useful for all patients, some people get benefit from certain medicines, while, for others they may be injurious to health. Similarly, the eatables used by the Prophet have health efficacy, no doubt, but they are medically beneficial for specific people. In this article, the manners of eating and the benefits of eatables of the Holy Prophet(SAW) will be discussed.

Key words: *Eating manners, Eatables of the Prophet, Efficacy, Diet,*

Eating and drinking is among the basic needs of human beings. Human body is made up of cells which in turn are formed by the food nutrients. The food nutrients are digested and dissolved in the stomach and absorbed into the membranes of the stomach. When these absorbed food contents are exhausted, the human body demands more food. After assimilation, this food becomes part of the body. This fully assimilated part of food becomes the source of energy for various body functions. When energy has been consumed, the body needs more food.

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## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ا	a	ذ	<u>d</u>	غ	gh	بھ	<u>bh</u>	Long Vowels	
ب	b	ڈ	dh	ف	f	پھ	<u>ph</u>	آ	ā
پ	p	ر	r	ق	q	ٹھ	<u>th</u>	آ	ā
ت	t	ڑ	ṛ	ک	k	ٹھ	<u>th</u>	ی	ī
ث	ṭ	ز	z	گ	g	جھ	<u>jh</u>	و	ū
ث	th	ذ	<u>z</u>	ل	l	چھ	<u>ch</u>	و (URDU)	ō
ج	j	س	s	م	m	دھ	<u>dh</u>	و (URDU)	ē
چ	ch	ش	sh	ن	n	ذھ	<u>dh</u>	Short Vowels	
ح	h	ص	ṣ	ن	ṇ	زھ	<u>rh</u>	ا	a
خ	kh	ط	ṭ	ه	h	کھ	<u>kh</u>	ی	i
د	d	ظ	ẓ	ی	y	گھ	<u>gh</u>	و	u

### Diphthongs

و —————  
 (ARABIC) aw  
 (PERSIAN/URDU) au  
 (TURKISH) ev

ی —————  
 (ARABIC) ay  
 (PERSIAN/URDU) ai  
 (TURKISH) ey

### Doubled

و ————— uww/uvv

ی ————— iyy

Letter **ع** is transliterated as elevated comma ( ' ) and is not expressed when at the beginning.

Letter **ع** is transliterated as elevated inverted comma ( ' ).

س as Arabic letter is transliterated as *d*, and as Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as *z*.

و as Arabic letter is transliterated as *w*, and as Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as *v*.

تھ is transliterated as *ah* in pause form and as *at* in construct form.

Article ل is transliterated as *al-* ( 'l- in construct form) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter.

و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as *-o*.

Short vowel — in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as *-i*.

(Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995), pp.54-64.

- c) **Journal Article:** Asma Afsaruddin, "Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership and Its Modern Implications," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 20:2(2003): 80-94.
- d) **Unpublished work/ Dissertation:** Effendy Bahtiar, "Islam and the State: The Transformation fo Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia", (Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 1994), pp.100-102.
- e) Cite all bibliographical information in endnotes. When the book or journal article is cited for the first time, provide full information: full name(s) of the author(s), title of the source, place of publication, publishing company, date of publication and the specific page you are citing. For subsequent citations of the same source, list the author's last name, as abbreviated form of the title, and the relevant page number(s). *Do not use footnotes or a biography.*

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  - a) **Book:** Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.78.
  - b) **Chapter:** Antonie Wessels, "Some Biblical Considerations Relevant to the Encounter Between Traditions," in *Christian Muslim Encounters*, eds. Y.Y. Haddad and W.Z. Haddad

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