

**MAINTAINING AND PRESERVING GOOD HEALTH AND
WELLNESS ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC GUIDELINES****Muhammad Musharraf Hussain***

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Health is the greatest blessing and bounty of Allah (SWT) to Mankind. “**Health is Wealth**” is a very famous proverbial statement, but no one knows precisely who has made this statement and when was it made. A healthy body and mind is the greatest asset bestowed by Allah. If one is not well or healthy, then his wealth cannot bring any benefits to him. It cannot make him happy. So man should always take good care of his health. Wealth without good health is not desirable, but good health without wealth is not always bad. It is sometimes seen as a test of our faith, because wealth is always provided by Allah (SWT) through various ways. On the other hand, apart from other reasons, sickness at times is sent to us by Allah (SWT) as a test of our faith and also due to disobedience to Allah. So whatever be the circumstances, we should accept it with patience and gratitude. If one is poor but healthy, he can always work on to earn money and wealth. Good health brings us happiness, pleasure and wellbeing. Thus one should always work to ensure that his health always remains fine, and take measures to protect

it from damage, deterioration and destruction. One should take proper amount of good, wholesome and nutritious food at proper time and do some sort of daily exercise. He should also avoid taking foods that are harmful to health and unlawful. Bad habits like smoking, drinking wine and laziness can spoil our health. Moreover, in order to maintain and preserve good health, one should do some regular exercise, take regular bath and adopt healthy lifestyle recommended by the great people particularly the Prophets (as).

THE PROPHETIC STATEMENTS ON HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROVED TO BE SCIENTIFICALLY TRUE

Islam is a complete and eternal way of human life, which the most gracious Allah (SWT) has presented to humankind through Muhammad (ﷺ), the leader and seal of the Prophets (as). So, if it can contain instructions about creed, morality, duties, obligations, private life, social life, political life, civilizations, culture, education, economics, finance, commerce, business, science, law, peace, war and other human problems, then why shouldn't it address health, wellness, hygiene and medical issues, because, without health and hygiene the way of life cannot be not complete. That is why Allah (SWT) inspired Muhammad (ﷺ) to make statements on healing, health and wellness for the benefit of man for his transient stay on the earth. This is because man needs to remain well, free from sickness to fulfill his brief mission on earth. After that time whether he likes it or not he will have to return to Him (Allah or God).

Prophet's statements are divinely inspired and true: We all know that nothing but truth came out from the mouth of the Prophet (ﷺ). So his statements on healing, health, wellness and hygiene are also true. In fact, he did not make a single untrue statement in his whole life of 63 years. It is because of this he was given the title, 'Al-Ameen, meaning Trustworthy' by everybody including his opponents and disbelievers. Furthermore, nobody could claim that he taught Muhammad (ﷺ). However, although he did not attend any school, college, *madrassa* (religious school) or university to receive any formal education, but the statements he made fourteen centuries ago are now proved to be scientifically true. It has been reported that the Prophet's statements on medicine and health which were made fourteen centuries ago are now proved to be scientifically true and correct. This further confirms that no one can claim the credit of knowing all these hidden facts of health and wellness, diseases and treatment as well as public health issues fourteen and a half centuries ago, except a Prophet (as), a chosen man from God, because Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an.

“He does not speak anything of his own desire.”(An-Najm 53:3)^[1]

“And if Muhammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; then We would have cut from him the aorta.” (Al-Haqqah 69: 44-46)^[2]

In fact the Prophet (ﷺ) did not speak according to his own opinions. What he spoke was under divine inspiration. His statements were inspired words of Allah. There are elements of divinity in them. They are full of wisdom and truth. His statements are proverbial, allegorical and free from constructive and objective criticisms.

HEALTH IS WEALTH

There is a great statement on health and wellness made by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) about 1450 years ago when modern science has not developed. He said good health equals to the entire wealth of the World. ‘Ubaidullah ibn Mihsan al-Ansâri (ra) narrates that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“Whoever among you wakes up in the morning, secure in his property, healthy in his body, and he has his food for the day, it is as if he were given the entire world (wealth).”
(Sunan at-Tirmidhī)^[3]

Probably the famous proverbial statement, ‘HEALTH IS WEALTH’ has been culled from this tradition many centuries later.

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AND PRESERVING GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Maintaining good health and wellness was the obligatory and foremost duty of all human beings. All great Prophets (as) of Allah stressed the need of maintaining good health. They also advised the Muslim Nation to abstain from taking foods that are harmful to health. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) prohibited many foods and drinks for the Muslims. Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrated that about a year ago the Prophet (ﷺ) while standing amongst us said.

“Certainly, no other blessing was given to humankind like good health and wellness.”
(an-Nasâ’I)^[4]

Abu ad-Dardâ’ (ra) reports

“Once I said to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ): O Prophet of Allah! If my health remains good and if I am well (cured of my sickness), I express my gratitude to Allah (SWT). This condition is better and likeable to me rather than being tested with diseases and ailments, and then I keep patience. The Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Truly, the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah too loves wellness and good health just as you do.” (Mu'zamal Awsat)^[5] Indeed good health is the root of all happiness. For example, someone owns several million dollars, but he is always sick and unhealthy. On the other hand, somebody has only several thousand dollars, but he has excellent health. Who between the two is happy? Certainly, the man with good health is happy.

SUPPLICATION FOR GOOD HEALTH

It has been narrated by Ibn ‘Abbâs (ra) that a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Badar visited him and said: **“O Prophet of Allah, after I have finished doing my daily prayer, what supplication shall I make to Allah?”** The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: **“Ask Allah for good health.”** When the Bedouin repeated the question twice, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him after the third time: **“Ask Allah for well-being and happiness in this world and then for security and health.”** (at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)^[6]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said.

“No supplication (earnest prayer) is more pleasing to Allah than a request for good health and security (safety).” (at-Tirmidhi)^[7]

Indeed, no other supplication is more rewarding, more pleasing, and more important than a request for good health and safety.

IMPORTANCE OF HAND WASHING

Washing hands before and after eating: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) emphasized the importance of neatness and cleanliness. As we use our hands for doing a variety of work, germs accumulate in them. So only by washing hands it can they be removed. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave too much emphasis on hand washing. He advised us to wash hands before and after eating food. Washing hands while starting the practice of eating is very important, because it is the integral part of physical cleanliness.

Salmân al-Fârîsî (ra) narrates: **“I have read in the Torah (Old Testament) that there was blessing (goodness) in doing ablution prior to eating food. When I discussed this matter with the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “The blessings of food lie in washing the hands (doing ablution) before and after eating.”** (Abu Dâwood, al-Hakim, at-Tirmidhi, Ahmad)^[8,9,10, 11]

Anas (ra) narrates that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“Whoever would like Allah to increase the goodness of his house should perform ablution (wash hands) when his breakfast is brought to him and when it is taken away.”
(Ibn Majah)^[12]

The British Medical Journal recently published a research to confirm that washing hands is much better than any other cure. The published research by the journal stated that hand washing appears to be effective in lowering the incidence of pneumonia in the developing world. Researchers confirm that Hand washing doesn't take much time or effort, but it offers great rewards in terms of preventing illness as adopting this simple habit can play a major role in protecting our health. (BMJ)^[13]

WASHING HANDS AFTER WAKE UP FROM SLEEP

Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“When anyone of you wakes up from sleep, let him wash his hands three times with water before he dips his hand in any water (or food) container (utensils), because he does not know where his hand was (or moved) while he was asleep (during the night).”
(At-Tirmidhi)^[14]

Hand washing is currently emphasized more and more in hospitals and clinics in order to prevent spread of germs. In fact it was Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who first talked about the importance of hand washing, which has now become a global slogan, **“World Hand Washing Day”**, which is celebrated every year.

The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed us not to put our hands into any food container before washing hands after wake up from sleep. Moreover, Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslim Nation to attain ritual purity through washing the exposed parts of the body and bathing some 1,450 years ago. To summarize, for the preservation of good health and hygiene he prescribed hand washing for the practicing Muslims in the following occasions.

- 1 When one wakes up
- 2 After coming out of the toilet
- 3 Before eating and after eating
- 4 If one touches his/her private/genitals
- 5 When touching a dead body

- 6 If the hand touches any dirt or unhygienic items
- 7 And to wash hands 7 times (once by sand) if one touches or has been touched by a dog especially from his/her mouth or from the anal area.

From the above one can easily understand the extent of hand washing the Prophet (ﷺ) prescribed for the Muslim Community for maintaining good health. Due to outbreak of COVID-19 WHO instructs the world community to wash and sanitize hands as frequently as possible.

Many verses in the Holy Qur'an and many Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) urge the Muslims for frequent hand washing. Muslims wash the external parts of the body five times a day during ablution before obligatory prayers. Recent researches report that simple physical measure like ablution should be given higher priority in pandemic contingency plans. Cleaning the inside of the nose regularly can be seen as effective preventive measures against an attack of Coronavirus, because the virus usually spreads to human body through inhalation.

GOOD EATING PRACTICES (GEPs) OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

Good Foods Good Health: Prophetic lifestyle is connected to proper eating habits of nutritious, wholesome and lawful foods. Amount of food to be taken daily and the time and frequency of eating is very important. It gives specific guidelines on how to preserve one's health free from pollution and malnutrition, and protect it from damage, deterioration and destruction. Indeed our health does not depend on the amount of food we eat; it depends on the quality of food we take. We should eat the foods that contain vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, etc. It should be fresh, wholesome. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned quite a good number of specific foods, which he considered to be wholesome and healthy. Modern medical science has confirmed that he was right. Among the foods mentioned were honey, dates, barley, vinegar, meat, milk, fish and ginger. He prohibited eating while standing and advised us to remain properly seated and eat slowly. Eating slowly is recommended for good health as it facilitates the food being thoroughly chewed and hence easier to digest.

Prophet's advice not to eat unlawful foods: Muslims are prohibited from consuming flowing blood. Foods contaminated with blood or by-products are forbidden. If something is considered forbidden, it remains prohibited no matter how good the intention is, or how

honorable the purpose is. Muslims consider that eating meats of prohibited animals can cause various diseases which are difficult to be treated. Meats of pork, dog, cat, monkey, or any other unlawful animals are prohibited. Meats of prohibited animals can only be considered lawful in emergencies when a person is facing starvation and his life has to be saved through the consumption of this meat. Meats of all carnivorous animals such as lions, tigers, wolves, dogs, cats, rats, etc. are unlawful. All birds with talons such as hawks, falcons, vultures, eagles, and domesticated donkeys are prohibited. Animals which are commanded to kill such as mice, scorpions, snakes, are also forbidden to eat. In fact, all reptiles, amphibians (frogs) and rodents are forbidden in Islam. Any domestic animal that has died before being slaughtered in the Islamic manner, or has not been properly slaughtered, is unlawful and thus prohibited. Animals that are slaughtered in the name of anyone but Allah are also prohibited. So if people follow the lifestyle of Prophet (ﷺ) in eating food, they will maintain a healthy life and will hardly be attacked with diseases.

Following Prophetic lifestyle in eating and drinking can prevent lifestyle diseases:

Following Prophetic lifestyle in good eating, drinking and hygienic practices can prevent many diseases. A story about the level of health of the new Muslims from the early period of Islam illustrates their health conditions. One of the kings of Persia sent a learned physician to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) for the treatment of his Companions in case of illness. The physician remained in Arabia for one or two years but none approached him or sought his treatment. At last, the physician presented himself before the Prophet (ﷺ), and complained: I have been sent to treat your Companions, but during all this time no one has asked me to carry out my duties in any respect whatsoever. The Prophet (ﷺ) instantly replied.

“It is the custom of the people of the land not to eat until they become hungry; they stop eating before their stomachs are full and they leave one third of their stomach empty.”
(Elgood, 1951)^[15]

Then the physician answered: This is the perfect reason for their excellent health. He then kissed the ground in reverence and departed.

In fact eating should be linked to the hunger stimulus in the stomach and to the centre for satiety in the brain. So when we eat we should fill only 1/3 of the stomach with food. The

other 1/3 is for fluids and the final 1/3 is for air which is related to the diaphragm and the lungs for respiration. In deed according to the Prophet's advice it is scientific to stop eating food while we still have a desire to eat.

AMOUNT OF FOOD A PERSON SHOULD EAT IN A SINGLE MEAL

The amount of food to be taken in a single meal on regular basis is also part of the diet therapy prescribed by the Prophet (ﷺ). Al-Miqdām ibn Ma'di Karib (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“The son of Âdam never fills a vessel worse than his stomach. The son of Âdam only needs a few bites that would sustain him (that is, to strengthen the loins), but if he insists, one-third should be reserved for his food, another third for his drink and the last third for his breathing.” (Ahmad, at-Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)^[16,17,18]

If we explain the above Prophetic statement in the light of modern knowledge, we will find that it exactly fits to the modern concept. Let us take the example of a liquidizer or blender which we use to mix, chop or grind food items in the kitchen. If we fill the blender completely with garlic, ginger, onion, turmeric and other food items and do not add water, will it work? Certainly, it will not. Our stomach is also like a blender. It contains solid food, liquid food and semi-solid food. It also contains vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, proteins, fibers, fat etc. So, in order to digest the food items properly we must keep some space in the stomach empty for the physiological process to take place properly. If we fill our stomach with food, we shall not be comfortable to walk, move, work, sleep or rest. Moreover, we might have obesity. So, the Prophet's advice on the amount of food items to be consumed in a single meal is very scientific.

Eating when not hungry is bad for health: Renowned Arabian physician and a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), Harith bin Kaladah (ra) was once asked, **“What is the best medicine”?** He answered, **“Necessity or Hunger”**.

When he was asked, **“What is a disease”?** He replied, **“Entry of food after food.”** He also said, **“Stomach is the seat of all diseases.”** (As-Suyooti)^[19] Even Ibn Sina (Avicenna) made similar statement. He said, **“Never have a meal until the one before it has been digested.”** (As-Suyooti)¹⁹ Harith bin Kaladah (ra) further said, **Food or diet is the best medicine. Give food and medicine to everyone as per his habit and need”**. (Ibn al-Qaiyyum)^[20]

In fact sickness occurs mainly due to overeating or under-eating.

The Prophet (ﷺ) advised the Muslim Nation not to eat until hungry. This saying makes perfect sense in modern day society, where obesity has become a major problem. The Prophet's recommendation to eat food only when one is hungry is confirmed by recent scientific research. This research finding is found in an article published in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* entitled, "**The Behavioral Science of Eating.**"

The individuals participating in the study were 45 undergraduate students. The participants were first asked to rate their level of hunger and then to consume a meal rich in carbohydrates. Then participants' blood glucose levels were measured at regular intervals after they consumed the meal. Blood glucose levels tend to rise after a meal containing carbohydrates. It was found that hungry students' blood glucose levels were much lower compared to the ones who were not hungry when took the meals. It is generally healthier if blood glucose levels rise by a relatively small amount because elevated blood glucose is damaging to the body's cells. (Koert and Brian, 2016)^[21]

Maintenance of good health through regular fasting: To maintain good health free from ailments Muslims have been advised to fast 2 days/week (intermittent fasting) or 3 days every month as recommended by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This directive is found to give us a lot of health benefits. Moreover, the Qur'an has directed the Muslim Nation to fast in the whole month of Ramadan. This practice of abstaining from foods during the day for a full month also gives us many physical and spiritual health benefits. The physical benefit of fasting is good health and wellness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to his followers, "**Fast, you will be healthy.**" (Mu'zamal Awsat)^[22] There was another version of the hadith, which says.

"Fast [the month of Ramadan] so that to heal your bodies from diseases." (Mu'zamal Awsat)^[22]

The three fathers of Western Medicine; Hippocrates, Galen & Paracelsus prescribed fasting as the greatest remedy and the physician within. Life Magazine in its September 1996 issue considered **fasting as the healing revolution**. There are more than 500 medical journal articles available on the internet on therapeutic effects of fasting.

Modern medical science does not specify the amount of food to be taken in a single meal: Modern medical science does not specify the amount of food one should eat regularly for maintaining good health. But the Prophet (ﷺ) made specific statements on the amount of food to be taken in a single meal and the time and frequency of eating. The Prophet (ﷺ) advised the Muslim Ummah (Nation) on the amount of food one should eat for maintaining good health. Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“The food for two persons is sufficient for three, and the food of three persons is sufficient for four persons.” (Bukhari and Muslim)^[23,24]

Jâbir (ra) narrates that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying.

“The food for one person is sufficient for two, the food of two persons is sufficient for four and the food of four persons is sufficient for eight.” (Muslim)^[25]

So if we can implement the first hadith (tradition) narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ra), let's say, the food of 100 million people of a country will be enough for 150 million people. On the other hand, if we can implement the hadith narrated by Jabir (ra), the food of 75 million people will be adequate for 150 million people. So, if we can change our eating habits according to the Prophetic advice, we shall have no food shortage in the country.

Moreover, we shall not need to import food from abroad spending huge amount of foreign exchange. On the other hand, our health will remain fine, excellent and free from common diseases, and at the same time we shall not suffer from obesity.

The Prophetic advice of eating small meals on a regular schedule has a scientific basis. This has been reported in a study where researchers reveal that eating small, frequent meals is one of the best ways to control blood glucose levels, as this ensures a constant supply of glucose to the body. Skipping meals or eating at different times each day can make it difficult to keep your blood glucose levels stable. One should try to eat about the same amount of food at about the same time every day. If somebody is on the run, pack something that's easy to eat and portion-controlled, for example yoghurt, a sandwich, fruit, etc.

DEMERITS OF OVEREATING

Overeating is a type of abnormality and unhygienic practice. The Prophet (ﷺ) advised the Muslim Community to seek refuge with Allah from heavy dieting. He said.

“Whoever eats excessive amount of food, will remain hungry on the Day of Judgement by the same excess amount.” (Ibn Mâjah, At-Tirmidhi)^[26,27]

This hadith is also reported by Ahmed (Rah) in his book on *Tibbe Nabawi*. Some people eat excessive amount of food making it difficult for the body to digest it within limited time. Overeating brings many illnesses such as indigestion, distorted thinking, malfunctioning of the stomach, abdominal disorder, disruption of sleep and bad dreams. Obesity and overweight are the results of excess dieting or uncontrolled dieting.

Ahmed (rah) mentions that there are several harmful effects of overeating. These are diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, paralysis, heart diseases, untimely old age complications, rheumatic pain, gastric acidity, peptic ulcer and other digestive problems.

Eating disorders among the youth: Recently our young girls today are very much exposed to a lot of unhealthy foods in order to look slim and attractive. The unhealthy social media propaganda, no doubt, plays a major part in the psychopathology of eating disorders. These are still complicated and difficult to understand.

PROPER USE OF RIGHT AND LEFT HANDS

Eating with the left hand: ‘Ā’ishah (ra) explains.

“The right hand of the Messenger (ﷺ) was for his ablution and food and his left hand was for evacuation (washing after urination and defecation) and anything repugnant.” (Abu Dâwood)^[28]

Eating with the left hand is not a style or fun or personal wish. It is a bad eating practice, which must be avoided. Left hand is used for some work which is not always considered good or pure.

Ibn ‘Umar (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“No one among you should eat with his left hand, or drink with it, for the Satan eats with his left hand and drinks with it.”** (At-Tirmidhi)^[29]

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (ra) reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said.

“Do not eat with your left hand, for the Satan (devil) eats with his left hand.” (Muslim)^[30] Ibn ‘Umar (ra) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“When anyone of you intends to eat (meal), he should eat with his right hand, and when he intends to drink he should drink with his right hand, for the Satan eats with his left hand and drinks with his left hand.” (Muslim, At-Tirmidhi)^[31]

Allah has created both the hands for doing a variety of work. Doing the work of right hand with the left hand and vice versa create many problems and is thus not permissible.

Islam teaches us to use the left hand to clean and wash after defecation and urination so that no spoiling reaches the mouth. The right hand is always kept clean for eating, writing and doing good work. This good practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) prevents the faecal-oral transmission of diseases. If there is no valid reason, such as an injury on the right hand, this practice of eating must be followed because, apparently, one does not obtain any benefit from eating with the left hand. It is contradictory to the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ), and thus disallowed.

There is a section of the human community that is used to eat food using knife, spoon and fork. These people have developed the practice of cutting food items into pieces with knife in his right hand, and then, they hold the fork in their left hand to put the food inside their mouth. Can't this practice be reversed? Let me ask some simple questions, does a student receive something from a teacher with left hand? Does a son give something to his father using his left hand? Can an army officer salute his general or commandant with his left hand? Would it be acceptable? Can one make a warm handshake with a president, head of state or prime minister using his left hand? Is it not against etiquette and good manners?

Benefits of eating with right hands: Eating with the right hand is a good practice and the very rule of nature. It is for necessity and convenience. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) also disallowed us to use right hand for cleaning the nostrils. Therefore, like good manufacturing practices (GMP) implementation in pharmaceutical industries we should also implement good eating and drinking practices of the Prophet (ﷺ) for our own health benefits. If we follow the Prophetic lifestyle in eating and drinking we shall not fall sick frequently.

GOOD DRINKING PRACTICES (GDP) OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

Definition of pure water: About the purity and usage of water, the Prophet (ﷺ) made an amazing statement. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said,

“Water is pure for ablution and nothing makes it impure.” (Sunan al-Tirmidhī).^[32] Imam Al-Bayhaqi said, **“Water is pure unless an impurity falls into it that changes its smell, taste, or color.”** (Bayhaqi)^[33]

Abu Umamah al-Bahili (ra) also narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Certainly water is pure; nothing can make it impure until its odor, taste and color are changed.”(Ibn Mâjah)^[34] The above Prophetic traditions made 1450 years ago confirm the statement of modern science of this century that water is colorless, tasteless and odorless liquid free from soluble and insoluble impurities. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us a simple method known as **ablution** to attain ritual purity prior to offering five obligatory prayers. In ablution, when we take some water on our right hand, we can easily examine with our eyes whether water is colorless or not. Then when we gargle with water we can easily ascertain the taste of water without even drinking it. Finally when we put water to clean the nostril we can easily verify whether the water we are using is odorless or not. Thus through ablution Muslims can easily examine the purity of water without doing any laboratory test.

Another important aspect of ablution is that in ablution we usually wash the nostril 15 times (3X5) a day. So this frequent washing of the nostril enables us clean the inside of the nose effectively. So, the nostril will always remain neat, clean and pure. As a result, the nasal swab if tested for Coronavirus will be most likely negative. Thus it is observed that those who clean their nostrils fifteen times a day will not usually be affected by COVID-19 and their nasal swab if tested for COVID-19 will show negative result.

COVERING FOOD CONTAINER AND CLOSING WATER-SKINS

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (ra) said that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah say.

“Cover the food and drink container, stopper the mouths of your water bottles, lock the door and put out your lamps before going to sleep.” (Bukhari, Muslim)^[35]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates.

“The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed us to cover food container, stopper water-skin and keep clean empty pot upside down.” (Ibn Majah)^[36]

This hadith exactly fits modern scientific idea. It is very usual that when a container is left open dust and dirt fall on it. So in order to prevent accumulation of dust and dirt in an open clean container it is necessary to cover it with something or turn it upside down so that dust

cannot pollute the inside of the container.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) commanded that the water or food pots be always covered. If nothing is available, he advised that the food pot can even be covered with a tree branch, so that crawling insects do not fall in but pass over the branch. One should avoid uncovered food or uncovered drink in case something poisonous has fallen into it that might be fatal if one were to eat or drink it. Moreover, children may not find it easy to spoil water if kept covered.

The above command of the Prophet (ﷺ) is in perfect agreement with the modern preventive health measures. This hadith contains medical information for the doctors and public health professionals, who always advise people on good hygienic practices, including covering the drinking pots and food substances in order to protect them from dust, flies and foreign particles. Furthermore, if naked lamps are not put off at night, rats can easily set fire to a house while people are asleep. Likewise, if the door is kept locked up, devil or thief will not be able to easily enter the house and steal the properties. So it appears that the current practice of locking the doors with pad locks and using other electronic devices is very much in accordance with the advice of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, much harm could be avoided if one follows this advice of the Prophet (ﷺ).

BLOWING HOT DRINK AND BREATHING IN THE CONTAINER

Blowing hot drink to make it cool and breathing in the container before drinking is harmful. Ibn ‘Abbâs (ra) narrates: **“The Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah prohibited breathing in the water pot (cup) and blowing into it.”** (Abu Dâwood, At-Tirmidhi)^[37]

Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (ra) narrates.

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) made this prohibition somebody said: O Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah! When we see some harmful dirt, shall we blow it out? The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: Throw it.” (Musnade Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi)^[38] Hazrat Abu Katadah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“While drinking water do not breath into the container.”** (Bukhari)^[39]

It has been observed that some people are accustomed to frequently take hot tea. Some prefer hot milk. However, since taking a hot drink is time-consuming, it is made slightly colder by

frequently blowing into it. This practice, which is usually prevalent in some Asian countries, is not desirable. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited such unhygienic practices. Through blowing, polluted air and bad smell enter the drink. So frequent blowing into the tea cup will pollute the drink with carbon dioxide which is not desirable.

We know that inhaled air contain oxygen, whereas exhaled air contains carbon dioxide. We do not inhale carbon dioxide because it is poisonous. We take oxygen while inhaling. Therefore, we should stop this practice without delay as it is not scientific. The above hadith indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) realized the harmful effect of breathing in the water container, a fact that was not clear to his Companions at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

However, the medical scientists of today clearly understood the significance of this hadith, which broadly refer to modern preventive measures of maintaining good health. It has recently been observed that there are a number of communicable diseases, which can be effectively controlled and prevented by following the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

This above hadith also indicates the importance of the purity of water, and it reminds us of the danger of droplet infections. Drinking contaminated liquids causes many diseases. As a general rule, the hadith teaches us to discard any impurity in what we drink, but the methods of removing the impurity vary with time and place. This hadith indicates that it is highly advisable to have clean drinks, free from any foreign particles. Modern scientists report that many infectious diseases can be transmitted by breathing or blowing into the water we drink or the food we eat. Examples of such diseases include influenza, herpes simplex, poliomyelitis, mumps, rubella, common cold, streptococcal sore-throat, chickenpox, tuberculosis and others which are mainly viral.

Two scientists from the University of Riyadh, Albar and Liu report that “Many infectious diseases can be transmitted by breathing or blowing into the water we drink or the food we eat. Examples of such diseases include influenza, herpes simplex, poliomyelitis, mumps, rubella, common cold, streptococcal sore-throat, chickenpox, tuberculosis and others which are mainly viral.”^[40]

Due to the ignorance of the Prophetic teachings, certain preventable and controllable diseases exist among the community and some of these ultimately turn into endemic in certain areas.

Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) directed the Muslim Nation to practise the preventive measures and live in a hygienic environment, free from communicable diseases.

MILK CONTAINS FAT-A WONDERFUL PROPHETIC DISCOVERY

The Prophet (ﷺ) made a wonderful statement on water 1400 years ago without any laboratory experimentation. The modern science today fully confirms what the Prophet (ﷺ) said. It has been narrated in the Sahihan by Ibn Abbas (ra).

“The Prophet (ﷺ) once drank some milk and then asked for some water, and rinsed his mouth, saying: It has fat.” (Bukhari, Muslim)^[41]

Ibn ‘Abbâs (ra) narrates: **“The Prophet (ﷺ) used to rinse his mouth out after drinking milk, saying that the fat in the milk was bad for those who had fever or who suffered from headaches.”** (As-Suyooti)^[42]

For years nutrition experts recommended to avoid whole milk due to its higher saturated fat content, because it might increase risk of heart attack. The reason is that excess fat raises cholesterol levels. However, Prophet’s recommendation to remove excess fat from inside the mouth is quite scientific.

Preserving the good health of the human babies through breastfeeding: The Holy Qur'an emphasizes breastfeeding until 24 months of age in numerous verses. Among the eight verses of the Quran related to the breastfeeding, 233rd verse of Surah Al-Baqarah is the most important. It stated that.

"And mothers [should] breastfeed their children for a total of two years." (Qur'an 2:233)^[43] It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“For a child, there is no milk better than the milk of the mother.” (Mustadrak)^[44]

He has also said that there is nothing that can take the place of food and water except milk. Likewise, it is narrated from Ali ibn Abu Talib (ra) that **for a child, there is no milk that has more blessings than the milk of a mother.** Breastfeeding is not only feeding your child, it is the exchange of love and strengthening of the soul.

Infant has the right to drink mother’s breast milk: The Prophet (ﷺ) also ordered

women to breastfed their children and warned that women who deprive their children from their rights are liable to punishment in the grave and in the life hereafter. Abu Umamah Bahili (ra) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“While I was sleeping, two men (angels) came to me, held me by my upper arms, and took me to a rough mountain. They said, ‘Climb.’ I said, ‘I cannot climb it.’ They replied, ‘We will make it easy for you.’ He continued: ‘So I ascended until I reached a high place in the mountain’ He continued further: ‘We moved on until I saw some women with snakes biting at their breasts.’ I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He replied, ‘Those are the women who deny their children their milk.’ (Mustadrak)^[45]

Breast milk is the best for both the baby and the mother: There are numerous advantages of breastfeeding for the baby. It gives an increased resistance to infections, and as a result there are fewer incidents of illness and hospitalization. It also provides decreased risk of allergies and lactose intolerance. Baby experiences less nappy rash and thrush. It is because of these benefits, most healthcare professionals recommend exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months or much longer. The benefits of breastfeeding also extend to the mother. It lowers risk of breast and ovarian cancer and helps lose pregnancy weight. It also lowers risk of osteoporosis and triggers uterus to shrink.

Breast milk contains everything baby needs for the first 6 months of life. Breast milk is sterile. It contains important antibodies and provides ideal nutrition for babies. It contains the required proteins, fats, higher quantities of lactose, vitamins and iron to satisfy the natural needs of the child.

HOUSEFLY CANNOT POLLUTE THE DRINK

Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said.

“If a housefly falls in the drink of anyone of you, let him dip all of it (in the drink) and then throw it away, for in one of its wings there is a disease and in the other there is healing (antidote for the disease) that is the treatment for that disease.” (Bukhari, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah)^[46]

The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered that the fly that falls on the food be dipped in it, thus killing the fly. If the fly’s death inside the food had made the food impure, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have ordered us to discard it, but he did not say that. Concerning the medical information

contained in the hadith, Abu ‘Ubaydah (ra) said that the purpose behind dipping the fly in the drink is to extract the cure from its other wing, just as the poison was extracted from the wing that fell on the food. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered us to neutralize the poisonous substances produced by the fly with the cure that Allah, the Exalted, kept in the other wing. The fly should then be submerged in the drink or food so that the cure could neutralize the effect of the poison. This hadith was examined in the microbiological laboratory of Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt and found it to be scientifically correct. This remedy of the Prophet (ﷺ) was revealed about 1,450 years ago. According to Ibn al-Qayyim (Rah), no medical scientist would have discovered such a marvelous remedy on his or her own.

CONTAMINATION OF FOOD BY DEAD ANIMALS OR INSECTS

There have been two hadiths. The first one is narrated by az-Zuhri regarding an animal (a mouse or some other animal) that has fallen into solid or liquid oil or butter-fat.

“I have been informed that a mouse had died in butter-fat, whereupon Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) ordered that the butter-fat near it be thrown away and the rest could be eaten.” (Bukhari)^[47]

Maimoonah (ra) narrates.

“A mouse fell into butter-fat and died. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about that. He said: Throw away the mouse and the butter-fat that surrounded it, and eat the rest of it.” (Bukhari)^[48]

Modern science fully supports the scientific aspect hidden in the above hadiths. When an animal falls on butter- fat (a semi-solid food item), it does not pollute its entire quantity. If some quantity of fat is taken from the various places near the dead animal and studied microbiologically, we can then know the extent of contamination. Similarly, in the case of liquid fat, if using a scoop samples are very carefully withdrawn from the container without stirring the oil and then taken on Petri dishes and allowed to incubate for the growth of microorganisms, the level of pollution can be ascertained. Furthermore, since the mouse fell down on the oil or fat, is unlikely that the growth of microorganisms would occur soon and spread throughout, because, in several cases, oil also serves as a preservative, and it does not extract the water soluble materials from the animal very quickly. However, if one does not want to eat the butter or oil on which a mouse fell and died, it is up to him.

GOOD SLEEPING PRACTICES (GSPs) OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

Sleep is one of the great blessings of Allah. Allah (SWT) states.

“And We have made your sleep as a means for rest.” (Qur'an 78: 9)^[49]

“And among His signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who listen.” (Qur'an 30: 23)^[50]

Sleeping during the morning is bad: Abdullâh (ra) narrates that a person was mentioned before the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was told that he had kept on sleeping till morning and had not got up for the prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Satan urinated in his ears.”** (Bukhari)^[51]

Âmir ibn 'Uthmân (ra) narrates from his father 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ra) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Sleeping during the morning hinders provision.” (Musnade Ahmad)^[52]

Ibn 'Abbâs (ra) once saw his son sleeping in the early morning and said to him,

“Wake up! Do you sleep at the hour during which sustenance is divided?” (Ibn al-Qayyim)^[53]

Sleeping during the late afternoon is injurious to health: Hazrat Aiyesh (ra) says, some Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah (SWT) said,

“Those who sleep after 'Asr (afternoon) and lose control on their minds (i.e. may become mad) should only blame their own selves.” (Jame Sagir)^[54]

As-Suyooti quotes al-Imâm who said,

“There is one thing that is forbidden for a man, and that is to sleep during the late afternoon, lest he lose his wits.” (As-Suyooti)^[55]

Excessive sleeping is harmful to health: Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

Prophet Sulaymân's mother advised his son: **“O my son! Do not sleep excessively, because excessive sleep will be the cause of appearing as poor on the Day of Judgment.”** (Ibn Mâjah)^[56]

Sleeping on the stomach is a hellish sleep: Abu Umâmah (ra) reports.

“The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a sleeping man in the mosque who was lying on his face (stomach) and he touched him with his foot, saying: Sit up, for it is a hellish sleep.”

(Musnade Ahmad, Ibn Mâjah)^[57]

Hippocrates writes in his book: **“If an ailing person sleeps on his stomach whereas this was not his usual habit when he is not sick, then he will be either testifying to the weakness in his mind or that he is suffering from a pain in his stomach.”**

Sleeping on the left is not good for health: Sleeping regularly on the left side harms the heart, because the organs of the body will put pressure on the heart with their weight. If a person sleeps on the left side, the right lung will put pressure on the heart. On the other hand, in this situation, the liver also remains unchanged and stationary. Sleeping on the left side also affects the activity of the heart and decreases its functions. Those who are overweight should not sleep at all on the left side.

Proper time of sleep: As-Suyooti (rah) says that the best time to go to sleep is after food has been digested. He further said that sleeping during the day is bad for health. It affects the complexion, gives rise to diseases, and makes a man lazy. It also ails the spleen, softens the nerves and weakens the desire. It should be avoided, except, during the summer time around noon, in accordance with the hadith of the Prophet (sa), which said: **“Have a nap for some time, for the devil never sleeps.”** (Akhbare Asbahan, as-Suyooti)^[58]

In fact, one should maintain a proper balance between how much time one sleeps and how much time one remains awake (for doing work to bring sustenance). It is not very important when one goes to sleep, but it is important how much time one spends in sleeping. It is quite natural that if one goes to bed late, he or she will wake up late, and vice versa. Too much sleeping and not sleeping at all during the night are equally harmful. Excessive sleep makes one lazy.

PROPHET’S SLEEP

Sleeping on the right is sunnah and good for health: Ideal and medically allowed sleeping position is to sleep on the right. Al-Barâ’ ibn ‘Âzib (ra) narrates.

“Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to me: **When you want to go to bed, perform ablution as you do for prayer, and then lie down on your right side and put your right hand under your head.**” (Bukhari)^[59]

The Prophet’s advice to sleep on the right side is very much scientific. Sleeping on the right

side is the best from the hygienic point of view, because this posture facilitates the function of the bronchi of the left lung, which quickly expels the mucous secretions.

GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES (GHPs) OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ) FOR PRESERVING GOOD HEALTH AND PURITY

It has been reported by Imam Muslim that the Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the following natural acts as part of good manners and hygienic rules for preserving health and purity.

- **To keep the moustache short**
- **Allowing the beard to grow big**
- **To use *siwâk* (traditional brush) for cleaning teeth**
- **To wash the nostrils**
- **To cut fingernails**
- **To wash places between fingers of feet**
- **To uproot the hair under the armpits**
- **To remove the hair under the navel**
- **After passing stool, cleaning the anus with pieces of soil and then washing it with water** (Muslim, At- Tirmidhi)^[60]

KEEPING LONG FINGERNAILS AND LONG MOUSTACHE

Keeping long fingernails and long moustache is unscientific and unProphetic: Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar (ra) relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Cutting the fingernails, shortening the moustache and removing the hair below the navel are natural acts of humans.” (Bukhari)^[61]

Anas ibn Mâlik (ra) narrates that: **“The Prophet (ﷺ) fixed up the forty days’ time within which shortening of the moustache, cutting of the fingernails and cleaning of the hair under the navel and armpit should be done.”** (Muslim, Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi, an-Nasâ’i)^[62]

Regular cutting of fingernails: The regular cutting of fingernails and keeping them clean are also important from a hygienic point of view. If nails are not cut regularly, there could be accumulation of dust, dirt and waste materials, and, as a result, the area beneath the nails becomes a constant source of microorganisms. So, the Prophet’s advice to cut fingernails every two weeks was quite scientific.

Women keeping long fingernails: Nowadays, some women keep long fingernails as so-called fashion or for the purpose of beautification. It takes a long time to clean them; some cannot afford to do this regularly. As a result, their fingernails always look dirty. Nobody loves to see a dirty nail. Possibly that is why women are found to use nail polish so that the dirty nails remain unnoticeable. Moreover, it is not comfortable to work with hands and fingers if the nails are long, because if nails are sharp and pointed it can hurt anyone.

Shortening moustache: Ibn ‘Umar (ra) further relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Shave the moustache and allow the beard to grow long.” (Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi)^[63]

The Prophet (ﷺ) kept his moustache and fingernails short by cutting them on Fridays before going for congregational prayer. Zayd ibn Arqam (ra) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Whoever does not shorten his moustache is not among us.” (an-Nasâ’I, at-Tirmidhi)^[64]

Keeping long moustache is unscientific. It is against the guidelines of good manufacturing practices (GMPs). If the moustache is too long, dirt or dust from it could contaminate the drink or food while drinking and eating. It is very obvious that, while drinking, one cannot prevent the moustache from touching the drink if it is too long. This causes dirt and dust from the moustache to contaminate the drink. Thus, it is hygienic and scientific not to allow the moustache to grow very long. Long beard on the other hand, cannot pollute the drink because the drinking cup always remains above the beard.

Importance of cleaning the anus with pieces of soil followed by washing with water: The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed us to clean the anus after passing stool with a piece of soil or something else prior to washing the area with water. This advice is very scientific from medical points of view. First, touching the stool with one’s own naked fingers is a detestable act and is unhygienic. Secondly, cleaning the remaining excretory materials by washing with water is a good and recommended act. This system of cleaning the anus by a piece of soil followed by water ensures thorough and complete cleaning. Currently the practice of using soil piece has been replaced by toilet tissue paper. In those days tissue paper was not available. However, the non-Muslim community is not habituated to use water after using toilet paper. The toilets do not have provision to use water. This practice goes against the

principle of attaining ritual purity, because it is not possible at all to remove every trace of stool with tissue paper.

The Prophet (ﷺ) further cautioned us that in order to attain ritual purity we must ensure that the urine droplets do not at all pollute the dresses or trousers we wear. This is because, it is a bad and uncomfortable practice to keep on wearing trousers contaminated by urine droplets. If this practice continues for some weeks and the trousers remain unwashed, it will appear that several milliliters of urine will remain trapped in the dresses. This is totally undesirable because urine is an impure human excretory product.

IMPORTANCE OF NEATNESS, CLEANLINESS AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Cleanliness is an excellent habit. The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized the need for neatness, cleanliness, ritual purity and preventing personal attires from being polluted by urine droplets and other ways. Our parents, teachers and elders also taught us how to remain clean during our youth. There is also a famous proverb saying, **“Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”** The Qur'an says.

Allah (SWT) loves those who keep themselves pure and clean. (Qur'an 2:222)^[65]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has taught us certain rules to observe which benefit both society and ourselves. It is up to us to be aware of this guidance, learn it and apply it. Abu Mâlik al-Ash'ari (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Cleanliness is half of faith.”** (Muslim)^[66]

aṭ-Ṭabarâni narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Cleanliness invites one towards faith, and faith leads its possessor to Paradise.”** (aṭ-Ṭabarâni)^[67]

Ibn Hayyan reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Clean yourself, for Islam is cleanliness.”** (Ibn Hayyan)^[68]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Islam is the religion of cleanliness. Therefore, cleanse yourself, for only neat and clean people will enter Paradise.” (aṭ-Ṭabarâni)^[69]

The Prophet (ﷺ) further said.

“Remain neat and clean as much as possible, because Allah has placed the basic

foundation of Islam on neatness and cleanliness. None but the clean can enter Paradise.” (Jame Sagir)^[70]

Abu Sayeed Khudri (ra)’s son Abdur Rahman narrates from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Every adult person should take bath on Friday, wash teeth through Miswak (cleaning tree twig) and use perfume if affordable.” (Muslim)^[71]

Modern societies of the world still have much to learn from Islam’s basic rules on neatness, cleanliness, purity and personal hygiene. Purity has an important impact on us and is strongly connected to worship. Without a clean body, clean attires and clean place, a Muslim cannot pray. It is such an important principle in Islam that the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized strongly. So we must endeavour to always remain clean and pure and we must keep our home and environment clean and tidy all the times.

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized that the maintenance of community health is more important than individual hygiene. Jâbir (ra) narrates that **the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade us to pass urine in stagnant water.”** (Muslim)^[72] Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“None amongst you should urinate in standing water, and then wash in it.”** (Abu Dawood)^[73]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) reports that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah say.

“No one of you should urinate in stagnant water, which is not flowing, and then (you may need to) wash in it.” (Bukhari, Muslim)^[74,75]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that the Messenger (ﷺ) said.

“Be on your guard against two things which provoke cursing. They (the hearers) said: O Messenger of Allah, what are those two things that provoke cursing? The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: Easing nature on the thoroughfares (where people walk) or under the shades (where people take shelter and rest).” (Muslim)^[76]

Abu Dâwood, Ibn Mâjah, al-Bayhaqi and al-Hâkim also recorded similar narrations. According to the narration of Mu‘âdh ibn Jabal (ra) the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Be on your guard against three things which provoke cursing: easing in the watering

places and on the thoroughfares, and in the shade (of the tree).” (Abu Dâwood)^[77]

The Prophet’s advice is quite scientific. It relates to public health concerns, because people who are not aware of this teaching can cause disrespect among other people. Public pathways and shaded areas are two areas where people would be offended from excrement and filth because they use them so often. The same curse would apply to those who leave filth behind in the toilet commode for the next person. The curse, in this context, has two meanings: people are cursed by the one who has to deal with the dirt they left behind, and they are cursed by Allah for their careless and disgusting habits. The practice of passing excrement in public places, road side must be avoided even in remote areas and places, which is evident from the Prophet’s saying.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

The Prophet (ﷺ) advised Muslims to keep their homes, the places of living and roads clean and tidy. He also instructed the Muslims to dispose waste materials in the proper way, thus stressing environmental sanitation and good housekeeping. He said.

Look! Allah is Good and He loves goodness. He is Clean and He loves cleanliness. He is Bountiful and He loves bountifulness. He is Generous and He loves generosity. Clean your court and courtyards, and do not imitate the Jews. (at-Tirmidhi)^[78]

So we should keep dirtiness away as it has harmful effects on our overall health. We also should not litter at home, school, roads, parks, etc. and maintain and practise cleanliness of the various body organs at all times. If we keep the areas and surroundings around us neat, clean and tidy, we shall not be frequently attacked with diseases. If we lead a healthy and clean life, we can become successful and happy in this world and the next.

PROPHETIC STATEMENTS ON SNEEZING AND YAWNING

Another protective hygienic measure done by the Prophet (ﷺ) before and ordered us to do it is sneezing. Abu Hurayrah (ra) reports.

“Whenever the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah sneezed, he would cover his face with his hand or a piece of cloth, and also lowered its sound as much as possible.” (Abu-Dâwood)^[79]

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said: **"Sneezing is from Allah and yawning is from Shaytaan.** If any of you yawns, let him place his hand over his mouth. If he says 'Ah, ah!' (makes a noise when yawning), Shaytaan laughs from inside him." (at-Tirmidhi)^[80]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) further reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

"Yawning is from Satan and if anyone of you yawns, he should let him hold it (yawning) back as much as he can, for if anyone of you yawns and say: 'Ha', Satan laughs at him." (Bukhari)^[81]

Ibn Abbas (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"When someone yawns, he should place his hand over his mouth. Yawning comes from Shaytan."** (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad)^[82]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) reported Allah's Messenger as saying, **"Yawning during prayer comes from the devil, so when one of you yawns he must restrain it as much as possible."** (At-Tirmidhi)^[83]

In another version by him and by Ibn Majah, it says, **"He should put his hand over his mouth."**^[81]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) reports that by the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

"Allah likes sneezing but dislikes yawning." (Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi)^[84]

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (ra) reports that the Messenger (ﷺ) said.

"When one of you yawns in the prayer, let him restrain it as much as he can, lest Satan enters therein." (Muslim)^[85]

The practice of covering our face with a handkerchief, cloth or at least with hands while sneezing and yawning is not the invention of a modern doctor. The current practices of the educated community are in conformance with the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ).

It has recently been observed that there are a number of communicable diseases that can be effectively controlled and prevented by following the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ). Due to the ignorance of their teachings, certain preventable and controllable air-borne diseases exist among the community, and some of these ultimately become endemic in certain areas. Thus,

the Prophet (ﷺ) directed the Muslim Nation to practice the preventive measures and live in a hygienic environment, free from communicable diseases.

PROPHETIC STATEMENTS ON SKIPPING DINNER AND AGING

The Prophet (ﷺ) advised the Muslim Community not to skip dinner. He usually ate dinner before the night prayer (Isha). He even said, **“Whoever skips the dinner meal his body weakens.”**^[86]

Jabir Ibn Abdullah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Bind yourself to have a meal at night, even a handful of dates, for skipping this meal makes one age quicker.”** (Ibn Majah)^[87]

On the other hand, Anas ibn Maalik (ra) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Have dinner, even if it is just a handful of low quality dates, for abandoning dinner hastens old age.”** (at-Tirmidhi)^[88]

The first hadith has been classified by Hadith scholars as weak hadith. The second hadith too was classified as *Dha'eef* (weak) by Shaykh Al-Albaani in his commentary on the ahadith of Sunan at-Tirmidhi.

According to modern science having dinner is a flexible matter; whoever wishes to have dinner may do so, and whoever wishes to skip it may do so. However, dinner helps the large intestines fermenting food and benefiting from some of its vitamins that results from the process of fermenting. Therefore, the one who has dinner should not sleep immediately after dinner in order to avoid indigestion. This is why physicians in the past and present advised walking after dinner. Ibn Al-Qayyim cited the statement of Al-Haarith ibn Kaladah, the renowned Arab physician, reading, **“When one eats lunch, let him lie down for a while, and when he eats dinner, let him walk forty steps.”** (Zaad al-Ma'aad)^[89]

However, the contents of both the narrations are not against modern medical science. Let me examine it in the light of medical science.

Respected readers, whatever we eat it usually gets digested in 5-6 hours. That is why we feel hunger and need to eat again. If, for example, we eat our lunch between 1 to 2 pm, then naturally at about 8 pm we shall be hungry. So if we skip dinner our stomach will remain

empty for 15 to 16 hours. Thus it can disrupt normal physiological processes. Moreover, if the stomach does not have adequate amounts of food for such a long time we might suffer from acidity. Dear readers, in order to prove this may I humbly suggest a clinical study by selecting 30 healthy persons of 40 to 50 age limit. Half of them will be given food in the morning, at noon and at night and the remaining half will not have dinner. After a period of three to six months we will measure the aging characteristics, which might include color of hair, body weight, shrinking body skin, reduced movement, lack of water in the body, and overall physical appearance, etc. From the data we can verify the authenticity of the Prophet's statements.

Taking good care of the human heart: Heart is one of the most important organs of the human body. The Prophet (ﷺ) made several statements on heart. Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir (ra) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“Verily, in the body is a piece of flesh which, if sound, the entire body is sound, and if corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart.” (Sahih Al- Bukhari)^[90]

Modern science defines human heart is an organ that pumps blood throughout the body via the circulatory system. The pumped blood carries oxygen and nutrients to the body and removes carbon dioxide and other wastes. This is why heart should always be kept sound and healthy; otherwise it will not be able to pump blood properly. So it may harm the tissues of the body. Therefore, medical science fully endorses the Prophet's statements about the importance of the soundness of the heart.

From the hadith we come to know that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave too much importance on the soundness and purity of heart. If the heart is fine and healthy, everything is fine. If it is corrupt and not functioning well everything in the body is unwell. This necessitates visiting a cardiologist for medical advice. So we must take good care of our heart in order to protect from physical sickness. The physical sickness includes heart disease, heart attack, abnormal heartbeat, heart failure, congenital heart disease, etc. However, in order to remain mentally and physically healthy, we should endeavor so that our hearts remain clean and sound free from physical sickness as well as spiritual sickness such as sin, aggression and envy.

Maintaining good health through abstaining from smoking: Smoking is injurious to health. World's scientific community is unanimous that smoking invites many diseases

relating to respiratory, circulatory and cardiovascular systems. Modern medical science reveals that smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Smoking also increases risk for tuberculosis and certain eye diseases. Smoking causes addiction and intoxication. Probably because of these harms of smoking it has been prohibited by the Prophet (ﷺ).

People who are addicted to smoking find it extremely hard to pass time without smoking. Young children some time found to steal parent's money to buy cigarettes for smoking. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited substances or drinks which cause intoxication. It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (ra) that the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allah said.

“Every intoxicant is unlawful and whatever causes intoxication in large amounts, a small amount of it is (also) unlawful.” (Sunan Ibn Majah)^[91]

Therefore, if we want to remain away from all the above killer diseases we must abstain from smoking. Moreover, frequent smoking leads to huge wastage of money which must be avoided as it does not bring any benefit to the smokers. So for maintaining good health every intelligent person should follow the Prophet's advice to abstain from smoking.

MAINTENANCE OF GOOD HEALTH USING HONEY

Honey is a splendid gift of Allah (SWT): Honey is a splendid gift of Nature which, Allah bestowed on humankind. He inspired the honeybees to make this precious natural product for the benefit of man. Honey is ‘**manufactured**’ in one of the world's most efficient factories, the beehive. In this factory, **there is no worker who is a human, and there is no need for machinery and equipment to manufacture honey.** In this factory, honey bees do all the work. Dr. Nadia El-Awady, an Egyptian freelancer writes that scientific research that began a few decades ago, and recent experiments in hospitals in Europe, USA, the Far East and China revealed unquestionable therapeutic effects of honey that paved the way towards new research on medicine.

Use of honey as medicine and food: Honey is an effective medicine. It is the best Qur'anic medicine for the cure of AIDS, because Allah SWT says, in honey therein healing for men. In Surah An-Nahl verse 69 Allah (SWT) states.

“And your Lord inspired to the bees.....

There emerges from their bellies a drink [honey], varying in colors, in which there is

healing for men..... Verily in this is a Sign for those who reflect'." (An-Nahl 16: 69)^[92]

The honeybees travel to a long distance to collect nectar from flowers and then return to their hives. And for this they do not need anybody's help to show them the way to return their home. Allah (SWT) inspired the honeybees to make this precious natural product for the benefit of man. It is Allah (SWT) Who trained the honeybees to make honey as per His divine plan.

Honey is one of the miraculous foods of Paradise. The Quran clearly talks about rivers of honey flowing in Jannah (Heaven). In Surah Muhammad, Allah (SWT) gives good news of streams of honey in Paradise.

“The description of paradise..... wherein are rivers of milk the taste of which never changes..... rivers of clarified honey (clear and pure)” (Qur'an 47: 15)^[93]

In ancient times the Greek and the Egyptians used honey to embalm the dead bodies. They also used it as preservative. About 3000 years BC in an Egyptian's queen's tomb there was a jar of honey which did not undergo any chemical change in 22 years.

REMARKS OF SOME GREAT MEN ON HONEY

- As-Suyooti (rah) says that honey is the food of foods, the drink of drinks, and the medicine of medicines.
- Ibn al-Qayyim (rah) mentions that no substance is more beneficial for the body as a food, a remedy, an ingredient and a preserver of medications, which also strengthens the stomach, than honey.
- Hippocrates, the father of medicine, prescribed it 2,000 years ago to a patient as a remedy for several ailments, and he also used it.
- Aristotle, the father of natural science, held that regular use of honey improved health and prolonged life.
- The famous Roman physician Galen, described honey as an all-purpose medicine for all types of diseases.

However, modern medical scientists termed honey as an immune system stimulant. So as an immune system stimulant, honey is the best Prophetic medicine for the treatment of diarrhea, AIDS and many other viral diseases. It is more effective than antibiotic gentamycin. According to an Egyptian scientist, dilute sterile solution of honey can cure the internal

infections of the eye. Imam Bukhari (rah) classified honey as medicine.

Prophetic traditions on honey: There are several important Prophetic traditions on honey. Ibn Abbas (ra) narrates that the Prophet (saws) said.

“There is a cure in three substances; a gulf (drink) of honey, cupping and branding with fire (cauterizing). But, I forbid my followers (Muslims) from cauterizing by fire (branding).” (Bukhari)^[94]

Jabir bin Abdullah (ra) also narrated the hadith. ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (ra) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his followers.

“There are two cures for you: Honey and the Qur’an. The Qur’an is a cure for the soul, and honey (food item) is a cure for every illness of mankind.” (Ibn Mâjah)^[95]

An Arabic writer, Ibn Majili, translates the words of the Prophet as follows.

“Honey is a medicine for the body and the Qur’an is a medicine for the soul. Benefit yourselves from the use of the Qur’an and honey.” (Ibn Mâjah)^[95]

I find it extremely necessary to explain the hadith^[95] in greater details. Firstly, the Holy Qur’an, revealed 1450 years ago, is the standard book of references of the past, present and future times. The Holy Qur’an is the Infallible and Veritable Word of God and the Last Testament, available in its pristine purity and original texts. About the Qur’an, the Book’s Author said, **“This is the Book about which there is no doubt.”** (Al-Baqarah 2:2)^[96]

And that is why we find that there have been millions of people all over the world who have memorized this voluminous book, Al Qur'an from chapter Al-Fatiha to chapter An-Nas, whereas there is not a single man in the entire world who has memorized the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation, or any of the other Holy Scriptures.

The Qur’an does not contain any single word of man. Even the inspired words of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (to whom the Qur'an was revealed) are not present in the Qur'an. His words are divinely inspired. They are, however, preserved separately in original tongue as well as translated into many other languages. In other divine books the words of God have been intermingled with the words of men. That is to say, people have changed and interpolated the former divine Books, and God's Words have been mixed up with texts of their own making. The Qur'an, on the other hand, exists exactly as it had been revealed to the

Prophet (ﷺ). Not a single stop, dot, comma, hyphen or any punctuation mark has been changed since its revelation fourteen and a half centuries ago.

The noble Qur'an is not a typical book of medicine, health science or pharmacy, but it provides effective guidance, which, if followed, ensures good health and absolute healing. All the laws, guidance, teachings, or morals a man needs for his existence on earth are incorporated in it explicitly. It contains the prescription for all types of ailments, be it physical or spiritual. It provides the prescription not only to treat an individual but also a society, a nation and finally the humankind. It contains the remedy for people who possess a wicked character and for those who are socially misled. A large number of people who have come in contact with the Qur'an and received guidance from it stayed away from all kinds of evils, pollution, lust and material influence. They also remained free from diseases and sickness and were not usually dependent on doctors and physicians. There are numerous examples of such people in the pages of history.

The Prophet (ﷺ) once said: **“Honey sharpens the sight and strengthens the heart.”** (Ibn Habib)^[97]

The Prophet (ﷺ) further told that honey should not be refused: He said, **“Do not refuse honey when it is offered.”** (Chaghghayni M. *Tibb al-nabbi*)^[98]

Abu Hurayrah (ra) transmitted a well-known hadith.

“Whoever licks honey in the morning three times a month will not suffer from any serious (fatal) disease.” (Ibn Mâjah, Muza'mul Awsat)^[99,100]

‘A’ishah (ra) narrated, **“The Prophet (ﷺ) used to like sweet edible things and honey.”** (Bukhari)^[101] She also said that **the Prophet (ﷺ) was very fond of honey. He used to drink a beverage made of milk, honey, and raisins.** (Muslim)^[102]

She further says, **“Every morning, the Prophet would consume a glass of water sweetened with honey.”** (Dhahabi)^[103]

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) once said, **“By Him in whose hand is my soul, eat honey, for there is no house in which honey is kept for which the angels will not ask for mercy. If a person eats honey, a thousand remedies enter his stomach, and a million diseases will**

come out. If a man dies and honey is found within him, fire will not touch his body.”
(Chaghghayni M. *Tibb al-nabbi*)^[104]

The Prophet (ﷺ) is also reported to have said: **“The condiment of drink is honey. It guards the heart, and drives away cold from the chest. He, who desires protection, let him eat honey.”** (Chaghghayni M. *Tibb al- nabbi*)^[98]

It has been reported that modern archeologists, excavating ancient Egyptian tombs, have found some pots of honey, thousands of years old, and yet still preserved. Through millennia, the archeologists continue to discover that honey remains unspoiled. This is really an unthinkable testament to the eternal shelf-life of honey.

In this connection I would like to clarify one important point. Diabetic patients can take a small amount of honey with medicine every day. There is no problem. Some modern doctors advise the diabetic patients not to take honey or sweets due to presence of sugar. Sweets are usually and mostly prepared from common sugar whose chemical name is sucrose. It is true that this sugar may increase the sugar level of the diabetics. So sucrose should be avoided. But honey contains only 1.5% sucrose. My plea is that honey not only contains sucrose, it also contains glucose, fructose, arabinose, xylose, maltose, gluco-uronic acid, galactouranic acids, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, proteins, amino acids, and many other carbohydrates, antioxidants and beneficial constituents. Due to the synergistic effects of all these thousands of active and inactive constituents in honey, it produces the desired healing effects. After all one needs only a little amount of honey a day. He does not need to take a glass of honey every day. So, there is no problem. Since Allah says, **in honey there is healing for men**, so why shall we go against the sayings of Allah SWT and advice patients not to take honey? Any justification or scientific explanation? As a matter of fact, honey is manufactured in an efficient factory where no human being works, and no machinery and equipment is needed to manufacture honey. It is a precious divine gift of Allah SWT for the benefit of man, for the healing of Mankind.

Before concluding the article on health and wellness I intend to discuss another divine remedy, which the Prophet (ﷺ) approved fourteen and a half centuries ago without doing any laboratory research. The hadith is about using *Nigella sativa* L. or black seed or black cumin. Allah SWT inspired the Prophet (ﷺ) to make a great statement on healing. About

black seed there are several authentic traditions.

Abu Hurayrah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said.

“Hold on (use this black seed regularly)! Because it is a remedy (cure) for every disease except death.” (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnade Ahmad, Ibn Majah)^[105]

‘Ā’ishah (ra) has also narrated that she heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying.

“This black seed is healing for all diseases except sām. ‘Ā’ishah asked: What is sām? He said: Death.” (at- Tirmidhi)^[106]

This amazing statement which has been recorded in Sahih Al Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Ibn Mâjah and Musnade Aḥmad generated tremendous interest among the world’s scientific community. The scientists’ concern was, how an unlettered man of the desert without having any pen and paper, could make such a wonderful statement on medical science? The Prophet (ﷺ) did not have to carry out any laboratory research to make this statement. In order to bring solution to the scientists’ concerns, over one million research studies have been conducted on *Nigella sativa*, black seed and its oil in various parts of the globe. From the results of studies it is known that whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) said about black seed is 100% true and correct. Researchers finally came to the conclusion that this tiny plant seed can effectively cure 129 different types of ailments including 17 types of cancers, diabetes, AIDS and hypertension. (Hussain, DAS, Hussain, MM).^[107]

This large number of diseases curable by *Nigella sativa* demonstrates the authenticity of the Prophet’s statement made over 14 centuries ago.

DISCUSSION

The above Prophetic statements on honey signify that if someone drinks one spoonful of honey daily, he will remain free from all kinds of illnesses, because Allah says, **‘in honey there is healing for men’**. (Qur’an, 16:69)⁹² In fact honey has had a role in healing and medicine for mankind throughout the ages. The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Muslims used honey for curing various ailments. Honey is also reported as a curative salve to cure infections, heal wounds and better digestion. Furthermore, honey is spermatogenic and also used as an aphrodisiac. However, based on the Prophetic traditions as well as results of modern scientific studies I believe that honey can be successfully used for maintaining and preserving good health as well as for the healing of Coronavirus infected persons, because

honey is antiviral and antibacterial. It is also bactericidal and bacteriostatic. In fact, its single greatest medicinal property is its antibacterial activity, which has been widely studied. (Dustmann, 1979)^[108]

The therapeutic effects of honey are huge. A few decades ago, there has been a significant rise of antibiotic resistance, where bacteria no longer respond to antibiotics. So a renewed interest in honey has been developed recently. Currently it is widely used in place of bacteria-resistant antibiotics. It has been reported that medical- grade honey kills antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Therefore, honey can be considered as the new antibiotic for the 21st century. This is because, thousands of scientific investigations and experiments around the world proved the marvelous curative effects of honey. Honey is the best Prophetic medicine for the treatment of diarrhea. So human being can use honey to achieve divine blessings in healing as well as preservation of bodily health.

However, in case we suddenly fall sick, we should follow the hadith on black seed and use the remedy for healing and restoration to health.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing, I would like to conclude the article by saying that in order to maintain and preserve good health and hygiene we must follow the lifestyle of the Prophet (ﷺ) and at the same time obey his teachings concerning health & wellness, sickness & cure, and disease & treatment, because his teachings are divinely inspired and scientific. They were made at a time when modern science had not yet developed. If medical ideas were not needed at that time, why did Allah (SWT) address him as a **Mercy to Mankind (Rahmatullil Alaamin)**? Global medical scientists during the last millennium examined his teachings and practices in its entirety and found them to be 100 per cent true and correct. They are also simple, easy to follow and free from superstitions and objective criticisms. Moreover, one does not need to spend additional money to maintain good health.

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