

## HADÎTH FORTY-SEVEN

Al-Miqdâd bin Ma'dy Karib narrated,

**“I heard the Messenger of Allâh saying, ‘A son of Adam has never filled a vessel more vicious than his stomach. It is sufficient for a son of Adam to eat food enough to provide for his essential needs. If it is inevitable to eat more than that, he shall fill one third [of his stomach] with food, one third with drink, and leave one third [empty] for breathing [comfortably].’”<sup>(1)</sup>**

### **The Importance Of The Hadîth**

This hadîth is a basis for the principles of medicine. It is narrated that when the physician Ibn Masawayh read this hadîth in the Book on Abû Khuthaimah he said, “If people make use of such words, they will be protected from diseases and maladies; hospitals and pharmacies will have no patients. He said this because overeating is the reason for all diseases.

Al-Hârith bin Kildah, a prominent Arab physician said, “Diet is the mother of medicine and overeating is the mother of illness.” Al-Hârith also said, “That which kills human beings and annihilates animals in the wilderness is eating food while the stomach is still full of undigested food.” It was also quoted, “If the dead were asked what the reason was for their death; they would have answered, “Overeating.” These are but some of the benefits of diet for having sound health. As for

<sup>(1)</sup> Recorded by At-Tirmidhy in *Kitâb Az-Zuhd* (Book on Asceticism) no. 2380. He labeled it as “good and authentic;” also recorded by Ibn Al-Mubârak in *Kitâb Az-Zuhd* (Book on Asceticism) no. 603 and by Al-Bayhâqy in his *Shu'ab Al-Imân* (Branches of Faith), no. 5648, 5650 and by At-Tabarâny 20/274.

the heart, little food brings about tender hearts and sound understanding, and humility. A small amount of food also decreases bodily desires and anger. Too much food results in just the opposite effect.

Ibn 'Umar said, "I have not been completely satiated for the last four months." 'Amr bin Qays said, "Beware of overeating; it hardens the hearts." Salamah bin Sa'id said, "Men used to be criticized for overeating as much as they were criticized for committing sins."

Muhammad bin An-Nadr Al-Hârithy said, "Hunger leads to piety as fullness leads to arrogance." Ash-Shâfi'y said, "I have not been full for 16 years because fullness results in laziness, witlessness, and sleepiness. In addition, it weakens one's ability to worship." The Prophet (peace be upon him) recommended taking only a little amount of food and said, "It is sufficient for a son of Adam to eat food enough to provide for his essential needs." In the two books of authentic hadîths (Al-Bukhâry and Muslim) it is recorded that the Prophet said, "**A believer eats in one intestine [is satisfied with little food] whereas a disbeliever eats in seven intestines [eats much food].**"<sup>(1)</sup> This means that a believer eats according to the etiquettes of Islamic legislation and eats in one intestine, whereas a disbeliever gluttonously eats in seven intestines. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also recommended giving some of one's own food to others in addition to eating a small amount of food. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "**The food of one person is sufficient**

(1) Recorded by Al-Bukhâry in *Kitâb Al-Aġ'imah* (Book on Food) no. 5393; also recorded by Muslim in *Kitâb Al-Ashribah* (Book on Drinks) no. 2060, as narrated by Ibn 'Umar.

**for two people, and the food of two people is sufficient for three people, and the food of three people is sufficient for four people.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The best diet is to fill one third of the stomach with food, one-third with drinks and leave one third empty for breathing comfortably as was mentioned in the hadîth narrated by Al-Miqdâd. Drinking too much brings about sleep and spoils food. Sufyân said, “Eat whatever you like, but do not drink so as not to feel drowsy.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions used to feel hungry and have little food. However, even if this was because they didn't have food, it is to be known that Allâh prescribed what was best for His Messenger. Therefore, Ibn 'Umar used to imitate the Prophet though he had the ability to eat much food. His father, 'Umar, used to do the same before him. In the two books of authentic hadîths (Al-Bukhâry and Muslim), it is recorded that 'Â'ishah narrated, “The family of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) had not eaten bread to their satisfaction for three consecutive days since his arrival at Al-Madînah until he died.”<sup>(2)</sup>

It is recorded in Muslim that 'Â'ishah narrated that, “**The Messenger of Allâh (peace be upon him) had not eaten barley bread to his satisfaction for two consecutive days until he died.**”<sup>(3)</sup> Al-

(1) Recorded by Al-Bukhâry in *Kitâb Al-Aṭ'imah* (Book on Food), no. 5392; also recorded by Muslim in *Kitâb Al-Ashribah* (Book on Drinks), no. 178/2058.

(2) Recorded by Al-Bukhâry in *Kitâb Al-Aṭ'imah* (Book on Drinks) no. 5416; also recorded by Muslim in *Kitâb Az-Zuhd* (Book on Asceticism), no. 20/2970.

(3) Recorded by Muslim in *Kitâb Az-Zuhd* (Book on Asceticism), no. 22/2670.

Bukhâry recorded that Abû Hurayrah narrated, “The Messenger of Allâh (peace be upon him) did not eat his fill for three successive days till he died.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Abû Hurayrah also narrated that “Allâh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) left this world without satisfying his hunger, even with barley bread.”<sup>(2)</sup> It is recorded in *Sahîh Muslim* that ‘Umar delivered a sermon in which he mentioned the afflictions of people and said, “I have seen the Messenger of Allâh suffering all day from hunger not having even poor dates.”<sup>(3)</sup> In *Manâqib Al-Imâm Ahmad*, Yahya bin Mandah narrated that Imâm Ahmad was asked about the Prophet’s saying, “one-third for food, one third for drinks, and one-third for breathing.” He answered, “One third for food is the nourishment, one third for drinks, is the strength, and one third for breathing is the breath of life, and Allâh knows best.”

(1) Recorded by Al-Bukhâry in *Kitâb Al-Aḡ’imah* (Book on Food), no. 5374.

(2) Recorded by Al-Bukhâry in *Kitâb Al-Aḡ’imah* (Book on Food), no. 5414.

(3) Recorded by Muslim in *Kitâb Az-Zuhd* (Book on Asceticism), no. 36/2978.

IBN KAJAB  
JAMI' AL-'ULÛM  
WAL-HIKAM  
(A Collection of  
Knowledge & Wisdom)

ابن مرجب  
جامع العلوم والحكم

Rendered into English  
by  
MUHAMMAD FADEL

UMMI AL-QUR'AN