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NOOR-I-ISLAM

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Ramadan Kareem this year starts on the **21st Day of July 2012** and ends on the **18th Day of August 2012**.
Saturday, **21 July 2012** being the **First Day of Ramadan** and Sunday, **19th August 2012**
being the **Day of Eid-Al-Fitr** {Insha-Allah}

The Prophet, peace be on him, recommended certain practices to follow when we fast. We will try to outline these in brief:

Suhoor

It is unanimously agreed throughout the Muslim world that a meal before one starts his day of fasting is of great benefit, as it makes fasting easier, particularly in overcoming the effects of hunger toward the end of the day. However, if one chooses not to have a meal, no blame is attached to him. Anas quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying: **"Have a meal before you fast, for Suhoor is blessed."** Al-Miqdam ibn Maadikarib reports that the Prophet, *peace be on him*, said: **"Have Suhoor, for it is a blessed nourishing meal."** In both pronouncements, the Prophet, *peace on him*, describes this meal as blessed. This is because it helps the fasting person to be active and reduces the burden of fasting.

This means that **having a Suhoor is a Sunnah**, which is fulfilled whether one has a full meal or a light snack. Indeed, even if one takes only a drink of water it is deemed as done. Abu Saeed Al-Khudri quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying:



“Suhoor is a blessing. Therefore, do not omit it, even if you only have a drink of water. Allah and the angels pray for those who have Suhoor.”

One may take Suhoor at any time from midnight till the break of dawn, although it is preferable that it is delayed. Zayd ibn Thabit, a learned companion of the Prophet, *peace on him*, reports: **“We used to take Suhoor with Allah’s Messenger before offering our dawn prayers.”** Zayd was asked how much time was between the two and he answered: **“As much as it would take to recite fifty verses of the Qur’an.”** Amr ibn Mammon said that the Prophet’s companions used to be the first to break their fast at the end of the day and the last to have Suhoor. If one is in doubt whether dawn has broken or not, one may continue to eat and drink until one is certain. Action may not be taken on the basis of doubt. Allah has allowed us to eat and drink until we are certain of the break of dawn, not until we suspect that it is due. He says in the Qur’an:

“Eat and drink until you can see the white streak of dawn against the blackness of the night. Then resume the fast till nightfall.” [2-187]

A man said to Abdullah ibn Abbas, the Prophet’s cousin who was a scholar of high repute: “I may be having my Suhoor when I start having doubts that dawn is due. If this happens, I stop eating.” Ibn Abbas replied: “Eat if you doubt until you are certain.” Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali school of Fiqh, says: “If one is unsure whether dawn is due, he goes on eating until he is certain.”

Early Finish

We are strongly recommended to finish our fast immediately when we are certain that the sun has set. Sahl ibn Sa’ad quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying: **“People will continue to be well as long as they finish their fast immediately after sunset.”** It is strongly recommended to start with a few dates, an odd number of them, and if not then to start with a drink of water. Anas reports that the Prophet, *peace on him*, **“used to end his fast with eating a few dates before offering Maghreb prayers, if no dates were available, he would have a few sips of water.”** Suleiman ibn Amr quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying: **“If one of you is fasting, let him end his fast by eating a few dates, and if dates are not available, then let him drink some water. Water purifies.”** This Hadith suggests that it is preferable to end one’s fast in this way before offering Maghreb prayers. When one has finished praying, one may have his meal, unless the food is already served when he starts with eating. Anas quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying: **“If your evening meal is served, then start by eating before offering Maghreb. Do not hasten to pray before eating.”**



A Short Prayer before Ending the Fast

Abdullah ibn Amr quotes the Prophet, *peace be on him*, as saying: “As a fasting person is about to end his fast, he is certain to have a prayer answered.” Abdullah used to pray at fast-breaking time: **“My Lord! I appeal to you with your mercy which encompasses all to forgive me.”** It is also authentically reported that the Prophet, *peace be on him*, used to repeat this prayer: **“Thirst is quenched; the veins are watered and the reward is certain, Allah willing.”** He is also reported to say: **“My Lord! For your sake I have fasted and with your provisions I end my fast.”** Al-Tirmithi relates that the Prophet, *peace be on him*, said: **“Three types of person are certain to have their prayers answered: a fasting person until he ends his fast, and just ruler, and an oppressed person.”**

Refraining from Anything, Which Conflicts with Fasting

Fasting is one of the main acts of worship in Islam. Allah has decreed fasting for us as an exercise of self-discipline, which helps us, form good habits. It is essential, therefore, to guard against anything, which is in conflict with fasting so that we gain its benefits and attain the quality of God-fearing people, which is the aim of this act of worship. Allah says in the Qur'an:

“Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.” [2:183]

Fasting is not merely an abstention from eating and drinking. It is an abstention from anything, which Allah has forbidden. Abu Huraira quotes the Prophet, *peace on him*, as saying: **“Fasting is not merely to go without food and drink; fasting is to abstain from idle talk and obscene language. If anyone calls you bad names or insults you, answer him by saying: ‘I am fasting, I am fasting.’”** It is also authentically reported on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet, *peace on him*, has said: **“Allah does not need him who continues to indulge in telling lies and cheating to abstain from food and drink.”** This means that Allah will not accept such a person's fasting. The Prophet, *peace on him*, also says: **“Many a fasting person will reap nothing but hunger, and many a night worshipper will reap nothing but staying up late.”**

Have a
Blessed
Ramadan
2012

Using a Toothbrush

A fasting person is recommended to clean his teeth with the traditional toothbrush, i.e. *miswak*, which is a stick taken from the Arak tree. No toothpaste is used with such tooth stick. It may be used at any time throughout the day. It is also perfectly permissible to use an ordinary toothbrush, but without toothpaste, during the day of fasting.

Charity & Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

To give to charity and to recite the Qur'an are two actions encouraged at all times, but they are especially recommended in Ramadan. Al-Bukhari relates on the authority of Ibn Abbas: **“Allah's Messenger used to be the most generous of people. He was at his most generous in Ramadan when Gabriel, the angel, used to come to him every night and they recited the Qur'an in turn. During that time, the Prophet, *peace and blessings of Allah on him*, used to be more charitable than unrestrained wind.”**

Voluntary Night Worship, Especially in Last Ten Days

Al-Bukhari and Muslim relate on the authority of Ayesha, the Prophet's wife,: **“When the last ten days of Ramadan began, the Prophet, *peace and blessings of Allah on him*, used to spend the whole night in worship, awaken the other members of his household for night worship, and exercise a high degree of self-control.”** Muslim also relates: **“The Prophet, *peace and blessings of Allah on him*, used to exercise more efforts in worship during the last ten days of Ramadan than at any other time.”**

[Hadiths related by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Al-Nisa'ie, Ahmad, Al-Bayhaqi, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, Ibn Khuzaymah, Al-Tirmithi]

اللَّهُمَّ سَلِّمْ لِي رَمَضَانَ وَسَلِّمْ
رَمَضَانَ لِي وَسَلِّمْ لِي مَتَقَبَلًا

Imagine a bride receiving the head of the state or the king who knocks at her door the morning after her wedding night to offer his congratulations. I suppose she will feel over the moon on receiving such an honor. Yet Al-Rubayyi' received a far more honorable visitor, the Prophet, *peace be on him*, himself who came in and sat with her people. She reports: "Allah's Messenger came to visit us the morning after my wedding, and he sat on this couch as you are sitting now. We had a few maids who were playing the tambourine and chanting praises of my relatives who were martyrs in the Battle of Badr. He listened to their singing until one of them said: 'Among us is a prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow'. He said to her: 'Do not say this. Go back to what you were saying earlier'." [Al-Tirmidhi]

Perhaps we should explain here that the Prophet did not object to the maids singing, playing the tambourine, or extolling the praises of Al-Rubayyi's father and uncle. He only objected when the maid attributed to him something that belongs to Allah only, which is knowledge of the future.

Women Companions of Prophet Mohammad

(Peace and blessings of Allah on him)

Al-Rubayyi'

"A Visit to
the Bride"

Who was Al-Rubayyi' then, and why would the Prophet pay her such a visit? She was the daughter of Mu'awwidh ibn Aftaa, a man from the Ansar who, with his brother, mortally wounded Abu Jahl during the Battle of Badr and he could no longer stand on his feet. He then was killed by Abdullah ibn Massoud. Both brothers were then killed in the battle. Perhaps because of this, the Prophet wanted to reassure her that he would continue to be her guardian. She must have felt elated by the Prophet's visit, as it signified an honor any bride would dearly love to have. Indeed the Prophet continued to visit her. She might offer him a meal and he would willingly eat with her family. He accepted her gifts and was generous to her. She once bought the Prophet a plate of dates and a plate of grapes. The Prophet accepted her gift and gave her a piece of jewelery telling her to wear it. On one of his visits, he told her to pour water for him to do his ablution. She did and reported a Hadith describing how he performed his ablution, mentioning that he washed every part three times.

Al-Rubayyi' followed in her father's footsteps. She joined the Prophet's army whenever there was a campaign of Jihad. Her role, like the women who joined the army, was to give support, nursing the wounded and giving the soldiers water to drink. She reports: "We used to join the Prophet on his expeditions, to give water to the fighters, serve them, attend to the wounded and send them and the dead back to Madinah."

[Al-Bukhari]

Al-Rubayyi' was keen to learn from the Prophet whatever she could. She reported no less than 21 Hadiths; some of them are related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim while the others are reported in other authentic anthologies of Hadith.

Few of the Prophet's companions gave us detailed description of him. Among these were Ali ibn Abi Talib and Umm Maabad at whose tent the Prophet stopped on his journey when he immigrated to Madinah. They would

mostly give a general description. Both Abu Bakr and Umar describe him as the full moon giving light. A man asked Al-Rubayyi' to describe the Prophet. She could only give a general description. She said: "Son, were you to see him, you would have almost seen the sun in its full splendor."

Al-Rubayyi' died in year 37, during the reign of Ali ibn Abi Talib.

[May Allah be pleased with them]

May Not Be Paid To...

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There are certain groups or classes of people who may not benefit from Zakah.

These are: the rich, the strong who can earn their living, the atheists and unbelievers who oppose Islam, the immediate relatives of the Zakah payer and Prophet's household and descendants. We will try to dwell briefly on each of these groups.

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No rich person may benefit from *Zakah* by way of personal gain. That is, a rich person may be given *Zakah* money only if he himself works for the *Zakah* Department i.e. he may be given his salary under the heading '*Zakah*' officers. There are other circumstances in which a rich person may be given money from the *Zakah* fund, such as his being a stranded wayfarer and cannot get hold of his money, which is in his hometown. In such a situation, he may benefit from *Zakah*.

Nor is it possible to pay *Zakah* to the wife or the young child of a rich man. Young children and wives are automatically considered rich if their fathers or husbands are rich. This is due to the fact that a person has a duty to support his young children and his wife. To give *Zakah* to young persons or wives is in effect, to give it to the rich man himself.

Zakah may not be paid to a person who has the physical ability to earn his living. The Prophet, peace on him, says: "*Zakah is not lawful to be paid to a rich person or to one who is physically strong, suffering no handicap.*" If, however, an able-bodied person is unable to find work or employment despite his determined efforts to do so, then he may be paid from *Zakah*. His entitlement to it is on grounds of his poverty.

Some schools of thought exclude non-Muslims from the list of beneficiaries of *Zakah*. They deduce from the pronouncement by the Prophet, peace on him, which says that "*Zakah* is taken from the rich among them

{i.e. Muslims} and paid to their poor." So the poor Muslims of any community have the foremost claim on *Zakah*, which is collected in that community. If, however, *Zakah* funds are plentiful and Muslims can be easily satisfied with what they receive from it, then it is proper to include among the beneficiaries of *Zakah* the poor of other communities, which live side by side with the Muslims. Such non-Muslims as may benefit by *Zakah* must be either poor or needy

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It should be pointed out that those scholars who exclude non-Muslims from *Zakah* also state that help may be given to the poor among non-Muslims from the treasury of the Islamic State. They are only excluded from benefiting from *Zakah* in particular. It is proper to quote in this connection the example of Omayyad caliph, Omar ibn Abdul Aziz, who wrote to the governor of Basra. "Find out those who have attained old age and are weak and cannot earn a living from amongst our protected minorities {i.e. followers of other religions}. And provide for them an income from the general treasury of the Muslims to meet their needs." It is worth pointing out here that the caliph asked his governor not to wait until such non-Muslim people ask for help.

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It was his duty, as defined by the caliph, to examine their conditions and their needs and to provide

them what would help them through the rest of their days.

Scholars also differ on whether *Zakah* be paid to Muslims who indulge in sinful practices. There is no question that the poor who are also pious and righteous have a higher claim to benefit from *Zakah*. The transgressors, or *Fasiqs* in the Islamic terminology, may be classified into two groups. There are firstly those who do not indulge in sinful practices in public, in careless contempt of the feelings of the Muslim majority, but cannot resist the temptation of the sin. Such people may be given *Zakah* money, if they are poor. Especially if by paying them from *Zakah*, we encourage them to mend their ways. If the sinner, on the other hand, commits his sins in public in blatant defiance of the feelings of the Muslim community as a whole, then he must not be given any help from *Zakah*; provided that he declares his repentance and stops being such an affront to the rest of the community. The families of such transgressors need not suffer as a result of the attitude of their breadwinners. It is possible to pay *Zakah* to the families of such people, as long as the family concerned does not help the transgressor to carry on with his sinful practices.

We have already mentioned that a child is considered rich if his father is rich. Similar, a woman is considered rich on the grounds of her husband being well off. It is, therefore, not permissible for a person to pay any part of the *Zakah* dues from him to his own children or to his wife, if they themselves are poor. The reason for this prohibition is that a man is required to support his young children and his wife. According to Islam, a man maintains his wife even if she is much richer than he is. She is not required to contribute to the expenses of the family, unless she freely chooses to do so. Hence, if a rich person pays out his *Zakah* to his children or his wife, he is, in effect, paying it to himself. If a person pays the *Zakah* due on his wealth to the *Zakah* department of an Islamic state and it so happens

that the distribution agency of that department pays it to the son or father or wife of that person, then this is perfectly legitimate. As soon as the man himself pays his *Zakah* to the *Zakah* department, he is no longer responsible for putting it to its proper use. His relatives are allowed to take it because they do not receive it from him directly, but from an authority which is responsible for the distribution of the whole *Zakah* fund.

Islam makes it obligatory on any adult child to support his parents if they are poor. Only if he himself is poor or if his income can just about meet the expenses of his own family, he is not required by law to support them. Thus, in cases where such a child is required to support his poor parents, he may not pay them directly the *Zakah* due from him. If he did, then he himself is the beneficiary of his own *Zakah*.

A rich wife may pay the *Zakah* due from her to her poor husband. There is no restriction in this case, because no wife is required to maintain her husband, even if she is rich and he is poor.

When the Prophet, peace on him, made it clear that the *Zakah* regulations apply to women in the same way as they are applied to men, several women went to him. And they asked whether they could pay *Zakah* to their poor husbands and to some orphans they were bringing up. The Prophet, peace on him, answered that they would have their reward doubled because they would be doing a kindness to a relative, in addition to paying their *Zakah*.

Similarly, if one is distributing his own *Zakah* himself, and he has poor relatives other than a child, or a parent or a wife, it is preferable that he pays *Zakah* to such poor relatives. They should be given a priority on his list of beneficiaries. The permission is granted here because we are not required to support or maintain our poor relatives unless the funds of the Islamic state treasury cannot provide for them or the government does not collect *Zakah* in order to provide social security for the poor. In such



a case, when the matter is left to the individual, we are required to maintain our poor relatives, if we can. There is no harm if we do so with the *Zakah* payable on our wealth. This means that we may pay *Zakah* to our brothers, sisters, uncles, or aunts, even when they are in employment provided that they are poor. That also applies if their income is not sufficient to meet their expenses.

The last group of people excluded from benefiting from *Zakah* is the Prophet's household. According to Islamic scholars, these include the descendents of the Hashemite clan of Quraish. Some scholars

include also the Muttalib clan as well. Most scholars {about 98%} agree that this restriction applied only to the Prophet's household during his life. The restriction, however, also applies to the members of the families of the Muslim ruler at any particular time. This is because the ruler is supposed to oversee the administration of *Zakah*. Hence he may not benefit from it and members of his family should be spared all that may result from their taking *Zakah* money.

{Ibn Saleh}

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَمَنِ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى
الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

YOUR HEALTH & DIET

Foods... You Shouldn't Fear to Eat

Katherine Tallmadge, Associated Press

Are you shying away from bad foods that are actually good for you? With all the hoopla about healthful eating, it's hard to separate fact from fiction. As a nutrition consultant, I've come to realize there is no shortage of surprises and superstitions in the world of nutrition. Here are reasons to enjoy some of your favorites.

Gluten & Wheat

They are "the most demonized ingredients beyond high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oil," said Melissa Abbott, culinary director at the Hartman Group, a company specializing in consumer research. Yet decades of studies have found that gluten-containing foods, such as whole wheat, rye and barley, are vital for good health, and are associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and excess weight. "Wheat is good source of fiber, vitamins and minerals," said Joanne

Slavin, nutrition professor at the University of Minnesota. She added that the confusion about gluten, a protein, has caused some people to avoid eating wheat and other grains. Only about 1% of the population, or less, cannot tolerate gluten and must eradicate it from their diet to ease abdominal pain and other symptoms, including the ability to fully absorb vitamins. One reason wheat-free or gluten-free diets are popular is that people who don't eat wheat often end up bypassing excess calories in sweets and snack foods. Then they start feeling better, lose weight, and mistakenly attribute their success to gluten or wheat avoidance.

Eggs

Eggs also don't deserve their bad reputation. In recent decades, their high cholesterol content has been thought to play a role in increasing LDL ["bad"] cholesterol and heart disease risk. But cholesterol in food is a minor factor contributing to high blood

cholesterol for most people, and studies have not confirmed a correlation between eggs and increased heart disease risk. The major determinant of LDL [“bad”] cholesterol is saturated fat, and while eggs are high in cholesterol – 184 milligrams in the yolk – they’re relatively low in saturated fat – about 1.6 grams in the yolk. Interestingly, some of the biggest egg-eaters in the world, the Japanese, have low cholesterol and heart disease rates, in part because they eat a diet low in saturated fat. In contrast, Americans eat eggs alongside sausages, meat and buttered toast. “The amount that one egg a day raises cholesterol in the blood is extremely small,” says Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard’s School of Public Health. “Elevations in LDL [“bad”] cholesterol of this small magnitude could easily be countered by other healthy aspects of eggs.”

Potatoes

Potatoes have been blamed for increasing blood glucose levels, insulin resistance, excess weight and Type 2 diabetes. A recent Harvard study that

followed large populations and their disease rates linked potato eating with being overweight, blaming it on the blood glucose rise. But many foods, including

whole-wheat bread and whole-grain cereals, cause similar spikes in blood glucose, and are correlated with superior health and lower body weights. How could the higher body weight in the Harvard study be explained? The study lumped all potato products together, including potato chips and French fries,



very fattening versions of potatoes usually eaten in large portions alongside hamburgers, hot dogs, and sodas. “It’s an easy food to attack; but the meal pattern may be the culprit,” said David Baer, a research leader at the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture. “Other epidemiological studies have not verified a connection between potatoes and weight gain or any disease, and no clinical studies have shown a connection.” Potatoes are a great source of potassium, Vitamin C and fiber that many cultures – Scandinavians, Russians, Irish, and Peruvians – relied on as a nutritious staple for centuries. And they were not fat.

Fruits

People often ask me if fruit is too high in sugar, especially for diabetics. This fear of fruit, I believe, is left over from the Atkins craze, which discouraged eating some fruits on the grounds that they are high in carbohydrates. Avoiding fruit could actually damage your health. Study after study over many decades’ shows that eating fruit can reduce the risk

of some cancers, heart disease, blood pressure and diabetes. Fruit is high in water and fiber, which help you feel full with fewer calories, one reason

why eating it is correlated with lower body weight. Even though they contain simple sugars, most fruits have relatively low glycemic index. That is, when you eat fruit, your blood sugar raises only moderately, especially when compared with refined sugar or flour products. Several health organizations,

including the US Dietary Guidelines, the National Cancer Institute, and the American Heart Association, recommend to eat at least five cups of fruits and vegetables a day because of their superior health benefits.

Soy

Though popular for centuries in many Asian cuisines, soy is sometimes seen as dangerous after studies found elevated rates of breast cancer among rats when they were fed a concentrated soy derivative. But studies looking at whole soy foods in humans have not found a connection. In fact, the reverse may be true. Soy, "when consumed in childhood or adolescence may make breast issue less vulnerable to cancer development later in life and probably has no effect on breast cancer risk when consumption begins in adulthood," said Karen Collins, registered dietitian and nutrition adviser with the American Institute for Cancer Research. Actually, Collins said, the evidence is so strong for protection against heart disease that the FDA allowed a health claim for labels on soy food products.

Fried Foods

While it's true that frying food usually increases its caloric content, that doesn't necessarily make it unhealthy. As long as food is fried in healthful oil instead of butter, shortening, or trans-fat, and it's eaten in moderation, it isn't less healthy. In fact, fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, and heart-healthy, cancer-preventive carotenoids such as beta-carotene [e.g., carrots, sweet potatoes], lycopene [e.g., tomatoes] and lutein/zeaxanthin [deep-green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale], need fat in order to be absorbed by the body. "The consumption of certain fats, such as saturated fatty acids and trans fatty acids [fats that are solid at room temperature], is associated with an . . . increased risk of cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, the unsaturated fats, monounsaturated fatty acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids [canola, sunflower and live oils] have significant metabolic benefits and are health promoting," said the 2010 US Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَكُمْ
 وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ
 مُسَفِّحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ
 عَمَلُهُ، وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

This day [all] good things are made lawful for you. And the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And so are the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you, when you give them their dowries, taking [them] in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret. And whoever denies faith, his work indeed is vain; and in the Hereafter he is of the losers.

[5:5]