



NUTRITIONAL THERAPY: IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHETIC (PEACE BE UPON HIM) MEDICINE

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Abstract

Nutrition is an integral part of Prophetic (Peace Be Upon Him) medicine, the holistic system of health and wellness based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This study investigates how the dietary habits and recommendations of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) can help us in modern nutritional therapy and disease treatment to lead healthy and balanced lives. Classical Islamic texts, historical accounts, and modern scientific research to examine the principles and practices of Prophetic (Peace Be Upon Him) medicine in relation to nutrition are analytically reviewed in this study. After careful comprehensive evaluation, this research concludes that Prophetic (Peace Be Upon Him) medicine emphasizes moderation, balance, and natural remedies as key factors for maintaining health and preventing diseases. In addition, specific foods and herbs that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) recommended for various health conditions and their potential therapeutic effects are also identified. By contextualizing nutritional therapy within the framework of Prophetic (Peace Be Upon Him) medicine, this research aims to provide insights into the integration of traditional wisdom with contemporary healthcare paradigms. Ultimately, this study seeks to elucidate the timeless wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and its enduring relevance in guiding dietary practices and disease treatment in the modern era.

Keywords: Nutrition, Prophetic (Peace Be Upon Him) Medicine, Dietary Practices, Disease, Treatment, Islamic Studies, Emotional Wellbeing, Psychology

Introduction

In the realm of Prophetic Medicine, a holistic system of treatment through diet emerges, emphasizing the consumption of wholesome and nutritious foods to maintain health and combat diseases. This approach, known as nutritional therapy, is rooted in simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and natural remedies, reflecting the timeless wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Nutritional therapy underscores the pivotal role of diet in preserving health and alleviating illness. Recognizing that human health is intrinsically linked to the quality of blood, which is directly influenced by food intake, Prophetic Medicine advocates for a balanced and wholesome diet to prevent the onset of diseases. Conversely, inadequate or inappropriate dietary habits can contribute to health complications.

The teachings of Prophetic Medicine offer invaluable insights into the significance of dietary choices and their impact on overall well-being. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not only recommended specific foods for treating various ailments but also emphasized moderation, balance, and adherence to dietary etiquettes. His guidance on avoiding harmful or forbidden foods and consuming those with medicinal properties remains relevant and profound.

Furthermore, Prophetic Medicine acknowledges the individual's body temperament and advocates for dietary adjustments tailored to specific health conditions. This personalized approach to nutrition aligns with contemporary principles of holistic healthcare and underscores the enduring relevance of Prophetic teachings in promoting wellness.

Through a nuanced understanding of nutritional therapy in the light of Prophetic Medicine, this research endeavors to explore the practical applications and efficacy of dietary interventions prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. By examining the intersection of traditional wisdom with modern healthcare paradigms, this study seeks to elucidate the profound impact of dietary practices on health outcomes and foster a deeper appreciation for the holistic approach advocated by Prophetic Medicine.

Understanding Nutritional Therapy and Health

As per the tenets of the School of Health, nutritional therapy, also known as dietary therapy, adopts a scientific methodology aimed at enhancing overall health by tailoring nutritional and lifestyle adjustments to individual needs. It advocates for the consumption of nourishing, natural foods in their unaltered state to optimize wellness, while also recognizing the healing properties of certain foods in addressing particular health issues.¹

In other words, nutritional therapy or dietary therapy is a way of using food and nutrients to prevent or treat diseases and improve health. It is based on the individual's needs and preferences, as well as scientific evidence. It also considers the quality and origin of the food, as well as how it is prepared and consumed.²

Key Concepts in Health and Nutrition

Nutrition: The process of acquiring, utilizing, and metabolizing nutrients by organisms for sustenance and growth.³ In this study, nutrition refers to the selection, digestion, and assimilation of food components that adhere to the dietary guidelines derived from Prophetic Medicine, the holistic system of health and wellness based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Diet: The habitual consumption pattern of food and beverages by individuals or communities.⁴ In this research, diet refers to the intentional selection and preparation of food items that follow the dietary recommendations outlined in Prophetic Medicine. It emphasizes the holistic nature of dietary habits, aiming to optimize physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Health: A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease.⁵ In this study, health embodies the multifaceted concept of wellness, emphasizing the integration of physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. It underscores the importance of adopting wholesome dietary practices aligned with Prophetic Medicine principles to achieve optimal health outcomes.

Medicine: The science and practice of diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease or injury to restore and maintain health.⁶ In this research, medicine extends beyond conventional approaches to include

holistic modalities advocated by Prophetic Medicine. It emphasizes the integration of dietary therapy, spiritual healing, and lifestyle modifications in promoting overall well-being.

Disease: A deviation from the normal structure or function of an organism, resulting in impaired health or well-being.⁷ In this study, disease encompasses physical, mental, and spiritual ailments that disrupt the balance of the body. It underscores the importance of preventive measures, holistic treatment approaches, and adherence to dietary and lifestyle recommendations derived from Prophetic Medicine to mitigate the impact of various diseases.

Research Objective

To comprehensively assess the applicability and effectiveness of Prophetic Medicine's dietary recommendations within contemporary nutritional therapy practices, aiming to enhance health outcomes and promote holistic well-being.

This objective seeks to investigate the extent to which the dietary recommendations outlined in Prophetic Medicine align with and contribute to modern nutritional therapy approaches. It involves a thorough examination of Prophetic teachings related to diet and nutrition, analyzing their relevance and efficacy in addressing prevalent health concerns and diseases. By synthesizing evidence from classical Islamic texts, historical accounts, and contemporary scientific literature, this objective aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how Prophetic Medicine principles can inform and enrich current nutritional therapy interventions. Additionally, this objective explores potential strategies for integrating Prophetic dietary guidelines into mainstream healthcare practices, with a focus on optimizing health outcomes and fostering holistic well-being. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research seeks to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern healthcare, offering insights into the practical application of Prophetic Medicine in promoting healthier dietary habits and improving overall health outcomes in diverse populations.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in the principles outlined in Hadith, the Quran, and previous literature to investigate the incorporation of Prophetic Medicine's dietary recommendations into contemporary nutritional therapy. The methodology entails an extensive review and analysis of Hadith, Quranic verses, and existing scholarly literature concerning dietary practices and their health implications. Thematic analysis is utilized to identify key themes and insights from these sources, facilitating a nuanced understanding of Prophetic Medicine's dietary guidelines. The focus lies on synthesizing and interpreting textual evidence to elucidate the relevance and applicability of Prophetic Medicine principles in addressing contemporary health challenges. Ethical considerations guide the respectful interpretation and contextualization of religious texts and scholarly literature, while reflexivity ensures transparency and addresses potential biases in the interpretation of findings. Limitations of the study include its reliance on secondary sources and the inherent subjectivity of textual interpretation. Nonetheless, the research methodology endeavors to offer valuable insights into integrating Islamic teachings on diet and health into modern healthcare practices.

Research Question

"How can the principles of Prophetic Medicine inform and enhance contemporary nutritional therapy practices, and what are the implications for holistic health and disease management?"

This research question aligns with the focus on "Nutritional Therapy: In the Light of Prophetic Medicine" and seeks to explore the application of Prophetic Medicine principles in modern nutritional therapy, as well as its impact on overall health and disease treatment.

Preserving Health: Insights from the Teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

In the timeless wisdom of Prophetic Medicine, Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ bestowed upon humanity enduring principles for health and well-being. Rooted in the inherent laws of nature, his teachings

provide invaluable guidance on maintaining health, a blessing bestowed by Allah. Through his instructions, Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ emphasized the importance of adhering to these principles, recognizing health as a paramount blessing often overlooked by many. His teachings, exemplified by narrations such as "There are two blessings in which many people incur loss, health and free time,"⁸ offer profound insights into prioritizing health in life's journey.

Drawing from Hazrat Ibn Abbas's narration, wherein the Prophet ﷺ advised "Make the most of five things before five others, life before death, health before sickness, free time before becoming busy, youth before old age, and wealth before poverty."⁹

Embracing these teachings requires aligning with the natural order, wherein adherence to its laws preserves health, while deviation invites illness. In today's world, where Western medicine often accompanies side effects and compromises immune resilience, Hazrat Muhammad's ﷺ guidance stands as a beacon of preventive wisdom.

Failure to uphold these principles not only leaves individuals vulnerable but also burdens them with costly treatments. Yet, by embracing the principles of health preservation in Islam, communities can envisage a landscape where diseases are curbed, and individuals thrive in good health, even amidst illness. Indeed, these principles bolster the body's natural defenses, fortifying the immune system and paving the path towards enduring well-being.

Promoting Cleanliness: A Pillar of Prophetic ﷺ Teachings

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of maintaining cleanliness in the environment. This directive resonates deeply with the second revelation, where Allah Almighty commands: "And your clothing purify"¹⁰. Scholars have expounded upon this directive to encompass all forms of cleanliness, including personal hygiene, sanitation, and environmental cleanliness¹¹. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ further instructed: "Avoid two things that invite curse." When asked about these, he elucidated: "To relieve oneself in the people's pathways or under their shade"¹². Sitting under the shade of trees and traversing pathways are common activities. Neglecting cleanliness in these spaces poses the risk of spreading diseases. Moreover, the presence of filth in such areas can evoke discomfort, adversely affecting both physical and spiritual well-being. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized the imperative of maintaining a clean environment. His teachings extend to performing acts of charity, as he proclaimed: "Removing harmful things from the pathway is an act of charity"¹³.

Physical Cleanliness: Enhancing Health and Well-being

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of maintaining physical cleanliness for health and well-being. Physical cleanliness refers to the hygiene and sanitation of the body and its surroundings, which can prevent or treat various diseases and infections. A clean body also fosters pure thoughts and inclines towards virtuous deeds, enhancing mental and spiritual well-being. Islam has provided clear guidelines for physical cleanliness, based on the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. According to Anas bin Malik, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "It is obligatory for every adult to perform ablution, use the tooth-stick, and apply perfume on Friday, if possible"¹⁴. Moreover, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Bathing on Friday is compulsory for every adult, using the tooth-stick, and applying perfume, if available"¹⁵. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also prescribed specific periods for trimming the mustache, cutting nails, plucking underarm hair, and cleansing the private parts, stressing their regular maintenance within forty days¹⁶.

Physical cleanliness has multifaceted benefits encompassing physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being. Firstly, maintaining cleanliness through practices such as washing hands with soap and water significantly reduces the risk of diarrheal diseases, potentially preventing up to one million deaths annually. Additionally, clean surroundings contribute to better psychological and emotional states, as evidenced by studies linking clean homes to improved health and lower stress levels. Conversely, cluttered environments are associated with higher levels of depression and fatigue, indicating the psychological impact of cleanliness. Socially, cleanliness fosters order and respect,

enhancing community interactions and reducing crime rates. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that clean environments improve focus and adherence to social norms, contributing to overall quality of life. Emphasizing the importance of cleanliness aligns with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Prophetic Medicine, highlighting its role in achieving holistic well-being for Muslims, encompassing physical, mental, spiritual, social, and environmental aspects of health.

Prophetic Guidance on Physical Activity for Health and Well-being

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of maintaining physical activity for health and well-being. Physical activity refers to any bodily movement that requires energy expenditure, such as walking, running, digging, or praying. Physical activity can prevent or treat various diseases and infections, as well as enhance physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ provided many examples of physical activity in his life and teachings. According to Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ asked him during the Hijrah (migration to Medina), “Do you feel pain in your abdomen?” Abu Huraira replied, “Yes.” The Prophet ﷺ advised, “Stand up for prayer, as it is a remedy”¹⁷. Islam prescribed standing for prayer as a remedy for abdominal pain, as it generates heat and relaxes the muscles through movement. This is a natural and scientific treatment, as recommended by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Abu Huraira also narrated that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “I have not seen anyone walk faster than him. It was as if the earth folded for him. We used to exert ourselves to keep pace with him, and he would not perceive it”¹⁸. This illustrates the Prophet’s remarkable physical endurance and vigor during journeys, wherein his companions struggled to match his pace, yet he remained unaffected. Abu Ishaq, narrating from Bara’ bin 'Aazib, reported that on the day of the Battle of the Trench, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ labored with us, transferring the earth, and indeed, the whiteness of his abdomen was visible from the exertion of transferring the earth¹⁹. Physical exertion through digging not only fosters agility and vitality but also enhances digestive capabilities. Strong joints result in strengthened muscles and tendons. Physical activity also facilitates radiant facial complexion, freshness, and bodily strength, promoting increased physical performance. Physical activity, according to the practice of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, constitutes the supreme formula for maintaining health and ensuring the well-being of individuals.

Prophet Muhammad's Guidance on Balanced Diet for Health

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of maintaining a balanced diet for health and well-being. A balanced diet refers to the consumption of various foods that provide all the nutrients needed to strengthen the body, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. An unbalanced diet, on the other hand, can lead to various diseases and impairments, such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular problems, and malnutrition. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not adhere to any specific diet; rather, he used various foods according to his environment and bodily needs. The diet of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was a model of simplicity and balance, encompassing all the nutrients needed to strengthen the body. Each meal or drink had a quality that served to balance and correct. For instance, consuming dates with cucumber or butter with dates. Islam always advocated the consumption of whole wheat bread without sieving, as it contains more fiber and nutrients than refined flour. Bread was eaten with vegetables, and various meats of animals and birds were exchanged, providing a variety of protein sources. Fruits and vegetables were consumed, as they are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Water was added to milk for drinking, as it helps to hydrate and nourish the body. Pure, clear, and sweet water was used, as it is essential for life and health. Honey was highly favored by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as it has many medicinal and nutritional benefits. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ provided many more principles for the community’s health, such as:

“A human being does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. But if he must (fill it), then one-third of food, one-third for drink, and one-third for his breath”²⁰.

It was the blessed habit of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not to eat to his fill, and he also forbade the community from doing so. Eating to fullness disrupts the digestive system, causing restlessness and sluggishness in nature. This not only affects worldly affairs but also impedes worship in the correct manner. Jabir ibn Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not leave evening meals, even if it is with a handful of dates, as its abandonment causes the person to grow old prematurely”²¹. The stomach remains empty throughout the night, and to replenish the energy lost during the day’s work, nourishment is required. If a person goes to sleep without eating or drinking, weakness may occur, and stored materials in the body begin to be broken down, leading to premature aging. Therefore, having an evening meal is crucial to avoid this. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ made this point very clear in an excellent manner.

The Importance of Adequate Sleep for Health and Well-being

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of maintaining adequate sleep for health and well-being. Sleep refers to the natural and periodic state of reduced consciousness and body activity that occurs at night, allowing the body and mind to rest and recover. Sleep has two significant benefits: firstly, it aids in digestion and promotes assimilation of nutrients. Secondly, it provides rest to both the mind and body, enabling an individual to remain alert and active for extended periods²². Conversely, individuals who do not fulfill their sleep requirements often suffer from various ailments and fatigue²³.

Allah Almighty has stated in the Noble Quran: “He it is who appointed the night for you, that you may rest therein”²⁴. Indeed, it is a reality that during the night, one can achieve greater relaxation and tranquility, as silence and darkness facilitate sound sleep. Even a glance at the timings of prayers makes it evident that they are scheduled according to both work and rest periods. Sufficient time is allocated for the Fajr and Dhuhr prayers to allow individuals to manage their daily tasks, while ample time is provided for rest during the evening and dawn prayers.

Narrated by Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-'As, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “O Abdullah! Have I heard correctly that you fast daily and keep awake all night (for prayer)? I replied, ‘Yes.’ The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Don’t do that; fast for a few days and then give it up for a few days, and offer prayer and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you, and your eyes have a right on you, and your wife has a right on you’”²⁵. This Hadith indicates that providing adequate sleep at night is a right of the body. Without proper sleep and tranquility, a person becomes susceptible to illness. A sick person cannot fulfill any task efficiently, neither in worldly matters nor in religious obligations.

Prophetic Etiquette of Eating

The Noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ bestowed upon his ummah etiquettes of eating that promote health and well-being. These etiquettes are based on revelation and are in accordance with human nature. The companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ diligently followed these guidelines and benefited greatly from the blessing of health and wellness. In the history of humanity, only the era of Medina and the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ were such that there were almost no illnesses or diseases. The fundamental reason for this was the Prophetic principles of health preservation, which people practiced and which are applicable until the Day of Judgment. Those individuals and societies who adhere to these principles remain healthy. Modern medical science is confirming the validity of these principles and advocating for their adoption.

The solution to the increasing diseases in the world lies only in adhering to the teachings of Prophetic knowledge. The Noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ established these principles in Medina Munawwarah and confirmed that salvation lies only in adhering to Islamic teachings. He instructed us in etiquettes of eating, and if a person only acts upon them, they will find love and prosperity in life.

Below are mentioned some of these etiquettes

Washing Hands Before Eating: It is narrated from Salman that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “The blessing of food lies in performing ablution before and after it”²⁶. The wisdom behind washing hands before eating is that hands, due to various tasks, often harbor different types of germs. If hands are

not washed, there is a strong possibility that these germs and dirt may enter the stomach, becoming the cause of many diseases. Consequently, illnesses and medical treatments may lead to financial difficulties and poverty. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ designated washing hands as a means of blessing.

Reciting Bismillah Before Eating: Umar bin Abi Salamah narrates that when I was a child under the care of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, my hand would roam all over the plate. Upon this, the Prophet ﷺ said: “O boy! Recite ‘Bismillah’ and eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you”. Since that moment, reciting Bismillah at the beginning of the meal brings joy to the nerves, and countless comforts are bestowed upon the heart and eyes. As a result, even an ordinary meal provides ample strength. Moreover, mentioning the name of Allah during meals brings blessings and suffices for everyone.

Eating Moderately: In the Noble Quran, excessive eating is condemned as extravagance, and Allah has prohibited it: “Eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess”²⁷. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed: “Most people fill their stomachs with food, but the believer eats in one intestine while the disbeliever eats in seven intestines”²⁸. Medical research has proven that most heart diseases originate from the stomach. The more a person eats, the more diseases they acquire. Avoiding overeating is highly beneficial for preventing heart diseases, as excess food leads to overworking of the heart, resulting in the abandonment of tasks by the cells. Overeating is also a major cause of insulin deficiency. This imbalance increases the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, and heart attacks.

Eating with gratitude and contentment: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us to be grateful and content with whatever food we have, and not to complain or waste it. He said: “Allah is pleased with His slave who says: ‘Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)’ when he takes a morsel of food and drinks a draught of water”²⁹. He also said: “The food for two persons is sufficient for three, and the food of three persons is sufficient for four”³⁰. He also warned us against wasting food, saying: “When the Prophet ﷺ ate, he would lick his three fingers, and he said: ‘If one of you drops a piece (of food) then let him remove any harm (dirt) from it and eat it, and do not leave it for Ash-Shaitan.’ And he would order us to finish (clean) the dish. And he said: ‘Indeed you do not know in which part of your food is the blessing.’”³¹

Eating slowly and mindfully: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us to eat slowly and mindfully, and not to rush or overeat. He said: “The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is enough for the son of Adam to eat a few mouthfuls, to keep him going. If he must do that (fill his stomach), then let him fill one third with food, one third with drink and one third with air”³². He also said: “The believer eats in one stomach, while the disbeliever eats in seven”³³. He also advised us to chew our food well and not to talk while eating, as this helps in digestion and prevents choking.

Prophetic Emphasis on Honey as Medicine: Healing and Wisdom

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of using honey as a remedy for various ailments, especially diarrhea. Honey is a great blessing from Allah Almighty, and it is also a food that can be used to treat various ailments. Allah Almighty has mentioned its healing properties in the Noble Quran: “In it is healing for people”³⁴. Honey was a preferred food of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “The Prophet ﷺ used to like sweet edible things and honey”³⁵. The above hadith highlights the principle of using food as medicine along with the principle that the remedy should be in accordance with the illness. It also emphasizes the benefits of using food as medicine, indicating that it is beneficial.

Another hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari states: “A man came to the prophet and said, 'My brother has got loose motions. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Let him drink honey.' The man again (came) and said, 'I made him drink (honey) but that made him worse.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Allah has said the Truth, and the 'Abdomen of your brother has told a lie’”³⁶.

From this authentic Hadith, we can derive some principles of Prophetic medicine. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of having good faith and complete trust in the diagnosis and prescription of treatment. Having trust in the treatment is fundamental; otherwise, the patient may be deprived of

its benefits, no matter how effective the treatment may be. Similarly, if someone seeks treatment through Prophetic medicine but does not benefit from it, it may be due to a lack of faith. Therefore, anyone desiring to treat their illness through Prophetic medicine should strengthen their belief and trust and then adopt the treatment with sincere intention and action. If they fulfill this fundamental requirement of Prophetic medicine, they will surely benefit from it.

Another principle that emerges from this treatment is that delayed treatment is often more effective than immediate treatment. In the case of intestinal inflammation causing diarrhea, simply stopping the diarrhea will not completely remove the toxins from the intestines. Therefore, the inflammation will persist. Hence, the best approach to treatment is to first cleanse the intestines and then eliminate the germs. Honey had the ability to perform both of these tasks. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had complete knowledge of medicine through divine revelation, and he did what a wise and compassionate physician should do.

The Prophet ﷺ instructed us to understand the properties, actions, and effects of common foods in our area and use them according to medical principles to treat various diseases. Secondly, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was well-versed in the fundamental principles of treating illnesses with food.

Healing from Poison with Dates: A Prophetic Remedy

One of the aspects of Prophetic Medicine that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized was the importance of using Ajwa dates as a remedy for various ailments, especially those caused by toxins or parasites. Ajwa dates are a type of date fruit that have healing properties and act as a tonic, which is a substance that strengthens the body and increases its resistance to disease. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “In Ajwa dates, there is healing for people, and if it is eaten on an empty stomach, it acts as a tonic”³⁷. He also said: “Ajwa dates are from Paradise, and they are a remedy for poison”³⁸. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim, a renowned scholar of Islamic medicine, explained that Ajwa dates contain an antidote, which is a substance that counteracts the effects of poison, and that they can kill the worms in the stomach due to their heat and tonic power. He also stated that eating Ajwa dates on an empty stomach regularly can reduce or eliminate the worm infestation³⁹. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ proclaimed that there is healing in Ajwa dates for every disease, urging people and scholars to contemplate and consider dates as a remedy for various ailments until the Day of Judgment. He also taught us the principle of administering many medicines on an empty stomach, as this can enhance their effectiveness and absorption.

Healing Heart Diseases with Talbina: A Prophetic Remedy

Pain, sorrow, grief, and distress are deeply felt in the heart. The agony of separation from loved ones can even jeopardize one’s life. While patience and consolation from friends may alleviate sorrow and pain, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ recommended using talbina, a porridge-like dish made from barley flour and milk, for alleviating restlessness, grief, and heartache.

Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated: “When a relative of ours passed away, women gathered at our place. After everyone had left, special women remained behind and started making talbina. Once it was prepared, they made me drink it, as they had heard the Prophet ﷺ saying: ‘Talbina soothes the heart of the sick and relieves some sadness’”⁴⁰.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ advised the treatment of cardiovascular diseases, such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and stroke, with talbina. In modern times, talbina has been recognized as one of the best remedies for lowering cholesterol levels. Cholesterol is a substance that accumulates in the blood vessels, contributing to various cardiovascular diseases. Talbina helps regulate cholesterol levels, reduces blood viscosity, and expels toxins from the body⁴¹.

Treatment of Cardiovascular Diseases with Olive Oil: A Prophetic Remedy

In the Noble Quran, Allah Almighty mentions the fig and the olive, stating: “And [by] the fig and the olive”⁴².

Olive and fig are blessed fruits mentioned in the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ deemed the olive tree blessed and instructed the utilization of its oil for medicinal purposes.

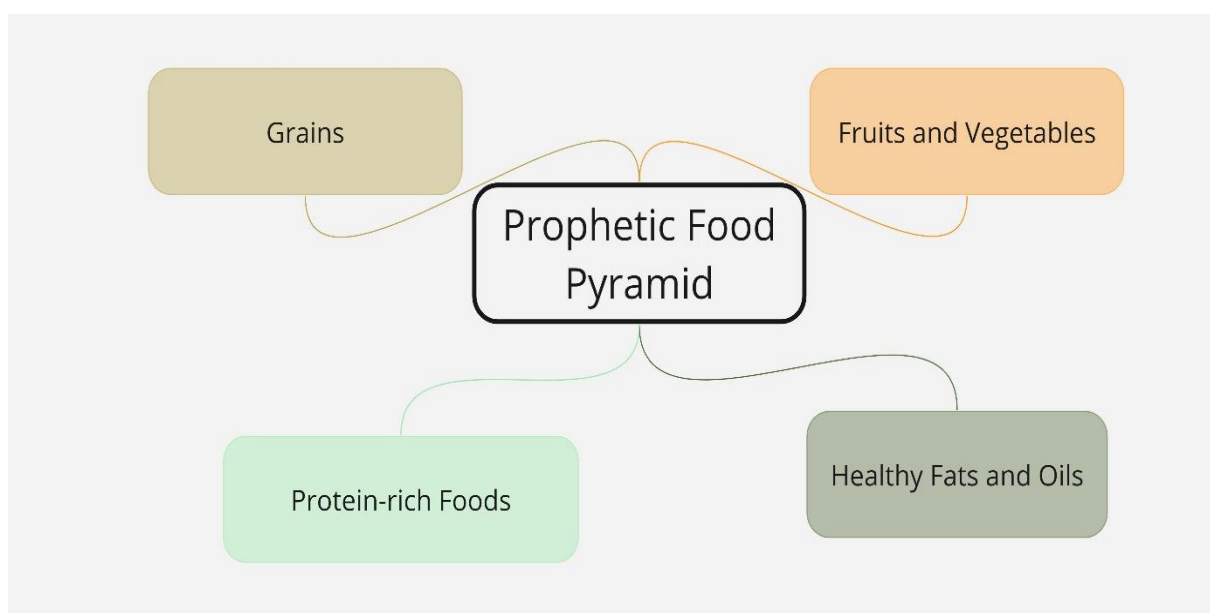
Hazrat Umar narrated that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “Apply the oil and massage with it, for indeed it is from a blessed tree”⁴³.

Another Hadith states: “Consume olive oil and apply it, for it is indeed from a blessed tree”⁴⁴.

The Prophet ﷺ instructed the use of olive oil for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and stroke. In the present era, olive oil has been recognized as the best oil for human health. It does not increase cholesterol levels in the body, and its use reduces uric acid levels. Both cholesterol and uric acid are risk factors for cardiovascular diseases. In contemporary times, these diseases are prevalent. Massage with olive oil on joints provides immediate relief, and vegetables cooked in olive oil balance cholesterol levels.⁴⁵

The Structure of the Prophetic Food Pyramid

The Prophetic Food Pyramid is structured into four primary food groups, each essential for maintaining health and preventing disease, reflecting the dietary habits endorsed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



1. Grains: The Foundation of the Pyramid

Grains, particularly whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread, and quinoa, form the base of the pyramid. These grains are crucial sources of energy-providing carbohydrates and are richer in fiber and nutrients compared to their refined counterparts. Their consumption was advocated in the form of whole and minimally processed foods during the Prophet's time, aligning with his teachings on natural and wholesome eating.

2. Fruits and Vegetables: Vital for Health

Occupying the second largest tier, fruits and vegetables were frequently consumed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and are highly recommended. They are pivotal for their high content of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This group underscores the prophetic practice of eating a diverse range of fruits and vegetables, which supports overall health and disease prevention.

3. Protein-rich Foods: Building and Repairing the Body

The third tier includes protein sources such as lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, and lentils, integral for tissue building and repair. The Prophet (peace be upon him) not only consumed these foods but also recommended them for their essential roles in providing energy and important amino acids, thus forming a crucial part of the diet.

4. Healthy Fats and Oils: Essential yet Moderate

The smallest group consists of healthy fats and oils. Essential for health, these fats were advocated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be consumed in moderation. Foods such as olive oil, nuts, seeds, and avocados are emphasized in the pyramid, reflecting their usage during his time to support wellness and energy needs.⁴⁶

Central to the Prophetic Food Pyramid is the principle of moderation and balance. This not only involves choosing whole over processed foods but also managing portion sizes, which aligns with the prophetic teachings on eating. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is known to have said that the stomach should contain one-third food, one-third water, and one-third air, highlighting the importance of not overeating.

The Prophetic Food Pyramid transcends beyond mere dietary guidelines; it is a way of life that fosters a mindful approach to eating. Rooted in the Islamic values of moderation, balance, and gratitude, it encourages making conscious choices about food consumption. Adhering to this guide helps individuals not only to improve their physical health but also to enhance their spiritual well-being, deepening their connection to Islamic teachings. By integrating the wisdom of Prophetic medicine into modern nutritional practices, believers can maintain a healthy lifestyle that honors their faith and body alike.

Exploring Prophet Muhammad's Holistic Approach to Mental Health

Mental health, often misunderstood within various cultures, including some Muslim communities, is profoundly rooted in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This chapter explores his compassionate approach to mental health, which predates many modern psychological understandings and practices. His teachings provide a holistic view that integrates spiritual, physical, and emotional wellness, guiding us towards understanding mental health not just as a contemporary issue but as an integral part of holistic health addressed centuries ago in Islamic tradition.

Recognition and Response to Mental Health by Prophet Muhammad

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) recognized the realities of mental health challenges and provided practical solutions, demonstrating profound empathy and understanding. His own experiences, such as the "Year of Sadness" following the deaths of his wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib, underscore his personal encounters with grief and stress.⁴⁷ These instances highlight the Islamic acknowledgment of emotional pain and the prophetic endorsements for addressing such human conditions.

Scriptural Insights and Prophetic Guidance on Emotional Wellbeing

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about mental health are embedded in both his sayings and actions. For example, the Quran recounts the emotional struggles of other prophets, such as Prophet Ya'qub's profound grief over the loss of his son Yusuf, illustrating that even the most steadfast individuals experienced severe emotional distress.⁴⁸ Moreover, verses from the Quran and Hadiths instruct on managing grief and stress, emphasizing the importance of spiritual and emotional care.

Prophetic Methods for Psychological Resilience

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provided invaluable guidance on managing psychological health that encompasses spiritual, emotional, and practical aspects of life. His methods for fostering psychological resilience were holistic, incorporating prayers, physical actions, and community interactions. These practices not only alleviated emotional distress but also strengthened spiritual well-being, demonstrating a balanced approach to handling life's challenges. Here are some examples illustrating how the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught psychological resilience:

1. Prayer and Spiritual Reflection

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) often turned to prayer during times of distress. During the Battle of Uhud, when he faced immense stress and physical danger, he remained steadfast in prayer, seeking strength and solace from Allah.⁴⁹ This act of turning to prayer in moments of hardship exemplifies his reliance on spiritual practice as a means of achieving mental resilience.⁵⁰

2. Physical Methods to Cope with Anger

The Prophet (peace be upon him) provided practical advice for dealing with anger, a common psychological challenge. He taught that if one is standing while angry, they should sit down; if sitting, they should lie down.⁵¹ This simple physical change can help regulate emotional responses and restore calmness, illustrating his understanding of the interconnection between body and mind.

3. Community Support and Compassion

The death of his companion Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated profound empathy by personally attending to the funeral arrangements and comforting the bereaved. His actions underscore the importance of community support and personal involvement in alleviating the emotional suffering of others, reinforcing social bonds as a foundation for psychological resilience.⁵²

4. Encouragement of Expressing Emotions

When his son Ibrahim passed away, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) openly wept. His reaction was a powerful message that expressing grief was not only acceptable but necessary for emotional health. He remarked, "The eye weeps, and the heart grieves, and we do not say anything except what pleases our Lord."⁵³ This instance highlights the prophetic endorsement of acknowledging and expressing emotions as a healthy part of the grieving process.

5. Holistic Self-Care

Understanding the physical impact on mental health, the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of a balanced diet, adequate sleep, and regular exercise. He advocated for moderation in all aspects of life, including how one eats, sleeps, and interacts with others, which is crucial for maintaining overall well-being.

6. Seeking Treatment and Encouraging Healing

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment".^{54,55} This hadith encourages Muslims to seek medical help and view treatment as a part of the divine plan, thereby reducing the stigma associated with seeking help for psychological conditions.

These examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) illustrate a comprehensive approach to psychological resilience that integrates faith, practical wisdom, and community support. His teachings continue to offer valuable insights for managing mental health, emphasizing that resilience is not only about enduring hardships but also about thriving through them by leveraging spiritual strength, practical strategies, and social support.

Integration of Natural Remedies and Emotional Healing

The holistic approach of prophetic medicine included the use of natural remedies to address both physical ailments and emotional conditions. His wife Aisha became adept in using herbal treatments, which were often used to soothe psychological ailments. The preparation of Talbina, a barley soup, is one such example where dietary intervention was recommended to alleviate heartache and sadness.

Prophetic Advocacy for Emotional Expression and Treatment

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged expressing emotions and seeking treatment for mental ailments, challenging the stigma often associated with these issues. His approach was comprehensive, advocating for prayer, meditation (dhikr), and community support as means to

alleviate psychological distress. This encouragement to seek cures reaffirms that mental health is not to be ignored within the Islamic context.^{56,57}

The prophetic approach to mental health, deeply rooted in empathy, spiritual insight, and practical guidance, offers a timeless model for holistic well-being. By revisiting these teachings, Muslims can reclaim a legacy of mental health awareness that is both spiritually enriching and psychologically empowering. This legacy not only aligns with contemporary understandings of mental health but also enriches them, providing a broadened perspective on wellness that integrates faith with psychological and emotional health practices.

Conclusion

In the era of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, he not only elucidated principles of healing through nutrition but also exemplified the application of food in treating various ailments. Regardless of the disease's severity, the elimination of exacerbating foods is paramount. Human blood derives its composition solely from food, which in turn sustains and nourishes all bodily organs. Incorrect dietary choices contribute to illness, while proper nutrition fosters health. Moreover, certain foods exhibit specific efficacies in addressing particular diseases, effectively addressing the root cause. The Prophet of Islam imparted invaluable principles of nutritional therapy, providing a foundational framework for treatment. Adhering to these Prophetic principles can yield comprehensive and efficacious healing, harmonizing with the simplicity and natural laws. This approach, enduring until the end of time, offers relief from suffering, distress, and complex ailments, bestowing the profound blessing of health and well-being upon humanity.

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