

MEDICINE OF THE PROPHET (SAW)

“O mankind! there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a guidance and a Mercy”

(Quran 10:57)

This is a gift for a good physical, psychological and spiritual health for Muslims. Indeed, the Islam's holistic approach to health covers all aspects of the mind, body, and soul. If Allah (SWT) decrees that illness or injury must be a part of our lives, then Islam provides us with the ways and means to accept and even be grateful for the trials and tribulations that envelop us. However, Muslims must also take care of their spiritual, emotional, and physical health. Since Allah (SWT) gave us our body, the most complex machine, as a trust. A true believer recognizes the wonders of the human body and is grateful to the Creator, a truly health-conscious person combines diet, nutrition, and exercise with remembrance of Allah (SWT) and the intention to fulfil all religious obligations. Indeed, good health is necessary if one intends to fast the month of Ramadan and performing the Hajj (or pilgrimage to Mecca) is an arduous task that requires several days of intense physical exertion.

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on Earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy” (Quran 2:168)

Diet and nutrition play an important role in maintaining the best possible health, as does a lifestyle that includes exercise. Islam emphasizes a simple diet combined with exercise. To fulfill the obligations of three of the five pillars of Islam, Muslims must be healthy and physically fit. Performing five prayers daily is itself a form of exercise, its prescribed movements involve all the muscles and joints of the body, and concentration in prayer relieves mental stress.

1. **Early Riser:** Prophet Muhammad (SAW) went to bed early and woke up every day with Adhan of Fajr. Being an early riser has been scientifically correlated with better productivity, as well as better mental health in general. So, waking up early can be difficult, but with small steps, even if you only wake up 15 minutes earlier to start, you can start to improve your quality of life.
2. **Moderation in Diet:** Physical ailments attack and harm the body and alter its normal functions, because of an excess amount of a substance. This type

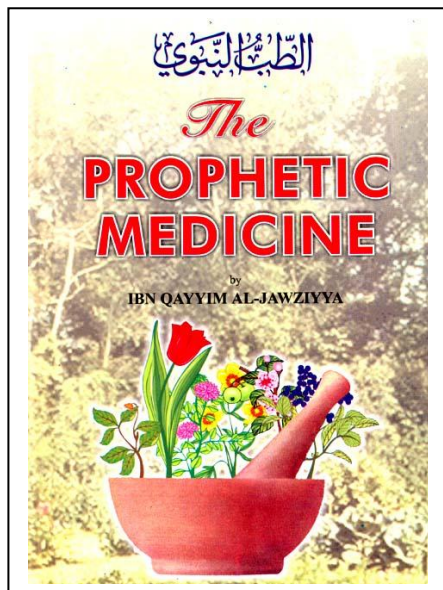
constitutes most diseases and occurs, because of overeating or consuming more than what the body needs, which brings about little benefit or is not digested easily, or due to complex meals. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) advised his followers to sustain themselves, but not overeat. He said: "The son of Adam [i.e. human beings] never fills a vessel worse than his stomach. The son of Adam only needs a few bites that would sustain him, but if he insists, one-third should be reserved for his food, another third for his drink, and the last third for his breathing [Sunan Ibn Majah 3349]. The human body consists of three basic elements, water, solids and air. This is why our beloved Prophet (SAW) gave each of these elements its due share in the body. Moreover, we now know that it takes our body 20 minutes to send signals to our brain that it is full. Slow eating will then help you eat less food and improve your digestion, and it is a practice The Prophet (SAW) himself and strongly advocated. And finally, eating together and not separately, for the blessing is associated with the company [Ibn Majah]. The Prophet (SAW) stressed this, and today sharing and enjoying food has been proven to reduce stress, and build healthy eating habits within family and children. These advices from the Prophet (SAW) is meant to prevent believers from over-stuffing themselves to the detriment of good health.

3. **Adequate Sleep:** The benefits of proper sleep cannot be overstated. Allah (SWT) says: "It is He Who made the night a covering for you, and the sleep a rest, and He made the day to rise up again" (Quran 25:47, also see 30:23). It was the habit of the early Muslims to sleep directly after Isha prayer, to wake up early with the dawn prayer, and to take short naps during the midday heat. On several occasions, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) expressed disapproval of zealous worshippers who gave up on sleep to pray all night long. He told once: "Offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you" [Sahih al-Bukhari 1975] and told another, "You should pray as long as you feel active, and when you get tired, sleep" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].
4. **Fasting:** Recent evidence shows that not only the food we eat, but also our schedules and eating habits also have a profound impact on our health. Fasting was a regular practice in the life of Muhammad (PBUH), not just during Ramadan. He fasted until the Maghreb every Monday and Thursday, as well as the 13th, 14th and 15th of each month. It has been proven to balance hormone

levels, prevent oxidative stress, and reduce overall inflammation. When you think about it, the less food you put into your body, the less it focuses on digestion and the more it can focus on healing itself from certain illnesses!

5. **Staying active:** Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: a strong believer was better than a weak believer [Sahih Muslim 2664]. He was talking in terms of faith and character but also indicating that physical strength i.e. optimum health and fitness were desirable, providing Allah (SWT) gave us the ways and means of attaining such strength. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) advised his followers, to work, to be energetic, and to start their day early, all of which are conditions for a healthy body. He said: O God, make the early morning hours blessed for my nation [Ahmad]. Exercise on the other hand has many benefits: First, exercise increases muscle tone, improves flexibility, enhances endurance, strengthens the heart, and fights depression. It also helps achieve significant weight loss. Secondly, aerobic exercise fights heart disease and high blood pressure, and reduces the risk of diabetes, while weight training increases muscle strength and reduces fat, increases bone density, fights back pain and arthritis, and improves overall mental health.
6. **Drinking water slowly:** Do not drink water in one breath but drink it in two or three breaths. This is how Prophet Muhammad (SAW) drank water. Science today proves that when a person drinks too much water in a short period of time they can experience headaches, imbalance in blood electrolyte levels and sometimes dizziness too. Drinking slowly helps you absorb the fluid and get the most benefit out of it.

“And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees – of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] it’s ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.” (Quran 6:99)



Traditional medicine in Islam is often called Medicine of the Prophet (al-Tibb an-Nabawi). Muslims often explore the Prophet's medicine as an alternative to modern therapies, or as a complement to modern medical treatment. Here are some traditional remedies, which are part of the Islamic tradition. However, one should always consult with a medical professional before attempting any treatment. Some herbs may be harmful in certain conditions or when consumed in the wrong quantities.

1. **Black seed:** Black caraway or cumin seed (*Nigella sativa*) is not related to the common kitchen spice. This seed is native to Western Asia and is part of the buttercup family. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once advised his followers: Use the black seed, for it contains a cure for all types of diseases except death. Black seed is said to aid digestion and contains antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and analgesic properties. Muslims often consume black seeds to relieve respiratory illnesses, digestive problems and to strengthen the immune system.
2. **Honey:** Honey is described as a source of healing in the Quran: "There comes forth from their [bees'] bellies, a drink of varying color wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think"(Quran 16:69). It is also mentioned as one of the foods of Heaven: "The description of Paradise which the pious have been promised is that in it are rivers of water the taste and smell of which are not changed; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine delicious to those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey, clear and pure "(Quran 47:15). Honey was also mentioned repeatedly by the Prophet (SAW) as a "healing," a "blessing," and "the best medicine. In modern times, it has been discovered that honey has antibacterial properties as well as other health benefits. Honey is composed of water, simple and complex sugars, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, and several different vitamins known to be conducive to good health.

3. **Olive Oil** : Allah(SWT) says "And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai that grows oil, and it is a relish for the eaters"(Quran 23:20). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also once told his followers: "Eat the olive and anoint (yourselves) with it, for indeed it is from a blessed tree". Olive oil contains monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids, as well as Vitamin E. It is consumed to promote coronary health and is used on the skin to increase softness and elasticity. It also found to control blood sugar.
4. **Dates** : Dates are a traditional and popular food for breaking the daily Ramadan fast. Eating dates after fasting helps to maintain blood sugar levels and is an excellent source of dietary fibre, potassium, magnesium, and complex sugars. It also helps people feel full to eat less.
5. **Zamzam Water**: Zamzam water comes from an underground spring in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. It is known to contain large amounts of calcium, fluoride, and magnesium, necessary nutrients for good health.
6. **Siwak**: Twigs of the Arak tree are commonly known as siwak or miswak. It is used as a natural toothbrush, and its oils are often used in modern tubes of toothpaste. Its soft fibers are rubbed gently over the teeth and gums to promote oral hygiene and gum health.
7. **Pomegranates**: The fruit pomegranate is mentioned in the Holy Quran as fruit of Heaven as Allah (SWT) says "Therein will be fruits and dates and pomegranates" (Quran 55:68). It is believed that pomegranates were the Prophet's favourite fruit. Modern scientific research has proven that pomegranates are one of the healthiest foods on the planet. They contain manganese, which helps form bone structures during the metabolic process, and potassium, which helps maintain cell function and balance fluid levels. They are also powerful in flavonoids and polyphenols, antioxidants that protect our bodies against heart disease.