

Al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib narrated that he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

- 1 No human being may fill up a vessel worse than his tummy.
- 2 It is enough for anyone to have a few bites to satisfy hunger.
- 3 If he must, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink and one-third for breathing.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Ahmad, 17186; al-Nasā'ī, 6737; al-Tirmidhī, 2380; Ibn Mājah, 3349.

From the Qur'an

﴿Children of Adam, dress well when you attend any place of worship. Eat and drink but do not be wasteful. Surely He does not love the wasteful.﴾ (7: 31)

The Narrator

Abu Karīmah al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib ibn 'Amr al-Kindī was one of the Prophet's companions. He visited the Prophet in Madinah and stayed there for forty days. He later lived in Homs in Syria. Yaḥyā and al-Ḥasan, Jābir's sons, reported hadiths from him, as did 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abi 'Awf. He died in Syria in Year 87 AH 706 CE.

Summary

Overeating is unhealthy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights this and states that it is sufficient to eat what is enough to satisfy hunger and enable a person to remain active.



Message and Meaning

1

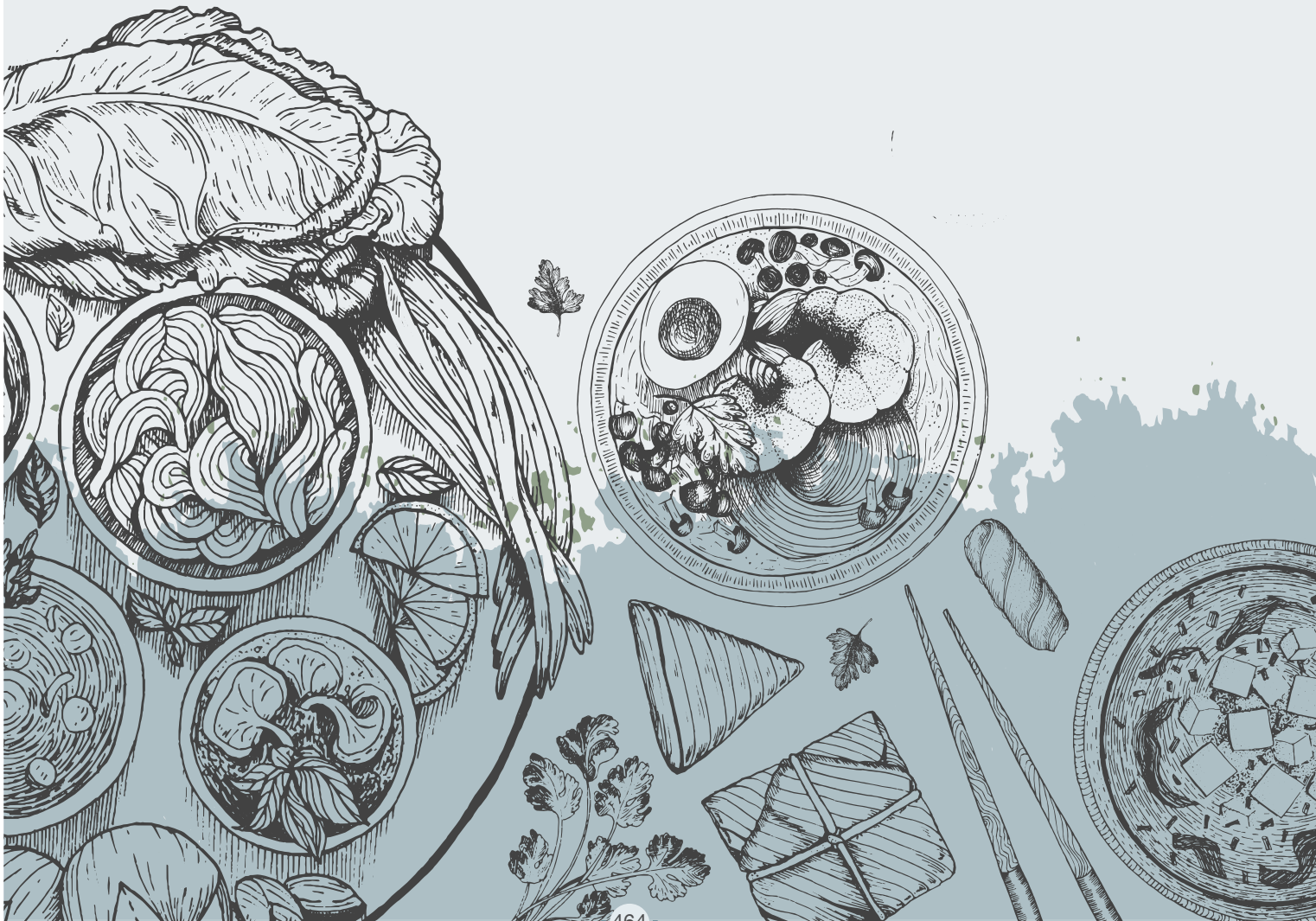
The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns against eating too much, as several illnesses are caused by overeating. Moreover, when a person eats his fill, he will feel lazy, disinclined to attend to worship, having no enthusiasm for work. His mind will be slow functioning.

2

Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recommends his community to be satisfied with a few bites, removing the feeling of hunger and giving them the energy to do their worship and good work.

3

If one is unable to maintain this and wish to eat more, the Prophet recommends that one should allow one-third of one's stomach for food, one-third for drink and one-third for easy breathing. When a person fills up his tummy with food and drink, he will be short of breath. He will feel uncomfortable, tired as though he is carrying a heavy burden.



Implementation



The Prophet's medical advice concentrated on disease prevention, more than treatment and cure.



A wise person does not fill his tummy with food, as this causes much harm. Luqmān, the wise, said to his son: 'When the stomach is too full, thought is in slumber, wisdom is dumb, and the body organs are too lazy to attend to worship'.⁽¹⁾



The desire to eat often leads a person into what is unlawful. It was the means by which Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree.



Eating sparingly is a good quality. The Arabs of old used to praise a person who ate little. This should apply more to the people of faith.



It is enough for any person to eat what satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives sufficient energy. Beware of overeating.



The Prophet and his companions used to eat only what was sufficient to keep them active. Therefore, they did not care for riches. Abu Hurayrah passed by some people who had cooked a whole lamb. They invited him to join them. He declined and said: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) left this life without ever having his fill of barley bread'.



Aspire to attain what is superior, not merely to eat your fill. This is sought after by unbelievers of whom God says: 'Let them eat and enjoy themselves, and let their hopes beguile them. For they will surely come to know [the truth]'. (15: 3)



Let your maximum be to have one-third of your stomach for food, so that you leave enough for your drink and comfortable breathing.



It is mentioned that Ibn Māsawayh, a famous physician, said when he read this hadith in Abu Khaythamah's book: 'Had people implemented this advice, they would have spared themselves all sorts of illness while hospices and pharmacies would have been idle'.⁽²⁾



A Muslim should eat what is enough to support life and satisfy hunger, while an unbeliever indulges in the pleasure of eating much. The Prophet said: 'A believer eats for one intestine while an unbeliever eats [to fill] seven intestines'.⁽³⁾

1 Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p. 82.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 468.

3 Related by al-Bukhārī, 5393; Muslim, 2060.

