Sayyid Al-Hakeem among the etiquettes of eating is to begin with the name of Allah and end with praising Him

Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem, Head of Al-Hikma National Movement, continued his discussion in the Ramadan lectures regarding the right of the stomach, which is the eighth right in our exploration of Imam Zain Al-Abidin's Treatise on Rights. Our conversation led us to the eighth illumination, which pertains to the etiquette of eating. There are etiquettes to observe before, during, and after consuming food.

Etiquettes before eating:

1. The source of the food: It must be halal, and one must ensure that the means of acquiring the money used to buy food are not haram or suspicious. Imam Mohammed Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said, "Worship consists of seventy parts, the best of which is seeking halal sustenance."

2. Washing hands: The Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Performing ablution before eating removes poverty, and after eating removes harmful substances and improves vision." He also said, "Whoever is pleased to increase the goodness of his house, let him perform ablution when his meal is presented."

3. Placing food on a spread on the ground: Anas ibn Malik reported, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never ate on a dining table or a cloth." It was asked, "Then, how did you all eat?" He replied, "On the ground."

4. Sitting position: One should sit like a servant, either kneeling on both knees or raising the right leg and sitting on the left. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, "When one of you sits to eat, let him sit in the manner of a servant, not crossing one leg over the other or sitting arrogantly, for it is a sitting that Allah Almighty dislikes, and its doer is detested by Allah."

5. Intention to eat for the sake of Allah: "Do not take it beyond the limit of sufficiency to the point of excess."

6. Being content with what is available and present of sustenance.

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) said, “Be generous to bread”, they asked, “What is that?”, the prophet replied, “If it’s served, wait nothing else.”

7. Gathering people to eat: The Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Food, when it has four qualities, is complete: if it is from halal sources, if many hands partake in it, if Allah is named at the beginning, and if praise of Allah Almighty is said at the end."

As for the etiquette during eating, Sayyid Al-Hakeem mentioned:

1. Beginning with the name of Allah and ending with praise of Him.

The Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) said: "When the table is set, it is surrounded by four thousand angels. When the servant says, 'In the name of Allah,' the angels say, 'May Allah bless your food.' Then they say to the devil, 'Depart, O sinful one, for you have no authority over them.' When they finish eating and say, 'Praise be to Allah,' the angels

say, 'People whom Allah has blessed, so give thanks to their Lord.' If they do not mention the name of Allah, the angels say to the devil, 'Come, O sinful one, for you will eat with them.' When the table is lifted, and they have not mentioned the name of Allah, the angels say, 'People whom Allah has blessed, yet they forgot their Lord, the Majestic, and Glorious.'"

2. Eating with the right hand.

3. Starting with salt and ending with it.

4. Taking small bites.

5. Chewing food thoroughly.

6. Not reaching for food until after swallowing the previous bite.

7. Not criticizing the food.

8. Eating what is nearest except for fruits.

9. Avoiding the top portion of the dish and the middle but eating from around the edges.

10. Not cutting food with a knife.

11. Not cutting meat, as the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) forbade it, saying, "Do not cut it, rather eat it tear it with hands."

12. Not placing meat or anything else on bread.

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) said, “Be generous with bread, as it’s from the blessings of skies, and dug from the blessings of the earth”

13. Not wiping hands with bread.

14. Not showing aversion to eating what falls from one's food.

15. Not wiping hands with a napkin until licking one's fingers, as one does not know in which food the blessing lies.