

## FOOD SAFETY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SUNNAH: A STUDY OF HADITH ON COVERING FOOD

**Muhammad Fikri Alhariez<sup>1</sup>, Irfan Yuhadi<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyyah Imam Syafi'i, Jember Indonesia

Correspondence: [Alhariezfikri6789@gmail.com](mailto:Alhariezfikri6789@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Food safety is a critical issue in maintaining public health linked with safe and clean food for preventing diseases. From a Sunnah perspective, the principles of food safety are not only viewed from a physical cleanliness standpoint but also from a spiritual perspective taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This study aims to examine the relevance of the Sunnah teachings regarding the practice of covering food in the context of food safety. The study is conducted by a qualitative approach using a literature review method. This research analyses Hadiths that discuss the importance of covering food and its implications for preventing contamination and food poisoning. The hadiths come from authentic sources narrated by Sahih Muslims and Imam Hanbal, therefore, hold a very strong position in the Sunnah. The findings of this study indicate that covering food in the Sunnah serves not only as a practical measure to maintain cleanliness and prevent contamination by microorganisms but also carries a philosophical and spiritual dimension that teaches Muslims to be grateful and mindful of the blessings of food. The study also highlights the importance of integrating religious teachings with modern principles of food safety as part of efforts to prevent foodborne diseases.

**Keywords:** *Sunnah, Covering Container, Food Safety.*

### Introduction

In today's world, food safety is an important aspect of preventing foodborne illnesses, serious health concerns, and the well-being of society. The quality and cleanliness of food significantly affect health, as consuming contaminated food can lead to foodborne diseases, ranging from mild infections to serious diseases that can threaten lives. According to a report issued by the WHO in 2015, it is estimated that 600 million people fall ill, and 420,000 people die each year due to foodborne illnesses caused by contaminated food worldwide<sup>1</sup>. The primary cause of food poisoning is contamination of food by microorganisms or other substances. Additionally,

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2015). *Estimates of the global burden of foodborne disease: Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group 2007–2015*. World Health Organization.

research shows that cases of food poisoning are due to improper handling of food hygiene during food preparation storage and the poor health of food handlers.<sup>2</sup>

One of study mention if any lack of essential food hygiene practices can lead to foodborne diseases and death of the consumer. Contaminated food presents one of the most common causes and major contributor to gastrointestinal illness (e.g. acute diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain). The causes of foodborne illness have been associated with improper storage or reheating (50%), food stored inappropriately (45%) and cross contamination (39%).<sup>3</sup>

Islam has provided guidance to its followers to consume food that is halal (permissible) and thoyib (good and healthy), as stated in the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on the earth [that is] lawful and good (halal and tayyib), and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." (QS Al Baqarah: 168)

Tafseer of tayyib (good food) is not evil or filthy, such as dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and all other unclean things.<sup>4</sup> The term *halālan tayyiban* has six different meanings such as anything that Allah has commanded, delicious, beneficial, does not concern human rights, modest, and pure/clean.<sup>5</sup>

Islamic teachings, as a perfect religion, and through the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad 14 centuries ago, have placed great emphasis on the principles of food safety and cleanliness. Furthermore, according to Islamic teachings, maintaining the cleanliness and safety of food is part of safeguarding the trust given by Allah over the human body. One of the teachings in the Sunnah related to healthy food is the recommendation to cover food.

This research is qualitative in the form of library research. A literature study is a research method that collects data by understanding every theory and literature related to the object research. The entire process of this study is conducted by utilizing both primary and secondary sources with an analytical description approach.

Several previous studies discuss the Hadith and food safety, such as encouraging covering food, and drink containers as an Instrument for adhering to halal and tayyib practices which focuses and highlights how the teachings found in hadith can be applied as a framework to ensure food safety, cleanliness, and purity, while also supporting the production of food that meets the

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<sup>2</sup> Kholil, K., Kohar, S., & Subagja, A. (2019). Strategies of food safety program improvement to prevent food poisoning outbreak at oil & gas industrial city. *ADI Journal on Recent Innovation (AJRI)*, 1(1), 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.34306/ajri.v1i1.13>

<sup>3</sup> Sahil Kamboj, Neeraj Gupta, Julie D Bandral, Garima Gandotra and Nadira Anjum. 2020. Food safety and hygiene: A review. *International Journal of Chemical Studies* · March 2020 8(2): 358-368. DOI: 10.22271/chemi.2020.v8.i2f.8794

<sup>4</sup> Abdur-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'di, *Tafseer as-Sa'di* Vol. 1 (Juz' 1-3) / Abdur-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'di; Nasiruddin al-Khattab — Riyadh, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Mohd Akil Muhamed Ali, Nurul Syahadah Mohamad Riza, Mohammad Naqib Hamdan, , Mohd Farhan Md Ariffin. 2023. Food Safety in Halalan Tayyiban Discourse According to Mufasssirin. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Science* . Vol. 13 , No. 8, 2023, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2023. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i8/17531>.

standards of being both lawful (halal) and wholesome (tayyib)<sup>6</sup> but not including the takhreej hadiths. Another, study about the parameter of food safety from the perspective of al-Hadith that concluded in Islamic teachings, the concepts of halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) are fundamental in determining what is acceptable for consumption, ensuring that food is not only lawful but also pure and beneficial for health.<sup>7</sup> Added studies about an overview of food safety, sanitation and personal hygiene in food handling from of Islamic perspective in general according Al Quran and hadith in general.<sup>8</sup>

This research will focus on the study of hadiths, including the takhreej hadiths of covering food, to identify the source of hadiths, verify the authenticity, and analyze the chain of narrators (sanad). Furthermore, the hadiths will be analyzed in terms of their meaning and relevance in the principle of modern food safety.

## Discussion

### Takhreej Hadiths

Takhreej hadith is being considered as a process of disclosing the position of hadith in its premier sources. In this era, this process has become among the matters that are highly demanded to be carried out by various parties to those who are quoting the hadith of the Prophet Peace be upon him in their writings<sup>9</sup>. Besides that, the science of takhreej means knowledge that debates the proposals and methodologies that facilitate or knowledge enable one to trace the places located hadith, mukhabarat, syawahid, whether situated in the original reference, like the original or not, and know the status of the original tradition is either accepted or rejected.<sup>10</sup>

The hadith regarding covering food in the vessel, after searching using the wording **عَطُوا** **الْإِنَاءَ** from the six major collections of hadith (Kutubusittah), namely Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan an-Nasa'i, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan At-Tirmidzi, and Sunan Ibn Majah, the finder found two hadith which is same matan as below:

وَحَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُو النَّاقِذُ، حَدَّثَنَا هَاشِمُ بْنُ الْقَاسِمِ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ، حَدَّثَنِي يَزِيدُ، بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَسَمَةَ بْنِ الْهَادِ اللَّيْثِيُّ عَنْ بَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ، عَنْ الْقَعْقَاعِ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " عَطُوا الْإِنَاءَ وَأَوْكُوا السِّقَاءَ فَإِنَّ فِي السَّنَةِ لَلْيَلَّةِ يَنْزِلُ فِيهَا وَبَاءٌ لَا يَمُرُّ بِإِنَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ غَطَاءٌ أَوْ سِقَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ وَكَاءٌ إِلَّا نَزَلَ فِيهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَبَاءُ " .

<sup>6</sup> Mohd Farhan Md Ariffin, Mohd Izzat Abd Shukur, Syed Mohd Jeffri, Syed Jaafar, 2019, Hadith Anjuran Menutup Bekas Makanan dan Minuman Sebagai Instrumen Pematuhan Halalan Tayyiban, e-Prosidings Kolokium Penyelidikan Siswazah Kebangsaan, Hal 169, 14 November 2019, Institut Pengajian Siswazah Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka.

<sup>7</sup> Mohd Farhan Md Ariffina, Khadher Ahmada and Sa'adan Manb. 2018. Parameter of Food Safety from the Perspective of al-Hadith. Online Journal Research in Islamic Studies Universiti Malaya Vo. 5 No. 1 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.15364/ris2018-0501-04>.

<sup>8</sup> Syuhaida Idha Abd Rahim, Siti Khurshiah Mohd Mansor, Mohd Asmadi Yakob and Noraini Ismail, Food Safety, Sanitation and Personal Hygiene in Food Handling: An overview from Islamic Perspective, International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology, 9(9), 2018, pp. 1524–1530.

<sup>9</sup> Kawaid, A. I. S. D., Amiruddin Mohd Sobali, & Ahmad Izzuddin Abu Bakar. (2021). Faedah Takhrij Hadis kepada Sanad Dan Matan: Satu Kajian Analisis: Benefits of Takhrij Hadith to Sanad and Matn: An Analytical Study. Ma' alim Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Sunnah, 17(2), 66-83. <https://doi.org/10.33102/jmqsv17i2.285>.

<sup>10</sup> Fadlan Mohd Othman, Ahmad Munawar Ismail, Latifah Abdul Majid, Mazlan Ibrahim, Mohd Arif Nazri, Haziyah Hussin, Sabri Mohamad, Nur Farhah Zainan Nazri and Hazman Hassan. 2012. The significance and application of takhrij al-hadith sciences in academic research. Education Research Journal 2(10); pp. 338-343, October 2012.

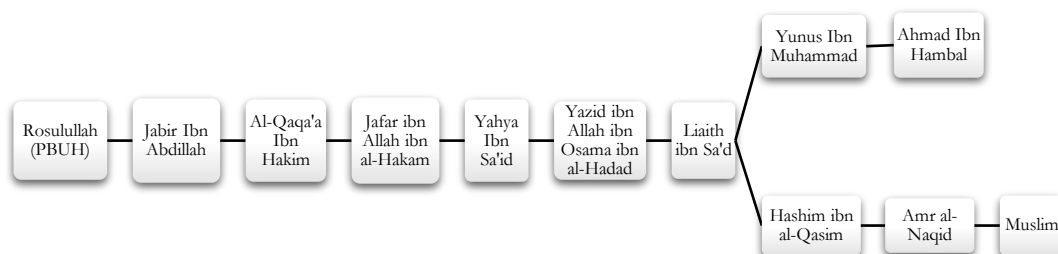
*Amr al-Naqid told me about Hashim ibn al-Qasim, Liaith ibn Sa'd, Yazid ibn Allah ibn Osama ibn al-Hadad ibn al-Laythi told me about Yahya ibn Said, Jafar ibn Allah ibn al-Hakam, al-Qaqa'a ibn Hakim, and Jabir ibn Abdillah, who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: "Cover your vessels and close your water skins, for there is one night in a year when a plague descends, and it does not pass by an uncovered vessel or an unclosed water skin without some of that plague descending into it."*<sup>11</sup>

Also, in the book of Musnad Ahmad by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, chapter 23, hadith no.14829.

حَدَّثَنَا يُونُسُ ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ يَعْنِي ابْنَ الْهَادِ ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ ، عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ ، عَنْ الْقَعْقَاعِ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ : غَطُّوا الْإِنَاءَ ، وَأَوْكُوا السِّقَاءَ ، فَإِنَّ فِي السَّنَةِ لَيْلَةً يَنْزِلُ فِيهَا وَبَاءٌ لَا يَمُرُّ بِإِنَاءٍ لَمْ يَغْطَ وَلَا سِقَاءٍ لَمْ يُوكَ إِلَّا وَقَعَ فِيهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَبَاءِ

*Yunus said he heard from Yazid, meaning ibn al-Hadad, who heard from Yahya Ibn Sa'id, who heard from Jafar Ibn Abdillah Ibn al-Hakam, who heard from Al-Qaqa'a Ibn Hakim, who heard from Jabir Ibn Abdillah al-Ansari, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Cover the pot and water the watering can. There is a night in the year when a plague comes down. It will not pass by a pot or watering can that is not covered or watered. It will fall into it from that plague."*<sup>12</sup>

When the hadith is subjected to takhrij (authentication and classification), at least two hadith books contain the hadith mentioned above. Below is a diagram showing the narrators of rawi (sanad) in which this hadith was transmitted.



The first narrator, al-Layth ibn Sa'ad, holds a distinguished reputation. He was al-Layth ibn Sa'ad ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fahmi, also known as Abu al-Harith, a well-respected Egyptian jurist recognized for his scholarly contributions. He narrated from several notable individuals, including Ibrahim ibn Abi 'Abla, Ibrahim ibn 'Ayn, Usama ibn Zayd, Usama ibn Zayd ibn Haritha ibn Sharahil, Bakr ibn Sawada ibn Thamama, and others. Additionally, his narrations were transmitted by figures such as Muhammad Ajlan, Hisham ibn Sa'ad, Qais ibn al-Rabi', Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, Hashim ibn Bashir, al-Attaf ibn Khalid, Abdullah ibn Lahiya, Abdullah ibn Wahb, and many more. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, a renowned scholar, once praised al-Layth, saying, "Al-Layth is highly knowledgeable, and his hadith are authentic."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Abu Husain Muslim Ibn al hajjaj An-nassumburi, *shahih Muslim*, (Cairo: Issa al-Babi al-Halabi & Co.) chapter 12, No.2014.

<sup>12</sup> Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, (1st ed, Cairo; Dar Al-hadits.), V 23, No. 14829.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Maqdisi, Abu Muhammad Abd al-Ghani ibn Abd al-Wahid, *Al-Kamal fi Asma al-Mujal* (1st ed. Kuwait; Gharas Advertising Company, 2016), V. 8, p. 263.

The second narrator is Yazid ibn Abdullah ibn al-Had, known as Yazid ibn Abdullah ibn Usama ibn al-Had al-Lithi, Abu Abdullah al-Madani, often referred to as "the lame one." He was physically impaired, with both legs affected, and was the nephew of Abdullah ibn al-Had. He narrated from several notable figures, including Thalba bin Abi Malik, Abdullah bin Khabab, Abdullah bin Dinar, the son of al-Zuhri, Ubada bin al-Walid bin Ubada, Suhail bin Abi Saleh, Ali bin Umar bin Ali bin al-Husayn, Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin al-Harith al-Timi, Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Amr bin Hazm, Yahya bin Sa'id al-Ansari, Yuhannas (the governor of Mus'ab bin al-Zubair), and Ziyad bin Abi Ziyad (the governor of Ibn Ayyash). His narrations were transmitted by Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar, Malik ibn Anas, al-Leith ibn Sa'd, Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Durawardi, Bakr ibn Mudar, Haywa ibn Shurayh, and Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Makhrami. Al-Dhahabi praised him, noting that Ibn Ma'in and other scholars trusted him, describing him as one of the imams of knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

The third narrator is Yahya ibn Sa'id, who was introduced to Iraq by Al-Mansur. He was appointed as a judge in Al-Hashimiyya, and it is said that he also held a judicial position in Baghdad. He learned from notable figures, including Anas ibn Malik, al-Sa'eeb ibn Yazid, Abdullah ibn Amer ibn Rabi'ah, Abu Umama ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Abu Salama ibn Abd al-Rahman, Sulayman ibn Yasar, 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr, and others. Those who narrated from him include Hisham ibn 'Urwa, Humaid al-Tawil, Yazid ibn 'Abdullah ibn Usama ibn al-Had, Malik ibn Anas, Muawiya ibn Salih, Ibn Jurayj, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Majishun, al-Laith ibn Sa'd, Sulayman ibn Bilal, al-Thuri, Jarir ibn Hazim, 'Asim ibn Suwaid al-Quba'iyya, 'Ubada ibn Sulayman, 'Isa ibn Yunus, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Muslim, Shu'abah, Ibn 'Aynah, Hamadan, Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, Zuhayr ibn Muawiyah, and Greer ibn Abd al-Hamid. Ahmad ibn Hanbal stated: "Yahya bin Sa'id is the most reliable of the people."<sup>15</sup>

The fourth narrator is Ja'far ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hakam ibn Rafi ibn Sinan al-Ansari al-Ausi. The maternal grandfather Rafi ibn Sinan, is also the father of Abdul Hamid ibn Ja'far. Narrated from his son Abdul-Hamid: Yazid bin Abi Habib, Saeed bin Abi Hilal, and Al-Leith ibn Saad. Abd al-Rahman al-Na'sai said in some graded manuscripts of the book *al-Jarah wa al-Ta'dil*: Ja'far ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hakam al-Ansari is a civilian whose trustworthiness is established. Rafi ibn Sinan is his maternal grandfather and the son of Abdul Hamid ibn Ja'far. There comes another narrator fourth, who is Ja'far ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hakam ibn Rafi ibn Sinan al-Ansari al-Ausi. He is narrated by Abdul Hamid, son of his father, Yazid bin Abi Habib, Saeed bin Abi Hilal, and Al-Leith bin Saad. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Na'sai said in some of the authenticated copies of the book *al-Jarah wa al-Ta'dil*: Trustworthy civilian Ja'far ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hakam al-Ansari.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Maqdisi, Abu Muhammad Abd al-Ghani ibn Abd al-Wahid, *Al-Kamal fi Asma al-Mujal* (1st ed. Kuwait; Gharas Advertising Company, 2016), V. 9. Pg. 405.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Mizi, Jamal al-Din Abu al-Hajjaj, *Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asmaa' al-Rijal* (The perfection of the names of men), vol. 1. Beirut; Al-Risala Foundation, 1992), c. 32, pg. 171.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Asqalani, Abu al-Fadl Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad, *Taqdeeb al-Tahdhib* (1st ed. Syria; Dar al-Rashid, 1986), p. 591.

### Asbab Al Wurud

The understanding and interpretation of a hadith, as well as its transmission to the listener, can be obtained by consulting the scholarly opinions of the Salf al-Salih and considering the asbab al-Wurud. The concept of maqasid al-sunnah, when understood through the lens of the ultimate hadith and the application of the method of asbab al-wurud, allows for a more comprehensive and balanced comprehension of a hadith. This approach ensures that the hadith is interpreted in a manner that is in line with the conditions of the current times and places and is accepted by all Muslims.<sup>17</sup>

The Asbab al Wurud (circumstances of narration) for the hadiths concerning the covering of food and drink containers that during the years, there is a night when sickness descends, affecting uncovered food and drink. The prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Cover the vessel and tie the waterskin, for there is night in a year when plague descends, and it does not pass an uncovered vessel or an untied waterskin, but some of that plague descends into it. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said this during a time when people often left food and drink uncovered. The advice came to prevent contamination from outside elements like insects or dust, which were common in the environment of 7th-century Arabia. It also served as a precautionary measure to protect food from supernatural harms (such as the influence of jinn or Satan), aligning with the belief that Satan may cause harm by bringing impurities."<sup>18</sup>

This hadith, as recorded in Sahih Muslim under the narration of Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA), emphasizes the importance of hygiene and precautionary measures in food safety. Scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim have elaborated on its significance, interpreting it not only as a preventive measure against spiritual harm but also as a guideline for public health. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in Fath al-Bari, explains that such narrations demonstrate the Prophet's foresight regarding disease transmission and the necessity of safeguarding sustenance from contamination. Similarly, al-Turtushi, in Siraj al-Muluk, discusses the wisdom behind such prophetic guidance, highlighting how it aligns with the broader principles of preservation of life (hifz al-nafs) and cleanliness, which are key objectives of Islamic law.<sup>19</sup>

### The View of Scholars

As per Nawawi scholar the hadith above the Prophet ﷺ stated, "There is a night during the year when an epidemic descends." In another version of the narration, it is reported as a day rather than a night. Al-Layth noted that non-Arabs among them take precautions during the first month of Kanun. Linguistic variations exist regarding the word for "pestilence," with both extended and shortened forms being reported by scholars such as al-Jawhari, though the extended form is more widely used. The plural of both forms is "awbiyah." Pestilence refers to a widespread disease often resulting in death. The phrase "they fear that" indicates both anticipation and concern for its occurrence. The term "Kanun" is permissible in Arabic as it refers to a well-known month. The

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Masrur, Mohd Shafiq Sahimi, Abdul Karim, Shakila binti Ahmad. 2024. *Asbab Al-Wurud as an Approach to Understanding the Purpose of Hadith (Maqasid Al-Sunnah) in a Wasatiyyah and Balanced Way that is Practiced in Contemporary Society*. RGSA –Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental ISSN: 1981-982X. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n9-083>.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Nawawi, Yahya ibn Sharaf. "*Al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj*", Kitab Al-Ta'un (Book of Plague), Chapter discussing the annual descent of epidemics, Volume 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1959).



differing narrations regarding whether it is a night or a day are not contradictory, as both are considered authentic. Imam Nawawi's Commentary on Sahih Muslim explains the practical and spiritual dimensions of prophetic guidance. Imam Nawawi interprets the hadith to stress the importance of cleanliness and precaution in food storage and mentions the wisdom behind such directives.<sup>20</sup>

The Hadith about covering vessels and containers serves as a preventive measure for avoiding contamination and impurity. Imam Nawawi explains that the prevention of harm is one of the key reasons behind this practice. By covering containers, one not only prevents physical impurities from entering the food or drink but also helps keep the food fresh. This hadith, as recorded in Sahih Muslim under the narration of Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA), emphasizes the importance of hygiene and precautionary measures in food safety. Scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi in *Sharh Sahih Muslim* have elaborated on its significance, interpreting it not only as a preventive measure against spiritual harm but also as a guideline for public health.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, al-Turtushi, in *Siraj al-Muluk*, discusses the wisdom behind such prophetic guidance, highlighting how it aligns with the broader principles of preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and cleanliness, which are key objectives of Islamic law.<sup>22</sup>

In analyzing the prophetic tradition on vessel coverage, two prominent Islamic scholars present distinct but complementary interpretations. According to Ibn al-Qayyim, this directive serves as an instructional tool for developing consistent mindful practices, asserting that even minimal compliance fosters beneficial habits. Ibn Qayyim's interpretation of these practices highlights the holistic approach in Islam, where physical hygiene and spiritual purity are interconnected. Covering food containers is a way to protect both the body and the soul from harm. Also emphasizes the preventive nature of these actions, teaching that covering food containers is part of a broader Islamic ethic of avoiding harm, which extends to both physical and spiritual realms.<sup>23</sup>

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in *Fath al-Bari*, explains that such narrations demonstrate the Prophet's foresight regarding disease transmission and the necessity of safeguarding sustenance from contamination. In his renowned commentary *Fath al-Bari* on Sahih al-Bukhari, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani examines the hadith concerning the covering of vessels. elaborates on the importance of covering food containers. He emphasizes that the advice of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not only to protect food from physical impurities like dust and insects but also to safeguard it from any possible spiritual harm, such as the influence of jinn or shayatin (devils). Ibn Hajar states that the Prophet's advice reflects both practical wisdom and spiritual awareness. Covering food containers was viewed as a method of maintaining purity, which is central to Islamic practices. This is particularly important when considering the general Islamic concept of cleanliness, as cleanliness is half of faith (Iman). Ibn Hajar also links this practice to the broader Islamic principle of preventing harm and ensuring health. He highlights that this practice holds both practical and

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Nawawi, Yahya ibn Sharaf. "*Al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj*", Kitab Al-Ta'un (Book of Plague), Chapter discussing the annual descent of epidemics, Volume 14.

<sup>21</sup> Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, ed. Khalil Ma'mun Shiha (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1998), 14:185.

<sup>22</sup> Abu Bakr al-Turtushi, *Siraj al-Muluk* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1994), 1:176.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zaadul Ma'ad Fi Hadyi khairil 'ibad*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Arna'ut, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1423 AH/2002 CE), 4:213-214.

spiritual significance, serving to safeguard the contents from physical contamination while also reflecting adherence to the Prophet's instructions for seeking divine protection from harm.<sup>24</sup>

### Relevance in Modern Food Safety Principles

The Sunnah of covering food, as taught by prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), aligns closely with modern food safety principles. This practice emphasizes hygiene, protection from contamination, and overall health preservation. The Hadith indicates that containers of raw material and finished products in a food handling setting should be kept covered. In addition, the packaging of raw material and final product should have a proper design to protect products from contamination from air, pests, and a wide range of other hazards. These all constitute valuable advice to prevent cross-contamination in a food handling setting.<sup>25</sup>

Health experts and scientists have agreed that covering food and drink containers is one of the efforts to maintain health and a simple way to prevent diseases. Food or drinks stored in tightly closed and organized containers are less likely to be exposed to disease-causing germs. For centuries, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has provided many guidelines related to preventive measures in disease prevention. This has been practiced long before scientist discovered microorganisms that cause diseases with their various types. The practice of sunnah covering food will bring many benefits to humanity.<sup>26</sup>

One of modern food safety principle related with covering food are good food packaging and storage. Food packaging provides many advantages such as physical protection, barrier protection and it also allows a better food preservation that will increase the shelf life of the product. Food storage conditions are key parameters in food quality and safety. Proper storage extends the shelf life of food, which depends on the food type, packaging and storage conditions, particularly temperature and humidity. Organoleptic changes should not occur during food storage and therefore packaging materials used for long term storage should exhibit very good barrier properties.<sup>27</sup> Proper food storage is a key aspect of modern food safety to prevent spoilage, contamination, and the spread of harmful bacteria. Islam offers guidelines that reflect the importance of proper food storage. This Hadith emphasizes the need to protect food from contamination and spoilage, which aligns with modern food safety practices like refrigerating cooked food promptly and storing it in clean, covered containers.

This hadith emphasizes the importance of cleanliness and precaution in protecting food and water from contamination. In the absence of proper coverings, harmful substances or pathogens could contaminate the consumables. The recommendation to cover food and drink containers is to preserve their contents and ensure that these containers are not contaminated by harmful agents, especially biological contamination from the interference of pests. This directive refers to the prevention of contamination in food, which is central to the concept of halal and tayyib

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<sup>24</sup> Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, ed. Muhammad Fu‘ad Abdul Baqi (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah, 1959), 10:89.

<sup>25</sup> Raheem SFU, Demirci MN. *Assuring Tayyib from a food safety perspective in Halal food sector: a conceptual framework*. MOJ Food Process Technol. 2018;6(2):170–179. DOI: 10.15406/mojfpt.2018.06.00161.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Hasan bin Ahmad bin Hasan Al Fakki, 2008. *Provisions Of Medicines In Islamic Law* (page 48-55). Maktabah Darul Minh.

<sup>27</sup> Sahil Kamboj, Neeraj Gupta, Julie D Bandral, Garima Gandotra and Nadira Anjum. 2020. Food safety and hygiene: A review. *International Journal of Chemical Studies* · March 2020 8(2): 358-368. DOI: 10.22271/chemi.2020.v8.i2f.8794



control. Maintaining Food Quality: Covered food is better protected from moisture loss, oxidation, and spoilage, which helps maintain its taste, texture, and nutritional value. Therefore, neglecting this practice is highly risky and can lead to harm to humans.<sup>28</sup>

Covered food is less likely to be exposed to harmful microorganisms from other sources, such as raw meat or unclean surfaces, thereby preventing cross-contamination. Biological contamination occurs when foods are contaminated by substances or materials produced by living creatures, including rodents, humans, microorganisms, or pests. Common biological contaminations include bacterial contamination, fungal contamination, microbial metabolites, parasite contamination, and viral contamination, which can be transferred through fecal matter, blood, pest droppings, and saliva and may also contaminate foods before harvest, during storage, and even during processing. Hermetically sealed containers with excellent air and water barriers are good measures to drastically reduce the possibilities of physical, biological, and chemical contamination under storage/shelf. Historically, before the advancement of refrigeration and food storage techniques, such guidance was particularly valuable to safeguard health. Modern science affirms the wisdom in this advice. Uncovered food and water are prone to contamination by insects, dust, bacteria, or other harmful agents. Ensuring proper coverings minimizes these risks significantly.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mohd Farhan Md Ariffin, Mohd Izzat Abd Shukur, Syed Mohd Jeffri, Syed Jaafar, 2019, *Hadith Anjuran Menutup Bekas Makanan dan Minuman Sebagai Instrumen Pematuhan Halalan Tayyiban*, e-Prosiding Kolokium Penyelidikan Siswazah Kebangsaan, Hal 169, 14 November 2019, Institut Pengajian Siswazah Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka.

<sup>29</sup> Awuchi, C. G. (2023). HACCP, quality, and food safety management in food and agricultural systems. *Cogent Food & Agriculture*, 9(1) <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2023.2176280>.

## Conclusion

The practice of covering food has a resilient foundation in Islamic teaching and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as reflected in authentic Hadith from Sahih Muslim and Musnad Ahmad. It is not only to maintain cleanliness and prevent contamination but also as a form of gratitude for Allah's blessings. The recommendation to cover food and drink containers is a directive related to the prevention of contamination in food, which is a core aspect of the concept of halal tayyib as outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith.

In conclusion, the Sunnah of covering food is a time-honored practice that not only aligns with but also strengthens contemporary food safety standards, underscoring its pertinence in promoting health, hygiene, and well-being. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) directed his followers to cover their food and drink containers to prevent harmful substances. This Hadith aligns with modern food safety practices in ensuring that food is fresh and properly stored to prevent spoilage, which can lead to foodborne illnesses. The Hadiths related to food cover a wide range of practices that directly align with modern food safety principles, from cleanliness and hygiene to proper food storage and handling.

The Prophet's guidance on food safety remains highly relevant and a timeless practice that complements modern food safety standards. This underscores Islam's proactive stance on public health and disease prevention, thereby reinforcing the relevance of the referenced Hadith to contemporary food safety discourse. Adherence to this Sunnah can contribute to enhancing awareness regarding the significance of maintaining food safety and health in everyday life.

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