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Wisdom in The Suggestion of Dates Consumption According to Hadith and its Relations to Magnesium

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Abstract

Date is one of the fruits mentioned in the Quran. Dates are also mentioned in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH in relation to its health benefits and advantages. This paper is meant to discover the wisdom behind the suggestions of consuming dates according to a hadith and how it is connected to a very vital mineral that is magnesium. The repetition of the expression in the hadith that is "*A house that does not have dates is a house whose occupants are always hungry*" two or three times by the Prophet PBUH shows that dates have a notable significance that should be studied. This study is a qualitative study by using the method of content analysis with reference to books of tafsir, academic writings and relatable nutrition books. The magnesium has been the subject of study because according to science, it is one of the major minerals contains in dates, that affects the absorption of other substances by the human body. The results of the study found that the mineral content of magnesium in dates can help complete a balanced nutrition in the diet and it is especially vital for human growth. Studies have also found that dates are rich in nutrients needed by the human body.

Keywords: Dates, Hadith, Magnesium.

Introduction

Al-Quran and hadith are the main sources in Islam to guide a Muslim's life to be in line with the demands prescribed by Allah SWT. A Muslim must take these two main sources as a reference in various aspects of life not only in terms of aqeedah, syariat and akhlaq but also as the main source of reference for various other sciences, including science. The second source is hadith, which means what is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in terms of words, deeds, pledges and also nature (Ehsan, 2003). Based on the meaning of this hadith, we can understand that whatever comes from Rasulullah PBUH is the best example to be followed and exemplified by Muslims.

Among the important things found in the hadith of the Prophet PBUH is the advice on having nutritious dietary consumption. Good food is very important to ensure the health of a

human being to help with their daily activities. Many hadiths of the Prophet PBUH advised Muslims to choose good food. Among hadiths from the Prophet PBUH, he suggested for dates consumption for daily intakes. Dates come from date palm tree from Phoenix species. The scientific name for dates is *phoenix dactylifera*. The word phoenix comes from the Phoenician word meaning palm tree. The word *dactylifera* is derived from the Greek word *daktulos* which means radius that describes the shape of the fruit. In Arabic, the date tree is referred to as *nakhl*, while its ripe fruit is called tamar (Tamizi, 2015). Dates are a type of palm plant whose fruit is edible and has a sweet taste. The height of the palm tree is about 15-25 meters, while the leaves are finely shaped 3 to 5 meters long. The palm tree is one of the long-lived trees (Fahmi, 2018).

Every suggestion stated in the hadith of the Prophet PBUH should be studied so that his wisdoms can be disclosed and thus help to provide understanding to Muslims about the importance of making him a role model and example in achieving a well-balanced life.

Research Objectives

This paper aims for two main objectives, namely

- To analyze the wisdom behind the recommendation of dates consumption based on a hadith of the Prophet PBUH and its relationship with a type of mineral that is very much needed by the human body, namely magnesium.
- To identify the benefits of magnesium consumption through dates intake.

The chosen hadith related to these objectives is the hadith narrated from Saidatina Aisyah r.a. which means:

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is reported to have said: *"A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry. A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry"*. The Prophet repeated it two or three times.

(Narrated by Muslim, Sahih Muslim: No. 5308)

Research Methodology

This paper is a qualitative study based on study of texts. The author collected data related to research hadith and scientific facts by using the library method by referring to the interpretation of the Qur'an, hadith books and related scientific books. While the results of research published in scientific journals or papers are the main source of reference on dates from a scientific perspective. The data obtained are then analyzed descriptively using deductive methods. This method helps the author to analyze statements that are general in nature, to produce statements that are specific in nature.

Dates in the Al Quran and Hadith

Date is one of the fruits mentioned in the Qur'an and hadith. Everything that is stated in the Qur'an and hadith certainly has a divine message specifically for the benefits of mankind.

1. Dates in Al Quran

Allah SWT had mentioned terms related to the date palm and its fruit in several verses in the Qur'an. This shows how special these dates are. Dates in the Qur'an are mentioned in several terms, namely *An-Nakhl*, *An-Nakhil*, *an-Nakhlah*, *Nakhlān* and *Rutab*. Of the 4 terms, the word *rutab* alone refers to the tamar fruit which is mentioned in Surah Maryam verse 25.

While other expressions that refer to the date palm are stated in the book *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfaz al-Quran* mentioned about 20 verses of the Qur'an in 16 surahs as follow (Baqi & Fuad, 1996):

1. An-Nakhl / النخل

- a. Surah Al-An'am (6) verse 99 & 141.
- b. Surah Al-Kahfi (18) verse 32.
- c. Surah Taha (20) verse 71.
- d. Surah Asy-Syu'ara' (26) verse 148.
- e. Surah Qaf (50) verse 10.
- f. Surah Al-Qamar (54) verse 20.
- g. Surah Ar-Rahman (55) verse 11 & 68.
- h. Surah Al-Haaqqah (69) verse 7.

2. An-Nakhil / النخيل

- a. Surah Al-Baqarah (2) verse 266.
- b. Surah Ar-Ra'd (13) verse 4.
- b. Surah An-Nahl (16) verse 11 & 67.
- c. Surah Al-Isra' (17) verse 91.
- d. Surah Al-Mu'minun (23) verse 19.
- e. Surah Yasin (36) verse 34.

3. An-Nakhlah / النخلة

- a. Surah Maryam (19) verse 23 & 25.

4. Nakhlan / النخلا

- a. Surah 'Abasa (80) verse 29.

2. Dates in al-Sunnah

Dates are often mentioned in the hadiths of the Prophet PBUH as a guide for us to practise healthy eating habit. Based on the study by Mohd Tamizi (2015), the number of hadiths that mention about the dates found in the book of hadith sunan sittah is five hundred and sixty (560). The details are as in the following table:

Table 1

Hadith about Dates in Sunan Sittah

No.	Sunan Sittah Hadith	Number
1.	Sahih Bukhari	172
2.	Sahih Muslim	136
3.	Jami' al-Sahih al-Tirmidhi	58
4.	Sunan Nasa'ie	45
5.	Sunan Ibnu Majah	86
6.	Sunan Abu Dawud	63
	Total	560

Next, the hadiths related to the use of dates in health aspects can be categorized into 11 topics as in the following table (Tamizi, 2015):

Table 2

Analysis of Hadiths about Dates according to Topics

No.	Topic	Number of Hadith
1.	Food for the Prophet and His Family	3
2.	Dates During Fasting and 'Idul Fitri	3
3.	Beverages made from Dates	4
4.	Benefits of Ajwah Dates	2
5.	Food Combination of The Prophet	5
6.	Blessings from Dates	2
7.	The Importance of Dates	1
8.	Dates and Disease Prevention	1
9.	The Importance of Dinner/ Eating at Night	1
10.	Dates for Tahnik Ceremony for Newborn Babies	1
11.	Eating Manners	2
Total		25

In this paper, the authors select hadith from the topic of the importance of dates as the main focus of the study. The hadith is quoted from the book of Sahih Muslim which means:

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is reported to have said: *“A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry. A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry”*. The Prophet repeated it two or three times.

(Narrated by Muslim, Sahih Muslim: No. 5308)

Dates According to Science

Date is a very beneficial fruit to humans. Various studies have been conducted to study the nutritional values of dates. Among the results of the study found on dates is that dates contain several important properties such as antiviral, antifungal, antioxidant, antihyperlipidemic and hepatoprotection (Al-Farsi & Lee, 2008). Tamizi (2015) stated in her study on the medical benefits of dates as an antioxidant agent, antitumor agent, neuroprotective agent, treating male fertility, a cholesterol regulator, antiatherogenic agent, antidiabetic and antilipemic agent, as well as good for pregnant women and mothers who just give birth.

Dates are known as antioxidant agents because they contain phenols, flavonoids, anthocyanins and even selenoproteins (Baliga et al., 2011). According to researchers from the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, dried dates contain antioxidants in the highest form of polyphenols among other dried fruits. A study reported that the prevalence of cancer and heart disease among the Bedouin population in Saudi Arabia turned out to be the lowest compared to other Arabs because the Bedouins is the largest number of date eaters compared to the Arab population in other areas (Ide, n.d).

Dates contain 50% sugar which is very nutritious. This is because the sugar contained in dates contains fructose and glucose which are high in calories and can be digested easily and quickly without going through the digestive process like other type of sugar (Yahya, 2004; Abidin, 2014). It serves to soothe tired nerves and ensure psychological protection (Yahya, 2004). On the other hand, according to Ahmad (2012), fructose can turn into glucose quickly and continue to be absorbed directly from the digestive system, so that the body's energy needs can be met especially for body cells that are highly dependent on glucose such as brain cells, nerve cells, red blood cells and bone marrow cells.

Yahya (2004) states other benefits of dates, among them is that dates can reduce blood pressure. Dates are also a lighter food from the fruit category and are easily digested by the body compared to meat even though the protein content in meat is high. Dates also benefit pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers because they play a role in promoting healthy fetal growth in the womb, preventing the mother from becoming weak and dates also helps to multiply and add nutrients to breast milk. Apart from that, dates also serve to strengthen the heart and circulatory system for pregnant women (Abidin, 2014). Raw dates or *balah ruthab* specifically contain the hormone pitosine which is very important to help strengthening the blood vessels in the mother's uterus and preventing bleeding (Ahmad, 2012). Assegaf (2009) also mentions the benefits of dates in protecting blood vessels and heart.

Dates are also very nutritious for the brain (Yahya, 2004). Dates provide physical benefits to the brain through a process called neurological or neural protection. This process can protect the nervous system from free radicals that occur as a result of cell metabolism or from external sources (Steinbrenner & Sies, 2009).

There are other benefits contained in dates such as protein, vitamins A, B1 and B2. Protein in dates plays an important role in protecting the body from infection and diseases as well as helping to rebuild the body's cells and balance the fluid in the body (Yahya, 2004). The content of vitamin A in dates can increase the strength of vision as well as body, bones and teeth. While vitamin B1 helps the nervous system to function healthily, helps the process of conversion of carbohydrates to energy, regulates appetite and digestion and enables the process of protein and fat metabolism. Vitamin B2 helps burn protein, carbohydrates and fats needed to supply energy and renew cells (Yahya, 2004).

In addition, dates contain minerals that are essential for the human body. Among the minerals found in dates are potassium (potassium), boron, calcium, cobalt, iron magnesium, phosphorus, sodium (sodium), zinc and fluorine (Abidin, 2014). Yahya (2004) also mentions among the important minerals in dates are such as potassium, sodium, calcium, iron, manganese and copper. Potassium and sodium if acted together can control the heartbeat. Potassium supplies enough alkali for body fluids, stimulates the kidneys to remove toxic waste products, helps reduce high blood pressure and promotes the formation of healthy skin (Yahya, 2004).

Abidin (2014) also mentioned dates contain 15 types of salts and minerals, rich in vitamins, have high carbohydrate levels between 44 to 88%, fiber levels between 6.4 to 11.5%, protein levels between 2.3 to 5.6%, fat levels between 0.2 to 0.5% and oil content between 0.2 to 0.5%. According to him, the protein found in dates is made up of 23 types of amino acids some of which are not found in other popular fruits such as oranges, apples and bananas. The special thing about dates is that they provide a source of calories to the human body without going through the process of further enzyme breakdown like other complex carbohydrate sources (Hashman, 2011). Dates also contain a type of fluorine mineral that can help improve dental health. It also contains selenium which is needed by the body's immune system and is able to prevent cancer (Abidin, 2014). Potassium content is found in high amounts in dates which are indispensable for the heart, blood vessels, muscles and digestive tract (Hashman, 2011). These minerals are very important in the formation of enzymes used in the body's main processes, contractions and muscle contractions as well as stabilizing alkaline acids in the body (Ahmad, 2012).

Among the important contents found in dates are phosphorus and magnesium. Phosphorus functions to compact bones (Assegaf, 2009). It is also important in supplying

nutrients to the skull and participating in the formation of phosphate compounds that channel energy and direct its use to all body cells (Ahmad, 2012). Magnesium, on the other hand, has the role of strengthening bones so that they are not easily broken. Magnesium is even needed in the process of bone reconstruction (Assegaf, 2009).

In addition to the mineral content, the fiber content in dates also provides benefits to the human body. Hashman (2009) states that the skin layer of dates contains fiber that is beneficial to the digestive system, prevents constipation and lowers the risk of colorectal disorders. Fiber or fiber substances are the most important factors in activating bowel movements and their elasticity. In other words, it plays a role in cleansing the stomach naturally and preventing constipation, digestive disorders and other disorders (Ahmad, 2012).

Indeed, date is a type of fruit that contains too many nutrients that a study from al-Shahib, W and Marshall, RJ entitled *The Fruit of The Date Palm: Its Possible Use as The Best Food for The Future*, states that dates can be an ideal food in the future (Abidin, 2014). Based on the studies that have been presented, it is clear that there are many benefits contained in dates for the nutritional needs of the human body.

Wisdom Behind The Recommendations to Eat Dates According to Hadith and Its Relation to Magnesium

This paper aims to reveal the wisdom of eating dates according to hadith and its relationship with magnesium. Based on research on previous writings, there is a hadith that attracts the author's attention regarding magnesium, namely the hadith narrated by Saidatina Aisyah r.a which mentions the importance of dates to human beings as follows:

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is reported to have said: *"A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry. A house in which there are no dates, its people will go hungry"*. The Prophet repeated it two or three times.

(Narrated by Muslim, Sahih Muslim: No. 5308)

The expression of the hadith which reads *'The house in which there are no dates, then the occupants will be hungry'* became the author's reason to research the wisdom behind it based on research on the mineral content of dates. This is because the word that is spoken repeatedly two to three times especially by Prophet Muhammad PBUH, so it certainly emphasizes the importance of dates to human beings. In the book of commentary for Sahih Muslim, the hadith is only commented in general that dates have benefits and should be kept for family members, and encouraged even on individuals to do so.

The importance of dates can be seen based on the nutritional content as stated according to Genske & Weers in Abidin (2014) on 1 kilogram of dates. The nutrition schedule of dates is as follows:

Table 3

Nutrition content in 1 kilogram of Dates

No.	Item	Amount
1.	Water	220 gm
2.	Sugar	730 gm is equal to 2740 calories
3.	Protein	22 gm
4.	Fat	2 gm
5.	Metal substance	19 gm
6.	Potassium	6480 mg
7.	Phosphorus	630 mg
8.	Calcium	590 mg
9.	Magnesium	580 mg
10.	Iron	30 mg
11.	Natrium	10 mg
12.	Vitamin A	500 unit
13.	Vitamin B1	0.9 mg
14.	Vitamin B2	1 mg
15.	Vitamin B7	22 mg
16.	Silicon, chlorine and sulfur	Medium intake

Based on Table 3, there are many nutrients in dates which are very beneficial for human health. What is more interesting is that the mineral salt content from magnesium sources is found to be high in dates. According to Tamizi (2015) mineral salts are needed in certain quantities to maintain the health of the body in particular to smooth the physiological processes of the body. Mineral salts can be categorized into two types according to the required quantity. Mineral salts needed in large quantities are called macromineral. Macromineral examples are calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, chlorine and magnesium. While the mineral salts needed in very small quantities are called micromineral for example iron, copper, cobalt, zinc, manganese, iodine and fluorine. But mineral salts will be toxic if taken in excess.

One of the most important and essential mineral salts needed by the human body contained in dates is magnesium. Magnesium is responsible for activating more than 300 enzymes in the human body (Faryadi, 2012; Tamizi, 2015; Devita & Amran, 2017). Most of these enzymes are involved in the process of energy metabolism. Magnesium plays a role in converting food into energy and helping the human body to function properly. People with low magnesium levels in their body need more oxygen and energy. Therefore, they will be easily tired. The mineral magnesium is also very important in the biochemical and physiological processes of the human body that directly affect lung functions, asthma, joint pain, immunity and so on.

Magnesium also works to balance calcium and ensure a smooth blood pressure/ improve blood circulation/ ensure a constant blood flow, providing nourishment to the bones, heart, stroke, muscular system, dental health, diabetes, emotions, stress, depression, nervousness and anxiety. People with magnesium deficiency will always be tired, become irritable, nervous, have muscle cramps and difficulty to concentrate. Therefore, magnesium deficiency causes many organs in the body to not function properly and can easily get chronic diseases such as chronic joint disease, heart attack, asthma, anxiety, depression, fatigue, diabetes and migraine (Faryadi, 2012).

Among the other benefits of magnesium for the human body is that it can maintain normal muscle function and help the nervous system to function smoothly. Apart from that, magnesium is a very crucial component for building healthy and strong bones, processing energy, helping with muscle contraction and bone mineralization. This deficiency of this mineral can cause muscle and nerve function to become impaired, especially in patients with chronic joints (Faryadi, 2012; Tamizi, 2015).

Conclusion

The authors had tried to disclose the wisdom behind the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH repetitions of the hadith narrated by Muslim 'A house in which there are no dates, then the occupants will be hungry' in which he repeated for two or three times. As a result of research on scientific studies on dates, the author concludes that the secret behind the repetition of the hadith has a relationship and relevance with one major mineral found in dates that is magnesium. The mineral magnesium is found to provide many benefits to the human body, especially in activating more than 300 enzymes in the human body. Magnesium is also very important for human biochemical and physiological processes. This mineral is vital to ensure that the main system in the human body which is the nervous system can run smoothly. This can ensure that the human body is protected from getting various chronic diseases and provide optimal health to human beings.

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