

The fate of left-over food

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We live in a country where poor people, representing majority class, do not have access even to clean drinking water. Yet, the number of people is not less in the same country that throws left-over food in waste rather than giving it to hungry and needy. They eat with the aim of as much as they can and after eating, when some food left, they throw it to dustbin. Haven't we all witnessed small kids ransacking the piles of garbage in search of food hurriedly before the vehicles of MCL arrive on the scene. Or go to Data Darbar, where people stand in long queues to get their share for *dal chawal*.

In our houses, our women family members collecting the left over-food before washing the crockery and they just gathered all this food at one place and packed it to one shopping bag and gave it to Massi to throw in to the MCL bin which is always full of garbage.

Many of them are seen fighting over the distribution of food. It reflects the basic requirement of food being unfulfilled for the less fortunate sects of our society. But are we taking proper measures to meet the food demand of these sects?

There are hardly one or two noticeable efforts in this regard. It is disheartening to admit that we, being a Muslim nation, do not make serious attempts to make use of the leftover for the deserving people. Islam strongly preaches that we shall regard food as a great blessing. A man himself is unable to grow a single grain. Yet, he wastes it many a times.

People, particularly the ladies of the house should be careful to utilize the unnecessary portions

of food, rather than throwing leftover food in the bins, inside and outside home. Moreover, beggars are often turned away who ask for single bread in the name of God. But the same people prepare enough dishes when they arrange a *milad* or *koonday*. Practice is more important of sharing and saving food than showing off and impressing people in such matters. Whenever a party or a wedding is arranged in our city,

the host be seen finicky about the arrangements, but least concerned about the leftover food. People have developed such insensitivity thanks to easy money flow by wrong means that leave heaps of food in their plates after sampling few items of their choice. And the food is of no use to anyone, thus it is doomed for big garbage bags. Also, the bearers on duty for such ceremonious gatherings do not bother and just throw large

bags of food in the bins, may be because they are concerned with their assigned duty. Even in restaurants, the chefs are seen complaining of the wastage of food. They, however, mainly get upset over the fact that food prepared with delicacy goes wasted.

The general attitude of people indicates indifference towards this issue, which has compounded the problem. Individual and collective efforts

are required to make use of the left over food for beggars, and people without shelter who go from door to door and asking for food. If this unwanted food collected in a defined manner and given to the needy people then it is a great service to humanity.

Teachers in school can also play a significant role in this regard. Students must be engaged in class activities of

bringing food from home. Then they shall pay a visit to some orphanage and present their contribution.

We should not forget places like Ethiopia and Afghanistan where children fight over single bread and hundreds starve to death. We must remember to thank God in gratitude for keeping us in a position where we are capable of feeding others.

One more reason of it is the lack of awareness in the people. People are used to throw the packet of garbage from near the bin and mostly it take place at out side the bin. Their sweepers take this garbage and place it to any plot, which is already a mixture of different types of garbage.

In Europe various churches arrange mobile kitchens on weekends where the most needy people gather to eat from the food collected by the housewives, members of the church.

In foreign countries, civic agencies visit houses to collect the left over food. Along with this media also plays a major role. Agencies assigned for social welfare advertise and newspapers promote their noble cause.

We shall get inspiration from the Holy Prophet (SAW) who was once sat to have his supper but the food spilled on the earthen floor. He, the most loved man by God on earth, collected the same food with his own hand and resumed his dinner. Where our society is in dire need to shed away the irrelevant and wrong practices, the change agents, mainly the media, educated political leaders, teachers and parents must come forward and set example by making use of the unwanted portions of food.

