

Breaking the Fast and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer

Some Muslims have exaggerated about breaking their fast to the point that they miss the Maghrib prayer (after eating dates comes the soup and juice and so on).

What is your advice with regard to such behavior?

If the meal is put in front of a person without his own intention being to miss the congregational prayer, then he can eat and drink, even if he misses the congregational prayer, based on the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "If the meal is served and the prayer starts, begin with the meal." (Bukhari narrated it, #631.) As for putting a large portion of food out purposely to miss the congregational prayer, this is the wrong approach and incorrect behavior. The correct thing is for a Muslim to take a lot of food unsuspectedly, thereby making him miss the congregational prayer, but he still gets the bigger reward. Then what is the sunnah? The sunnah is what is reported on the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) "that he used to break the fast before he prayed with fresh dates, if there were no fresh dates then with dry dates, and if there were no dry dates, then he sipped from water." (At-Tirmidhi narrated it and others. He stated it was hasan, gharib hadith. Also Al Albanni declared it hasan in Sahih Al Jama #4995.)