

Seventeenth Rule

CONTINUED CLEANLINESS

One of the most important and attractive aspects of Islamic teachings is related to cleanliness. It means to be ritually pure at all times by performing ablution (wudhu) and ghusl whenever necessary. The major ablution (ghusl) on Friday for example, has been much stressed and cleans us from many sins and misendeavours. By keeping ourselves clean and pure, we make it difficult for Shaytan to enter our soul. Cleanliness acts like a barrier preventing one's lustful ideas from entering his or her mind.

Imam Ali (AS) encouraged people to remain clean and said,

The bath-place is a good place. Its heat reminds man of The Fire of The Wrath of Allah (SWT) and it removes the dirt of the body.

One of the traditions of The Prophet (S), which has come down in the form of an everlasting and beautiful slogan, is that, cleanliness is part of faith and faith leads a person to Paradise.

Islam is one religion that emphasizes cleanliness to its limit and considers purity as part of faith. al-Qudah (2000) in his article, Supremacy of Preventive Medicine in Islam, which appears in the book **Islamic Medicine**, says,

Ablution cleans those parts of the body that are most exposed to microbes. Microbiologists proved that on each cubic centimeter (of the exposed parts), there are around 1-5 million microbes. To remove them, continuous washing of the skin is required and this is achieved through performing ablution, which is constantly repeated during the day.

In his book on **Microbes of the Skin**, Dr. Kelgman visualized the skin with all the bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites on its surface, as the earth with its existing living creatures and their differences. Professor Vaindov proved in his study that bathing removes more than 200 million microbes from the skin. These microbes do not stop multiplying, so they must be removed continuously, in order to decrease their number, so that the body can resist them. One of the secrets of preventive medicine in Islam is that it made cleanliness an act of worship. This gives it spiritual essence and a kind of continuity that no other law can provide. The Prophet (S) legislated for us more than 17 different total ablutions (an action of washing the whole body), to be performed after sexual discharge, end of menses, end of post childbirth confinement, on feast day, and others.

The mouth contains no less than 100 kinds of bacteria that vary between 500-5000 million microbes in one millimeter of saliva. These microbes are nourished by food remnants between the teeth, and on the teeth themselves. Their growth and multiplication results in the production of several acids and secretions that affect both the smell of the mouth and the color of the teeth. If these microbes are not removed several times a day, they cause tooth decay and other gum diseases. Modern science proved that the Miswak (a branch of a tree used as a toothbrush) Muslims use following the tradition of Prophet (S), has the effect of protecting the teeth, as it removes the microbes on its fibers, and even kills some of them chemically. Therefore, it prevents accumulation of food and microbes on the teeth.

Quoting al-Sadiq (AS) in **Misbah al-Shari'ah**, Chapter 9, it is narrated,

The washing closet where one relieves oneself, the toilet, is called so because people are relieved from the weights of the filths, and they clear out their dirt and impurities. The believer learns from this that the pure of the ephemeral things of this world (i.e. food) will finally have such an (impure) end. Then, abandoning this world and turning away from it will relieve him.

He empties his soul and his heart from being engaged with it, and disdains collecting and possessing it, as he disdains the impurities, the feces and filth. He thinks, of himself, how he is honored in an instance and feels humiliated in another. He then realizes that adhering to satisfaction and fear of God gives him relief in both worlds, that comfort is in neglecting this world, in refraining from enjoying it and in removing the impurity of (wanting) the unlawful and the doubtful. Therefore, he closes the door of arrogance to himself after knowing it, runs away from sins, opens the door of modesty, remorse and shyness, strives to carry out His Commands and to refrain from the forbidden, hoping for a good return and a delightful proximity.

He imprisons himself in the prison of fear, patience and abstinence from (satisfying) the desires until he arrives, with Allah (SWT)'s custody, in the eternal abode, and tastes His Pleasure, as this is what is reliable (counted), and everything else is nothing.

Besides physical cleanliness and revolution from every visit a Muslim experiences when visiting the washing closet, Islam has laid much more emphasis on the ways to safeguard oneself. Further, it would only be complacent for any person to replace the damage done by the microbes and parasites with clean water. The many times this happens, the better – and that is why The Prophet (S) recommended being clean and in ablution at all times. Muslims males also perform Istabra after urinating – a procedure where the penile organ is squeezed to get rid of the remaining urine in the organ. Silent coughing and a push in the groin area are also recommended after urinating.

As Muslims, one cannot pray or perform acts of worship in an unclean state. Men and women have to take a shower (in a prescribed manner, as per the rulings) after sexual intercourse; women have to do the same after monthly bleeding; women also wait for ten days after giving child-birth and then take the ceremonial shower, and so forth. Washing away blood in wounds is also an obligation before prayers.

Muslims are further obliged to perform *major ablution* (ghusl) after having sexual intercourse. This individual, who is ceremonially unclean, is neither permitted to enter a mosque, unless passing through it without stopping for a single second. Furthermore, unclean individuals (Muslims or not) are not allowed to even enter or pass through the mosque of The Prophet (S) and Masjid al-Haram, The Sacred Mosque in Makkah that holds The Ka'bah. Apparently, for similar reasons, atheists and infidels are prohibited to visit these sacred mosques,

O Believers! The idol worshipers are unclean; they shall not be permitted to approach The Sacred Mosque after this year. If you fear loss of income, God will shower you with His provisions, in accordance with His will. God is Omniscient, Most Wise.

(al-Qur'an, Chapter 9, Verse 28)

al-Majlisi (1627) writes that *the whole City of Makkah is sacred and should be held in purity at all times. The whole city is a place of prayer and can be considered as a mosque.*

O you who believe! Do not violate the sanctity of The Monuments of Allah, or the sacred month, or the offering (during Hajj), nor the symbolic garlands, nor those repairing The Sacred House (The Ka'bah)....

(al-Qur'an, Chapter 5, Verse 02)

Water, is therefore one of the most pure elements in this universe and even The Prophet compared a faithful believer to water. The Qur'an also considers water as a source of Allah's Mercy.

From **The Disciplines of The Prayer** by al-Khumeini, it is stated in **Misbah al-Shari'ah** that al-Sadiq said,

When you intend purification and *wudhu* (ritual ablution), proceed to the water as you proceed to Allah's mercy, because Allah has made water the key to his proximity and supplication, and a guide to the court of His service. In addition, as Allah's mercy purifies the sins of the servants, similarly the outer filths are purified by water and by nothing else.

Allah, The Exalted, says, *And He it is Who sends the winds as good news heralding His Mercy, and We send down purifying water from the sky.*

(al-Qur'an – Chapter al-Furqan, Verse 48).

Minor ablution (wudhu) is therefore highly recommended, repeatedly, as per The Infallible (AS) - *light upon light*. In fact, the origin of the word *wudhu* means light or energy. Moreover, as we have observed before, this act has a strong ability to strengthen one's energy and information within the energy to increase productivity during worship.

Surely, Allah Loves those who turn unto Him constantly and Loves those who continually purify themselves.

(al-Qur'an – Chapter 02, Verse 222)

The Infallible have further said,

If you can always be in the state of wudhu (minor ablution), than do so for verily if The Angel of Death were to take the soul of a servant of God while the latter is in the state of wudhu, martyrdom is written for him. Wudhu upon wudhu is light upon light.

Burujardi, al-Khumeini's son-in-law narrates,

On several occasions I have seen al-Khumeini performing wudhu, and noticed that he closes the water tap between the acts of wudhu, and re-opens it (only) when it is necessary, to avoid any extra water to flow from the tap. This is while most of us do not have the smallest degree of attention toward the matter of wastage. For example, from the time we intend to perform wudhu, the tap is open until when our ablution is completed.

Whenever al-Khumeini wanted to perform wudhu, he was very careful in using less water. This vigilance was witnessed in the most minor of his movements. He always performed ghusl (the Friday major ablution) before the call of prayers at Friday noon, and his Friday ghusl was never left. Whenever the Imam performed wudhu, he would perform all the parts of it facing the direction of The Ka'bah in Makkah. Even if the basin was not in the direction of The Ka'bah, at every instance, after taking a handful of water, he closed the tap, and facing The Ka'bah, washed his face or hand. Al-Khumeini, in accordance with his self-commitment and Islamic belief, tried to practice whatever he preached.

Islam is one religion that has specific rulings on pure and impure items. The religion also has rulings on ways to purify an impure element and whether with water, earth or stones. Even though some of these rulings are now applied in the modern-day society, man has had to wait for decades until science gained crucial knowledge over the different types of dirt and cleansing agents.

Islam for example, considers urine, fecal matter, semen, as impure elements and you have to purify yourself after you get into contact with these elements. Alcohol is also forbidden. It is an impure element, and the internal and external electrical faults that occur after drinking alcohol is only now being appreciated and the West is spending a fortune to educate the young to abstain from alcohol.

Muslims are further advised to wash their hands before they prepare food and eat, and to wash their private parts with water after urinating or passing out fecal matter. Stones may be used for some cleaning after passing out fecal matter, but several different stones have to be used. Even though tissue paper may remove the dirt physically, these paper towels hardly do the job of proper cleansing. Similar is the case with a dog licking any given material, blood squirting out from one's wound, intoxicants or any other forbidden drink getting into contact with a person, and so forth – different types of cleansing methods have been prescribed.

Quoting al-Sadiq, al-Khumeini writes the following narration in his book **The Disciplines of The Prayer**,

The servant has been commanded to perform the *wudhu* (ritual ablution) to be pure when standing before The All-Powerful and supplicating, and by obeying Him, to be purged from filth and impurity, beside his removing laziness, expelling sleep and purifying the heart to stand in the Presence of The All-Powerful. Confining it (The *wudhu*) only to the face, the two hands, the head and the two feet, was because when the servant stands before The All-Powerful, the parts which are exposed are those which are ordered to be washed in the ablution - as with his face he performs the prostration, with his hands he requests, desires, dreads and supplicates, with his head he inclines to Him in his bowing down and his prostration, and with his legs he stands and sits..

When The Prophet was asked as to how one can achieve good concentration, fear of Allah and presence of heart in prayer, he replied that the person should take seriously the performance of Wudhu – the minor ablution, washing before prayer, and perform it well. Clearly, The Prophet meant a direct relationship between the wash and increased vibration in ones energy resulting in increased attention in prayer or other kinds of worship.

An advice from The Prophet (S) to Abu Dhar (AR):

O Abu Dhar! Performing wudhu during difficulties is among the things that wipe out sins, and frequent visits to the mosques, that is establishing (a pious) relationship with Allah (SWT).

Ablution is, therefore, one of the most divine and productive suggestions we have in Islam, and to perform this act for Allah (SWT) before any worship or even before any job may increase our attention and concentration drastically. Apparently, this electrical concept is not only related to Islam, but numerous mediaeval books of etiquette insist upon the washing of hands, face and teeth every morning. According to al-Qur'an,

Truly, Allah (SWT) loves those who often turn to him, and He loves those who cleanse themselves.

(al-Qur'an - Chapter 2, Verse 222)

In addition, to all the rulings we have in Islam, Allah (SWT) has only this to say: Allah (SWT) does not desire to make any impediment for you; but He desires to cleanse you, and that He may complete His blessings upon you; haply you may be grateful.

(al-Qur'an - Chapter 5, Verse 6)

The tradition is from **The Disciplines of The Prayer** by al-Khumeini,

A group of Jews came to The Messenger of Allah and asked him questions. Among their questions was why the four organs were given the *wudhu* (ablution), while they are the cleanest parts of the body?

The Messenger of Allah (SA) said,

When Satan whispered to Prophet Adam and he came near the tree and looked at it, he lost face. He stood up and walked to it - the first step taken towards leaving a better course of action as prescribed by The Almighty (although a sin was never committed as all Prophets of Allah are sinless). He took with his hand some of what was of it and ate it. Off his body flew what were on him of jewelry and apparel. He put his hand on the top of his head and wept.

Allah accepted his repentance, but made it incumbent upon him and his offspring to purify those four organs. Therefore, Allah ordered the face to be washed, because it looked at the tree. He ordered the hands to be washed with the elbows, because he took with them (the fruit of the tree). He ordered the head to be anointed (with the hand wet with water), as he put his hand on the top of his head, and He ordered the feet to be anointed because with them he walked to this act.

Islam Prefers White Clothing

al-Majlisi (1627) reports that The Prophet (S) preferred white clothing and that most of his garments were of white color. According to the *Science of Colorology*, white is the color of purity. It will purify the body on the highest levels. It is the highest charging field to bring peace and comfort at the highest level. Apparently, Islam has much emphasized white clothing, in particular when praying to Allah (SWT). For centuries, Muslims have been wearing white clothes during prayer and employed white shrouds for their dead, and now we have the advantage of knowing its merits.

Color is light and light is energy, so color is energy. Recent research into the effect of color on people has shown that people who are blind from birth can learn to differentiate colors through their fingertips by noticing the color's rate of vibration. Surprisingly why most fast food companies use red and orange as their colors. Red and orange both stimulate the appetite, which makes you feel hungrier, which means you buy more.

Today, most recent discoveries confirm the validity of using colors for healing and harmonizing the balance of body and mind. Innumerable experiments and tests have scientifically proven the influence of color on the human psyche. The color white in many cultures equals purity and it is the color of integrity. It is made up of all colors and therefore is complete. It is the highest charging field to bring peace and comfort at the maximal level. Therefore, the recommended white clothing is supposed to increase our attention and concentration in prayer, as we become more productive and energetic.

The Prophet (S) was correct when he said,

White is the best and purest of all colors, and should be worn when praying.

In Energy Field Soma,

The White pomander has the distinctive quality of containing the entire rainbow and may be used for protecting the complete electrical field, (chakras or energy centers) and bringing them into balance. It has cleansing and protecting essences.
(Bonkosky, 1999)

Medical doctors and nurses have been wearing white clothing for centuries, and besides cleanliness, the specific color clothing does have a protective effect and shields away the energy released by the sick people.

There are five recommendations about the head, and five others related to the body. The first five concerning the head are, washing the mouth, trimming the mustache, combing the hair, and drawing up water through the mouth and nostrils. The second five concerning the body are; circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, shaving off the hair in the armpits, clipping the nails, and cleansing the private parts.
(al-Khisaal, by Sheikh Saduq (AR), Page 125)

Continued cleanliness is considered one of the basic rules for attaining *spiritual perfection* (Taba Tabai, 1991). Islam recommends brushing teeth before performance of rituals, and especially at the time we perform wudhu and before prayer. As The Prophet (S) has advised,

If I were not hard upon my followers, I would enjoin them to brush their teeth before every prayer.
(Bihar al-Anwar; volume 76, page 126. al-Majlisi, 1627 (AR))

The Prophet (S), in particular, brushed his teeth before taking his ablution for prayer, upon waking up for his supererogatory night prayer, and before the dawn prayer. Apparently, The Prophet (S) also brushed his teeth before retiring and on his deathbed (al-Akili, 1993).