

## MYSTERIES OF CLEANLINESS

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From Revival of Religious Learnings by Imam Gazzali  
(r.a.) IHYA ULUM-ID-DIN

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Allah say in Holy Quran (9:109)

".....therein, where there are men who love to purify themselves. Allah Loves the pure..."

This verse was revelead Allah praising the people of Quba who were accustomed to use both stones and water after calls of nature.

"...Allah would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you, that you may give thanks purifiers....." (5:7)

The Holy Prophet said:

Religion is founded on cleanliness.

Cleanliness is the key to prayer.

Cleanliness is one half of belief.

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Those who possess insight understand by these sayings that the most important thing is the purification of the heart. If the tradition 'cleanliness is one half of faith' is limited only to the external cleanliness of physical organs by water and not also to the purification of the heart which may entertain evil designs and thoughts, its meaning then will be distant and it is impossible.

## PURITY HAS GOT FOUR STAGES

1. The first stage is the purification of the external organs from excrements and filth.
2. The second stage is the purification of the bodily organs from sins and faults
3. The third stage is the purification of the heart from evil traits and evil vices.
4. The fourth stage is the purification of the inner self from everything except God . This is the stage of the Prophets and the saints.

Every item of cleanliness is half of action, because the object of the actions is the glorification and greatness of God. In reality God's knowledge is not attained unless the heart is purified of all things other than God. For this reason,

Allah says in Holy Quran (6:92)

And they measure not the power of Allah its true measure when they say: Allah Has nothing revealed to a human being. Say : Who revealed the Book which Moses brought, a light and guidance for mankind, which you have put on

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parchments (scroll) which you show, but you hide much (thereof), and by which you were taught that which you knew not yourselves nor (did) your fathers (know it)? Say: Allah. Then leave them to their play of caviling.

There can be no two things in mind at the same time and God also has not created two minds in the same man. The object of the actions is to adorn the mind with praiseworthy qualities and religious firm faith. It is well known that the mind will not be adorned with those qualities till the blameworthy evils and false faith reign in it.

To purify the mind from these evils comprises half of its actions and the first half is prerequisite for the second. In this sense, purity is said to be half of belief. So to purify the bodily limbs from the prohibited things is the first half and to strengthen it with religious acts is its second half. These are the stages of belief and every stage has got its rank. Nobody will attain a higher stage unless he first goes through the lower one. He can attain real purity of heart till he purifies it from the blameworthy vices and adorn it with the praiseworthy qualities. He can't purify the heart till he purifies his organs from prohibited things and makes it firm with religious acts. The more honorable is the object, the more difficult is the attainment of that object. The longer is the road that leads to it, the greater are the obstacles. Don't think that this can be attained with ease and without efforts. He who is blind to these stages of purity will not understand the above mentioned four stages. He will understand the lowest stage of cleanliness. It is like the outer husk of a crop or like skull in relation to brain.

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He understands that the outer cleanliness is the desired object and makes exaggeration in it and spends much time and wealth in abstersion (Istinja), in cleanliness of cloth, body and in the use of water and thinks that the noble purity comprises these outward and external cleanliness. The early Muslims concentrated their entire attention and energies on the purification of their hearts and were lenient in their outward cleanliness. Even Hazrat Omar, being placed in a high position, made ablution with the water from a jar which belonged to a Christian woman. The companions were accustomed not to wash their hands after eating from the remains of fat and food but to wipe them out against the arches of their feet and regarded the use of soap as innovation. They used to say pray kneeling and prostrating directly on the ground in the mosque and walk barefooted on the roads. They used to use pebbles after calls of nature.

Abu Hurairah and some inmates of Suffa said: we ate meal and when the prayer time came, we wiped our fingers against the pebbles and proceeded to say prayer. Hazrat Omar said: we did not know the use of soap at the time of the Prophet and the hollows of our feet were our towels. It is said that the first four innovations after the Prophet were the use of sieves, soap, tables and eating to (fill)satiety. The efforts of the companions were towards the purification of the heart to the extent that some one among them said: it is better to say prayer with shoes than without shoes because when the Prophet look off his shoes with uncleanness at the advent of Gabriel, the companions also took off their shoes. He told them: Why have you taken off your shoes? One of them named Nakhyi said: Perhaps someone in need may pass by and take these shoes. In fact, they walked barefooted, sat on the mud and sand, prayed directly on the floors of the mosque. They used to eat bread of coarse wheat which

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the animals trod with their feet and sometimes polluted with their urine. They made no efforts to avoid small impurities.

These things have now changed. The People termed cleanliness for ironed cloth and say that it is the foundation of religion. One group spend most of their times in beautifying their bodies just like a new bride but their minds are full of evil thoughts, pride, self conceit, ignorance, show and hypocrisy He who cleanses with-stones after calls of nature, walks barefooted in mud, prays in mosque on the floor, walks on the rugs without leather over shoes or makes ablution with water belonging to an old woman, is attacked furiously and he is termed as impure.

The following are three matters of external purity-

- (1) purification from impurities,
- (2) purification of the body from excrements and
- (3) purification from bodily growths. such as pairing of nails, cutting off hairs, cirrcumcision, removal of the hairs of pubes and the like.

## PURIFICATION FROM IMPURITES

There are three matters in this, the things to be removed, the means of removal and the meaning of removal. That which shall have to be removed is of three kinds

- (1) inanimate objects,
- (2) animate objects and

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(3) parts of animate objects.

(1) As to inanimate objects, all are pure except wine and intoxicating things.

(2) All animate (i.e. living thing ) objects are pure except dogs and pigs and their young ones. when an animal dies, it becomes impure except five-

(1) locusts,

(2) fish,

(3) worms in foodstuffs,

(4) dead animals which have no flowing blood like flies, beetles and the like.

(5)

(3) As to purity from inanimate objects, it is of two kinds,

(1) what is cut off from an animal and its law is the same as that of dead bodies. Hair is not impure. Bones, however, become impure after death.

(2) The second is what is changed after entering into body. They are all impure.

What emits from the body not after change is pure, such as sweat and tear. Things which have a fixed seat and are subject to change are impure. such as saliva, mucus of nose except the seed of life like semen, eggs. Blood, pus, feces, urine are impure. Nothing is exempted of these impruities except five things:

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- (1) the remains of odour after abstention with pebbles are exempted,
- (2) whatever cannot be avoided, such as mud in the streets and the dust of dung inspite of their impurity is exempted,
- (3) what is attached to the leather socks of impurites of the streets is exempted after it has been wiped against earth.
- (4) the blood of fleas and the like little or much on shirt is exempted except when it goes beyond the ordinary limits.
- (5) and the blood of itches and pimples is exempted.

## THE MEANS OF REMOVAL OF IMPURITIES

The means of removal of impurities are either condensed or liquid things. The condensed or solid things are pebbles of abstersion. Pebble purifies it if it is itself pure and dried. It should be hard, pure, dry and free from illegality. Liquid thing is water with which impurities are cleansed. Only pure water can remove impurities. The water, when mixed with impure thing and changing not its colour is pure, but if its colour taste and aAour are changed, it becomes impure. The Prophet said: When water is sufficient to fill two pitchers, it carries no impurities, if less, it carries impurities and does not remain pure. This is applicable in case of stagnant water. If flowing water mixes with impure things and does not remain pure. This is applicable in case of

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stagnant water. If flowing water mixes with impure things and becomes changed, it becomes them impure.

Some incidents together with urgent need and necessity strengthen the belief that only change in water was taken into consideration by the Prophet. The following words of the

Prophet support it: Water was created pure and nothing makes it impure except that which changes its colour, taste and smell.

## MANNER TO REMOVE IMPURITIES:

If the impurity is not a matter of touch, it is sufficient to run water over all its parts. If the impurity is physical, it should be removed. If its taste remains, it indicates the persistence of the physical matter. The same is true of the persistence of colour. if it sticks, it is exempted provided it is thoroughly rubbed. If taste persists, the persistence of its physical matter is perceived.

## MANNER OF TAYAMMAM

The manner of purification with sand is as follows. If the use of water does harm to a person, if water is not found on search, or if there is danger in reaching the place of water such as fear of ferocious beast or fear of enemies, or if the water is even insufficient to quench thirst, or if the water is in possession of another and the price is high, or if he is ill or has got wound and water will do harm, then he should wait till the time of compulsory prayer comes. He should then proceed to use



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pure soil with intention of Tayammam. He should put his right palm over the sandy soil and lift it to his face, wipe it and intend to observe prayer. It should be done only once. Then he shall again place his left palm over the sand and wipe his right hand and then place his right hand to the elbows over the sand and then wipe his left hand up to the elbows. By this Tayammam, only one prayer at a time can be done.

## CLEANSING THE EXTERNAL BODILY GROWTHS AND DISCHARGES

These are of two kinds, the discharges and the wet excretions of the body and bodily growths. These excretions are eight in number.

(I) That which attaches to the hairs of head such as dirt and lice should be removed by washing, combing and the use of ointment. The Prophet used to oil his hairs and comb them on every alternate days and ordered his followers to do the same. The Prophet said: Oil your hairs on every alternate days. He also said: Let one honour his hairs. It means: Keep them clean of filth and arrange them. Once a man came to the Prophet with dishevelled hairs and fuffed beard and he said: Has he got no oil wherewith to arrange his hairs ? Then he said: One of you comes as if he is a devil.

(II) Filth which collects in the holes of ears. This filth should carefully be caleansed

(III) Filth in the nose should be removed by inhaling and exhaling.

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(IV) The filth which collects between the teeth and the tip of the tongue should be removed by tooth stick and the rinsing of mouth.

(V) Filth which attaches to the beard should be removed and the beard should be combed. There is a well known tradition that the Prophet either at home or in journey never parted with his tooth stick, comb and mirror. Hazrat Ayesha said that the Prophet said: God loves a man who adorns himself whenever he goes out to meet with his brethren.

(VI) The filth which collects in finger joints should be removed and the Prophet ordered his followers to cleanse them specially after eating.

(VII) The filth which collects in nails of fingers should be removed. The Prophet ordered that the manicuring of nails, plucking the hairs of armpits and shaving the pubes should be done once every forty days. Once revelation stopped coming to the Prophet. When Gebrail came to him, he asked him the reason and Gebrail said: How can revelation come to you when you have not cleansed the filth from your knuckles and nails and filth of mouth by toothstick?

(VIII) Filth of the whole body collected through perspiration and dust of path ways should be removed by bath. There is no harm to enter public bath room for that.

## SECOND KIND OF FILTHS

These are bodily growths and are of eight kinds.

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AUTHORITY OF 'Aisha SAHIH\_MUSLIM #REF=0502 RASULULLAH, (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) said: Ten are the acts according to fitra: clipping the moustache, letting the beard grow, using the tooth-stick, snuffing up water in the nose, cutting the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving the pubes, and cleaning one's private parts with water. The narrator said: I have forgotten the tenth, but it may have been rinsing the mouth.

(1) Hairs of head. There is no harm in shaving the hairs of head for one who desires to be clean and there is no harm in keeping them provided he oils them and keeps arranged and combed.

(2) Hairs of moustache. The Prophet said: Cut off your moustaches, in another narration, spare your moustaches. In another narration, trim your moustaches and spare your beards. In other words, let your moustaches extend to the upper lip. Shaving of moustaches was never mentioned in the tradition, while trimming so closely as to resemble shaving has been narrated by the companions. There is no harm in leaving the ends of moustaches to hang down. The Prophet said: Cut off your moustache along a tooth stick. The Prophet said: Spare the beard and let it grow. The Prophet said: Do the opposite as the Jews used to spare their moustaches and trim their beards.

(3) Hairs of armpits should be removed once every forty days either by plucking or by shaving

(4) Hairs of pubes should be removed once every forty days either by shaving or by the use of a depilatory.

(5) Nails should be manicured because of their ugly appearances and also because of the dirt which collects

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underneath them. The Prophet said: O Abu Hurairah, manicure fyour nails as the devil sits therein when they are long.

(6) The navel cord which is cut off at the time of brith of a child

(7) foreskin of genital organ. The Prophet said: Circumcision is sunnat for a male and meritorious for a female. Excess should be avoided in the case of a female. The Prophet said to Omme Atiyyah O: Omme Atiyyah, be moderae in circumcision and cut off only a small portion of clitoris, for it is better to preserve femininity and more welcome to masculinity.

(8) Length of beard. There are differences of opinion regarding the length of the beard somesay that it is to be kept up to grip and ther is no harm in cutting beyond the grip. Hazrat Omar and some Tabeyins used to do it. Hasan Basari and Qatadah said that to spare it to grow long is better as the Prophet said: Spare your beards. It has been said that the bigger the beard, the smaller the intellect.

There are ten undesirable practices regarding beard. These are

- (1) dyeing the beard black,
- (2) bleaching it with sulphur,
- (3) plucking it,
- (4) plucking the grey hairs,
- (5) trimming it,

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- (6) augmenting its size,
- (7) keeping it dishevelled,
- (8) combing it for show of people,
- (9) making it black for show of youth,
- (10) making it grey to attract honour and dyeing it red or yellow.

Dyeing it with black colour is prohibited as the Prophet said: The best of your youths is he who follows the old among you and the worst of your old is he who follows the youth among you. The Prophet said: Black dye is the sign of the inmates of Hell. The first man who used black dye was Pharaoh. The Prophet said: There will appear in latter ages people who will dye their beards black like the peak of pigeons. They will not get the fragrance of Paradise.

Dyeing the beard yellow or red is permitted. The Prophet said: Yellow is the colour with which the Muslims dye their beards and red is the colour with which the believers dye their beards. Henna can be used for red dye and saffron and phillyrea for yellow dye.

Bleaching the beard with sulphur to give the appearance of advanced age to attract attention and to have their testimony accepted is undesirable.

To shave beard is Makruh or undesirable.

So also plucking grey hair because the Prophet prohibited it as it is a light for a believer.

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Final note: Since these Islamic practices are essential part of our worship (ibbada), reliable Ulema or alternatively knowledgeable person in Islam shall be contacted to ensure the proper understanding of these rules: