CHAPTER IX

PERSONAL HYGIENE
Keeping oneself clean is a fundamental principle of Islam for 'Allah loveth those who keep themselves clean.'

The Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) declared that Islam means cleanliness and, therefore, when Hazrat Qasim Ibn Asim (may Allah be pleased with him) desired to be initiated into Islam, he was ordered to first take bath with water containing leaves of 'lot' trees (Ali, 1978).

Bathing is the process of immersing the body in water and washing away any perspiration and particles of dirt and dust that may have adhered to the skin. As reported by Hazrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said that there is impurity at the root of each hair and, therefore, we should wash our hair regularly and keep our skin free of dirt.

1. Al-Bara'at : 108
2. Tirmizi: al-Jami Bab Ma Ja'a anna Tahta Kull Sha'ra Janebah
From a social point of view, bathing stops foul smell and prevents unpleasant odour from spreading in a gathering or congregation. Thus, when some labourers came to the mosque and the unpleasant odour of their sweat spread in the limited space that was available, they were advised by the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) to ensure cleanliness and neatness before coming to the mosque (Ali, 1978).

The law of wadhu is another step towards personal hygiene and so we recite:

1. 

"Oh ye who believe! when you have to perform your prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles." (Latif, 1969)

How many times each organ should be washed would depend on the amount of water available as also on the impurities involved. This is why the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has ordained that while it is essential to wash each organ at least once, it can be washed twice or even thrice. But no one is permitted to offer prayers unless his body is clean.

2. 

The translation of the Arabic verse is:

1. Al-Maidah : 06
2. Muslim : al-Jami al-Sahih Bab Wujub al-Tahara al-Saiah
Circumcision which means the removal of the foreskin which covers the glands of the male genital organ is regarded as a metaphor for purity and hygiene in Islam apart from the fact that it is a sunnah of the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him). There is no doubt that circumcision prevents inflammation of the glands and the foreskin. There are also reports that cancer of prostate is correlated with circumcision. (Kazim, 1973).

Islam is the religion of natural and healthful living and therefore, there is no doubt that dental hygiene has become an integral part of our daily life. Nothing could better emphasize the necessity of keeping the teeth clean and healthy than the remark of the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) that if it were not for the inconvenience of the Ummah he would order the brushing of teeth at the time of each wadhu.

\[(1)\]

\[\text{هـ، وـ سـ لـ مـ لـ عـ وـ لـ اـ نـ ـ اـ نـ ـ طـ اـ نـ ـ لـ اـ مـ رـ تـ اـ مـ - بـ ـ الـ سـ عـ وـ اـ كـ ـ حـ دـ كـ ـ حـ دـ كـ ـ عـ ـ لـ سـ عـ وـ تـة.}

That the brushing of teeth with a softened stick 'miswak' aids in digestion and removes phlegm is the lesson which Hazrat Haseeb (may Allah be pleased with him) learnt from the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) centuries before the scientific world could discover that bad teeth do not masticate well and that such imperfectly masticated food causes

1. Tirmizi : Bab Fi al- Siwak
indigestion when it reaches the stomach. Teeth decay because disease germs multiply in the mouth if sugar is present under such conditions. Salts which are present in the enamel of the teeth are dissolved by the microorganisms and it becomes necessary to brush the teeth and rinse the mouth with water after eating as this reduces local acid concentration (Ghosh, 1969).

It is reported from Hazrat Anas bin Mallick (may Allah be pleased with him) that brushing with a soft stick not only cleans the mouth but also improves eye sight and makes the food palatable. Further, it checks stomach ailments. Ibn Moaz (may Allah be pleased with him) heard it from the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) that 'miswak' made of olive stick is very pleasing and also checks abnormal growth of the gums. Indeed the 'miswak' purifies the mouth and is a means of seeking the pleasure of Allah.

Besides brushing the teeth and washing the body, nails also need to be cut and the hair should be brushed and combed. Thus, as reported by Hazrat Nafal and Hazrat Ibne Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) our Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has advised us to shave off the hair on and

1. Kunzul Ummal : Bab al-Siwak Vol.9, pp 191
2. Kunzul Ummal : Bab al-Siwak Vol.9, pp 194
around the groin and trim the mushtaches as a part of personal hygiene. This certainly keeps the head and body lice away and prevents the adhering of dirt, dust and disease germs under the nails.

Dress is the index of a person and indicates his manners. It protects us from the extremes of climate and external injuries. It should be loose fitting so as to allow a stratum of air between the dress and the skin. Since air is a bad conductor of heat this would amount to wearing an additional garment for the maintenance of bodily heat. The Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) knew this and therefore, a loose fitting 'kurta' was his favourite dress.

The wearing of silk garments is generally prohibited but when clothes give a soothing feeling to persons suffering from dermatitis and prevent the lice from clinging and attacking the skin, it is all right to wear such a dress. This could be the reason for permitting Hazrat Abdur Rehman and Hazrat Zubair (may Allah be pleased with them) to wear clothes made of silk when they complained of lice attacking their person.

1. Bukhari : al-Jami al-Sahih Bab Taqleem al-Azfar
2. Tirmizi : al-Jami Bab Ma Ja'a Fi al-Qamis
Sleep is of great significance from the point of view of human health and hygiene. The ever Merciful Allah has therefore planned it for mankind because this recurring state of inactivity and periodically decreased responsiveness to one's surroundings is necessary for the restoration of physical and mental alertness and to remain free from strain and stress.

"And devised sleep to give you rest."

From a biological point of view sleep has two components: an obligatory need to sleep and an accessory indulgence in sleep. The former varies with the physical and mental make up of an individual while the latter depends on age, sex and the immediate environment of a person. Thus, while an infant sleeps for about fourteen to fifteen hours, an adult needs only seven to nine hours of sleep in twenty four hours.

Sleep has also certain other benefits. Keeping awake is a kind of ailment called 'Insomnia' whose usual manifestations are muscular weariness and increased irritability. Should we therefore not give the body its due and bow our heads in gratitude to the Almighty Allah Who has among His countless favours to man, devised sleep so that we may lead a healthy and purposeful life.

1. Bukhari : al-Jami al-Sahih Bab al-Harir
2. Al-Naba : 09