

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

Sneezing ¹

And bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) for as long as the duration of this world and the next.

Sneezing is an expiratory² effort in response to irritation of the nasal epithelium. It is a reflex which expels irritants and keeps the airway clear. Professor Naseerullah Khan, president of the Islamia College in Lahore states: "When a western Doctor heard the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that when you sneeze say '*Alhamdulillah*' and then reply... he asked himself why all these supplications for such a same action? After research he found that in a person's head there are minute holes which are blocked by air and to rid these Allah (The Exalted) has arranged a pressure to release these holes. With the pressure of the sneeze the air is released through the nose. If this air is not released then there is a chance of disease. So when a person sneezes, the creator is thanked."

I was once sat in a lecture and the Imam was doing his Friday speech when something caught my attention. He was saying that he had read in a national paper that a Muslim Doctor and a non Muslim Doctor had been working together. The Muslim Doctor sneezed and said '*Alhamdulillah*' as per the Sunnah. The non Muslim Doctor asked regarding words in Arabic. The Muslim Doctor said, 'I praised my Lord'. The non Muslim Doctor was confused as to why he praised his Lord for sneezing.

After two years the Muslim Doctor went on pilgrimage and surprisingly saw the other Doctor there too. He asked with amazement 'What are you doing here?' he replied 'I researched for the past two years and I found the reason why you praised the Lord. My findings tell me that when a person sneezes the heart stops momentarily, you praised your Lord that He continued your heart beat. After my research I embraced Islam.'

'Abd-Allah Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates from the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that when one sneezes then say '*Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen*'.ⁱ

If a person feels like sneezing they should not stop it as it disturbs the body's physiology. The researcher on sneezing in a New York medical report states that if a person holds sneezing not only does one lose the strength of repulsion but it harms the stomach too.

Holding can cause pressure and light-headedness. There are reported cases of people suffering a stroke from the pressure. Doctors state that stifling the sneeze makes you sneeze the blood vessels reducing your circulation. One sneeze can propel 100,000 bacteria into the air. And the spray itself can travel as far as any wind current can take it, which may be hundreds of miles. ⁱⁱ

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would sneeze he would cover his blessed face with his blessed hand or with a cloth and lower his voice.*" ⁱⁱⁱ

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Allah (The Exalted) likes sneezing..." ^{iv}

ⁱ Tabrani

ⁱⁱ Should you try to hold back sneezes? By patti woods, M.A, CSP (shooting the breeze about sneezing)

ⁱⁱⁱ Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud

^{iv} Bukhari

¹ See Volume One, Chapter Forty-Nine for this Sunnah

² The act of breathing out.