

CHAPTER TWENTY

SUNNAH OF MISWAK

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the family of our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) until there remains not a single drop of blessings.

Usage of Miswak

The use of *Miswak* is a means of purifying the mouth and is pleasing to Allah (The Exalted).ⁱ

Sunnah of All The Prophet's (upon them all be peace)

The *Miswak* is a stick by which a person cleans the mouth. This is a great Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). It is also a Sunnah of all the Messengers of Allah (upon them all be peace), for they used the *Miswak*.ⁱⁱ

Abu Ayyub Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that four things are the Sunnahs of all the prophets (upon them all be peace) 1) Circumcision, 2) To apply fragrance (*Itr*), 3) To use *Miswak*, 4) Marriage.ⁱⁱⁱ

Seventy Extra Rewards For One Salaah

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has reported that, "*The prayer before which the Miswak is used is seventy times more excellent than that before which it is not used.*"^{iv} Ibn Abbas, 'Ali and Ata (may Allah be pleased with them all) state that, "*But it increases to 99 or 400 times.*"^v

This reward is based on sincerity, the more sincerity you have the more reward you get, it may be that you can get 70, 99 or even 400. *Subhanallah!* There are many benefits and one can gain so much reward. If we saw an advert stating the benefits of a product we would buy it. Don't forget the reward of following a Sunnah at the time of corruption and also reviving a Sunnah, we will not get these benefits elsewhere. May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow this beautiful Sunnah, Ameen.

Many Benefits

Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*Make Miswak a must do not be headless as there are twenty four benefits in Miswak, the greatest benefit is that Allah (The Exalted, is pleased, there is increase in wealth, it freshens the breath, it strengthens the gums, it relieves headaches, it relieves toothache and due to the light from the face and teeth the angles shake hands.*"^{vi}

The *Miswak* has benefits for a person in this world and the hereafter. The *Miswak* saves you from many types of illnesses in the mouth, with the gums and teeth. 'Ali, Ata and 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be please with them all) state that *Miswak* strengthens a person's memory, cures headaches, relieves the veins in the head, it gets rid of phlegm, strengthens the eye sight, keeps the liver healthy and helps digest food, increases intelligence, helps increase in family, lineage stays healthy in an old age, strengthens the stomach, purifies the heart, when exiting the Mosque the angles walk behind the person, the Prophets' make supplication of forgiveness for the person, the *Shaytan* is displeased, the difficulties of death become easy and one remembers the *Shahadah*, when the angel of death comes to take the soul he will come as one of your friends and in some narrations it states he comes in the form when he takes the soul of a Prophet, you will get the book of deeds in the right hand, cross the bridge of *Pul-Sirat* with the speed of lightening, peace in the grave, if a person forgets to use the *Miswak* who has a habit will still be rewarded, and the doors of paradise are opened for that person.^{vii}

'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*The Miswak increases the memory and rids phlegm.*"^{viii}

The doctors say that the reasons for spots in the mouth are due to heat and acid from the liver and bacteria that is created in the mouth. One should use a *Miswak* as the saliva that is created from using the *Miswak* rids the illnesses.

On Awakening

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"Never woke from sleeping at any time of the day or night without cleaning his teeth with a Miswak before performing ablution."*^{ix}

To perform *Miswak* after sleeping when one awakes is a Sunnah. Whilst asleep the bad odours from the stomach comes towards the mouth which is why the mouth smells. With the blessings of this Sunnah the mouth will be cleansed.

On Entering The House

When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), intended to recite the Qur'an or sleep, he would use a *Miswak*. He did the same when entering the house. 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that, *"The first thing that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did on entering the house, was Miswak."*^x

Part of Ablution

Hassan bin 'Atiyya (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, *"Ablution is part of faith and using a Miswak is part of ablution."*^{xi}

The Emphasis

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), said that, *"If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with Miswak for every prayer."*^{xii}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has concern for us, he did not want to place any type of burden on us, however, unfortunately we have turned our backs on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. What answer will we give to Allah (The Exalted) on the Day of Judgment? *Allahu Akbar!*

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"I have told you repeatedly to (use) Miswak (the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), emphasised on the use of the Miswak)." ^{xiii}*

Importance of Miswak

Allama Sha'rani (may Allah have Mercy upon him) states that, 'Once Abu Bakr Shibli (d.334 A.H.) (may Allah have Mercy upon him) was in need of a Miswak at the time of wudhu, he looked for one but could not find one. He spent a Dinar¹ and bought one and used it, people said, 'You have over spent, can you buy a Miswak this expensive?' Abu Bakr Shibli (may Allah have Mercy upon him) replied, 'This world and all its contents in front of Allah (The Exalted) is not even compared to a mosquito, what answer will I give on the Day of Judgement when Allah (The Exalted) asks me, "Why did you leave the Sunnah of my beloved? The wealth that I gave you which (in front of me) is not equivalent to a mosquito, you did not spend it for this Sunnah?"' ^{xiv} *Allahu Akbar!* What more can be said about the importance of the *Miswak*.

Miswak a Great Sunnah

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that, *"He passed away in my house, on my day, between my chest and throat. And at death Allah (The Exalted) joined my saliva to his. For when my brother 'Abd al-Rahman entered carrying a Miswak in his hand, he (the Prophet) began to look at it, and I knew that it pleased him, so I said; "Shall I bring it to you?" Yes, he nodded, so I handed it to him. He put it into his mouth, but it was too hard for him. "Shall I soften it for you?" I asked. Yes, he nodded, so I made it soft. And by him there lay a leather vessel containing water into which he started dipping his hand, saying, "No deity is there except Allah! (The Exalted) truly death has agonies!" then he lifted up his hand and said, "The Highest Companion! The Highest Companion!" and I said, "So by Allah! (The Exalted) he will not prefer us."*^{xv} *'Inna Lil-La-hi Wa-inna Ilay-hi Ra-Jioon.'*

Even on the death bed the *Miswak* was a beloved Sunnah of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), because it pleases Allah (The Exalted). Let us grasp hold fast to this Sunnah, we brush our teeth anyway, why not use the *Miswak* too as you can carry the *Miswak* with you as there is no need for paste, as the *Miswak* comes from a tree which has natural benefits and you can use it whenever you want, after eating, before entering the house, etc.

¹ An Arab currency.

Cure For Illness

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states that, "There is a cure for every illness in Miswak besides death."^{xvi}

Allama Amjad 'Ali writes in Bahar-e-Shariat that, "The scholars state whosoever has a habit of using the *Miswak*, then at the time of death they will (be blessed with the) reciting of the *Shahadah* and one who takes drugs will not (*Allah forbid*).^{xvii}

Disadvantage of Toothbrushes

According to researcher, 80% of illnesses of intestine and liver disease come from bad health. In general, those who do not keep their teeth clean, bacteria will create more diseases in their body. Remember that the toothbrush is not a substitute of a *Miswak* as the researches have stated. When the toothbrush is used once, a bed of bacteria sits at the bottom of the brush, even after washing the brush the bacteria will increase, with the brush the natural brightness of the teeth is lost, by using brush gaps are created between the gums and teeth. When gaps are created bits of food get stuck and bacteria grows, besides many illnesses in the eyes can be created, weakness in eyes as well as one can lose their eye sight.

How to hold the Miswak

According to 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) hold the *Miswak* in the right hand so that the small finger is below the *Miswak* and the thumb is below the tip and the other fingers are on top of the *Miswak*.^{xviii} Do not hold it in the fist as there is a chance of illness.^{xix}

Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan writes; "To keep the teeth healthy, a deed has been practised by the scholars, that is in the first cycle of the *Witr* prayer recites *Surah Nas*², in the second *Surah Lahab*³ and in the third *Surah Ikhlas*⁴."^{xx}

Manners of Miswak

1. The *Miswak* should not be too hard nor too soft.^{xxi}
2. It is from trees such as *Zaytoon*, *Peelu* or *Neem* and not from a fragrant tree.^{xxii}
3. Rub the *Miswak* on the gums at least three times and dip it in water each time.^{xxiii}
4. If the finger is to be used instead of the *Miswak*, then the upper and lower jaws on the right side are cleaned with the thumb and the left side is cleaned similarly with the index finger.^{xxiv}
5. Put the *Miswak* upright when not in use.^{xxv}
6. There is a chance of becoming insane if placed on the floor.^{xxvi}
7. The *Miswak* should be no thicker than the little finger and longer than the hand span as the devil sits on the end if longer.^{xxvii} It is not a problem if less than a hand span but not too short that it is difficult to use.
8. Imam Shafi said, 'cleansing the teeth increases wisdom'.^{xxviii}
9. Use the right hand to perform the *Miswak*.^{xxix}
10. Clean at least three times.^{xxx}
11. Do not perform the *Miswak* in a up/down motion but use it from right to left as there is a chance of damaging the gums.^{xxxi}
12. It is disliked using the *Miswak* in the toilet.^{xxxii}
13. Do not use it whilst lying down as there is a chance of bad temper.^{xxxiii}
14. To perform *Miswak* in *wudhu* is an emphasized Sunnah (*Sunnat-e-Muakeda*).^{xxxiv}
15. *Miswak* is Sunnah for ablution and not for *Salaah*.^{xxxv}
16. Do not throw away the *Miswak* or the bristles away but bury them.^{xxxvi}

2 Surah No: 109.

3 Surah No: 110

4 Surah No: 111

17. Use the Miswak from one end and not both. ^{xxxvii}
18. Women can also use the *Miswak*. ^{xxxviii}
19. One who uses the *Miswak* gets five rewards for each tooth. ^{xxxix}
20. The companions would keep the *Miswak* on their ears even at the time of journey.
21. Cut the bristles (tip) of the *Miswak* every 1-2 days and start fresh by biting to make it soft.
22. It is permissible to use *Miswak* whilst fasting. However, it is not permissible to use a flavoured *Miswak* nor is it permissible to use toothpaste, when the taste enters the throat breaking the fast and it is *wajib* (necessary) to be made up. However, if it does not go down the throat it is *Makrooh* (disliked), but one should abstain if there is no need to do so. ^{xl}
23. It is Sunnah to use a *Miswak* on the day of *Jumu'ah*. ^{xli}
24. According to a hadith, the use of *Miswak* will gain a person the reward equivalent to the number of new Muslims that revert until the day of judgement. ^{xlii}
25. To use the Miswak after eating, one will gain the reward of freeing two slaves. ^{xliii}

Other times when the usage of Miswak is Sunnah

1. For the recitation of the Holy Qur'an.
2. For the recitation of Hadith.
3. When the mouth emits bad odour.
4. For teaching or learning the virtues of Islam.
5. For making remembrance of Allah (The Exalted).
6. Before intercourse.
7. After entering one's home.
8. Before entering any good gathering.
9. When experiencing pangs of hunger or thirst.
10. After the time of Suhoor.⁵
11. Before meals.
12. Before and after a journey.
13. Before and after sleeping.

May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to practise this beautiful Sunnah with sincerity, Ameen.

⁵ After eating when intending to keep a fast.

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- i Bukhari
- ii Tirmidhi and Tabarani.
- iii Tirmidhi
- iv Mishkat & Baihaqi
- v Maraqil Falaah Sharh Nurul Idah
- vi Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 903 with reference to Qushayri
- vii Footnote of Tahawi and Maraqil Falaah Sharh Nurul Idah
- viii Maraqil Falaah Sharh Nurul Idah
- ix Muslim, Tahrah. Abu Dawood, Tahrah. Jam'i-ul-Hadith, Vol: 1, p. 285
- x Muslim
- xi Tirmidhi. Sharah Sunnah. Jam'i-ul-Hadith, Vol:1, p. 292. Author of Ibn Abi Shayba
- xii Bukhari, Tahrah. Musli, Taharah.
- xiii Bukhari
- xiv Lawaqihul Anwar
- xv Bukhari, Riqaq
- xvi Delmi
- xvii Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 904/5
- xviii Raddul Mohtar
- xix Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 908
- xx Fatawa-e-Razwiyya / Nizam-e-Shariat
- xxi Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 908
- xxii ibid
- xxiii ibid
- xxiv ibid
- xxv ibid
- xxvi Raddul Mohtar
- xxvii Bahrur Raiq & Bahar-e-Shariah
- xxviii Ihya by Al-Ghazali
- xxix Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 908
- xxx Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 908
- xxxi ibid
- xxxii ibid
- xxxiii Maraqil Falaah
- xxxiv Abu Dawud, Durre Mukhtar. Bahar-e-Shariah; Vol: 4; with reference to Raddul Mohtar
- xxxv Jam'i-ul-Hadith, Vol: 1, p. 293. Fatawa-e-Razwiyya, Vol: 1, p. 619
- xxxvi Faizane Sunnat, Sunnats of Miswak, p. 908
- xxxvii ibid
- xxxviii ibid
- xxxix Tazkiratul Waizeen
- xl Fatawa-e-Barkatiya, p. 314
- xli Musnad Imam Ahmad
- xlii Tazkiratul Waizeen
- xliii Tazkiratul Waizeen.