

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

SUNNAH OF APPLYING FRAGRANCE ('ITR)

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our lord and master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to the fullness of Your heavens and Your earth.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) liked aromatic things and perfume, he used them himself and recommended their use to others. On waking up he would relieve himself, perform Wudhu, and apply fragrance on his clothing. If fragrance was presented to him, he would never refuse it. He would use perfume at night too, especially on Fridays for Jumu'ah prayers.

Naf'i (may Allah be pleased with him) said that ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would at times burn only 'Ud and at times he would use 'Ud and Camphor and say, "*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would do this.*"ⁱ

To use any fragrance that burns like incense sticks or loban is permissible. If you burn these with the intention of the Sunnah then you will be rewarded for that¹. The Scholars say that 'Ud opens the clogs and does away with gas; it also dries away unnecessary moisture while strengthening the intestines and brings relief and comfort to the heart. It helps the mind, sharpens the senses, constipates and helps relieve the enuresis, bed wetting that result from coldness of the prostrate.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates that she used to perfume the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) with the best scent available until he saw the shine of the scent on his head and bear.ⁱⁱ

Natural smell

A sweet fragrance was naturally emitted from the blessed body of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). In a narration Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) says that, "*I did not smell anything more fragrant than the fragrance of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). The fragrance was better than Amber and Musk.*" *Subhanallah!*

Jabir Ibn Samura (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, "*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) touched my cheek and I felt a cool sensation and his hand were scented. It was as if he had taken his hand from a bag of perfumes.*"ⁱⁱⁱ

Subhanallah! This was the natural fragrant from the Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) hands.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) slept on a rug in the house of Anas (may Allah be please with him) and being very warm he perspired. Anas's (may Allah be pleased with him) mother brought a long necked bottle in which to put his blessed perspiration. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked her about this. She said, "*We put it in our perfume and it is the most fragrant of scents.*"^{iv} *Subhanallah!*

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*I have never smelt any 'itr or fragrance better than the fragrance of the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) blessed perspiration.*"^v

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) states that when a companion would desire to visit the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and would not find him, they would track him by his fragrance in the streets.^{vi}

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, "*When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went down the road, anyone who had followed him knew that he had passed that way because of his scent.*"^{vii}

¹ Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan writes that to burn incense sticks that contain unlawful ingredients is unlawful and in another place he writes that it is not permissible to place incense sticks or something that burns on the grave, but place it away from the grave. (Fatawa-e-Razawiyya, Vol: 4).

If the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) shook hands with a man, his beautiful scent would remain on that man's hand for the rest of the day, and if he placed his hand on the head of a child, that child would stand out from others by virtue of his sweet fragrance.

Umme Salma (may Allah be pleased with her) reported to have said, "When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) left this world I placed my hand on his chest. Many weeks have passed and I eat and wash this hand yet the fragrance still remains. *Subhanallah!*"^{viii}

Spend a third on 'Itr

'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say that, "Whoever spends a third of his wealth on 'Itr is not being extravagant."

Once the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) blew (for blessing) on his palm and wiped it over the back and stomach of 'Uqbah (may Allah be pleased with him) as he complained of an illness to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). It became so fragrant, and as he had four wives, everyone put on so much perfume, to equal that fragrance, but it could not overcome the fragrance that 'Uqbah had.^{ix}

Do not refuse 'Itr

Thumaamah bin 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that, "*Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) did not refuse perfume, and would say that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) never refused (the acceptance of) perfume.*"^x

Azra bin Thabit Al Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "When I went to Thumama bin 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) he gave me some perfume and said, that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) would not reject the gifts of perfume." xi Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would not reject the gifts of perfume." xii

When someone offers us any fragrance do not refuse, if you don't want any then just take a small amount and you will get the reward of following the Sunnah.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "Whosoever is presented with Raihan should not refuse it, because it is easy to wear and has a good scent." xiii

Fragrance form Paradise

Abu Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) states from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that, "*Whosoever is offered Raihaan (name of a fragrance) do not reject it as this is from Jannah (paradise).*"

Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) says that, "*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Three things should not be refused: a pillow, fragrance ('Itr-oil), or milk.'*"^{xiv}

These three items are usually cheap and easy to give as a gift. The scholars say that if someone gives you these three items then do not refuse them as it could break the heart of the person giving it. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not like to break anyone's heart or feelings.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*I would put a lot of fragrance on the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to the extent that you could see the shine on his blessed forehead and blessed beard.*"^{xv}

We find from this hadith that to apply 'Itr on the beard is the Sunnah.^{xvi}

The smell from the Rose

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "*When I was taken into the sky then the earth started to cry because of my separation. When I was coming back from the ascension then my perspiration dripped on the earth, from which a red rose grew, whosoever wants to smell my fragrance, smell a red rose.*"^{xvii} *Subhanallah!*

Use 'Itr without Alcohol

We should also use 'Itr to follow the sweet Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Let's start this from today and stop using other things that can be very expensive and contain alcohol. Make it a regular habit to rub perfume on Fridays when going for Jumu'ah prayer too.

Imam Shafi'i (may Allah's mercy be upon him) states that four things make the body strong; eating meat, using scent, bathing and putting on linen clothes. ^{xviii}

Women & perfume

Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) has related the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "*An eye that looks at an unknown man or woman (with evil intent) commits adultery and a woman who perfumes herself and then passes by a gathering of men is no better.*" ^{xix}

Allahu Akbar! If a woman applies any scent and a man can smell it, then it attracts him towards adultery, hence, for women to apply perfume of any type is unlawful. However, if applying to please her husband in her home only then that is encouraged.

Maymuna bint Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Allah (The Exalted) remains displeased with a woman who emerges from her home wearing perfume and gives men the opportunity to look at her, until she returns home." ^{xx}

The Scholars say that fragrance is the fuel of the soul, which is the engine of the powers of the body. Therefore, various strengths and powers in the body are nurtured in the presence of fragrance.

Fragrance for men & women

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said, "The perfume for men is that whose odour is apparent but whose colour is hidden and the perfume for the women is those whose colour is apparent but whose odour is hidden like henna and saffron." ^{xxi}

It is forbidden for men and children to use henna except on the hair and the beard. It is forbidden for females to use fragrance of any type.

Manners of 'Itr

1. To apply 'Itr on the hair and beard is Sunnah. ^{xxii}
2. To apply 'Itr at night and before Jumu'ah prayers is a Sunnah.
3. One should not refuse 'Itr when offered.
4. To use 'Itr of Raihan and 'Ud is Sunnah. ^{xxiii}
5. Women should not use 'Itr or any perfumes but apply Henna.
6. One should not use a fragrance that contains unlawful ingredient or alcohol.
7. To burn 'Ud and Camphor is a Sunnah. ^{xxiv}

ⁱ Muslim

ⁱⁱ Bukhari, Vol: 7, p. 528

ⁱⁱⁱ Muslim

^{iv} Bukhari

^v Shama'il-e-Tirmidhi. Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 615

^{vi} Madaarijun Nabuwah & Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 620

^{vii} Bukhari

^{viii} Sharh Shama'il-e-Tirmidhi & Khazinah Rahmah, p. 132

^{ix} Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 619

^x Bukhari. Ahmad. Sharah Sunnah. Fathul Bari. Fatawa-e-Razawiyya, Vol: 9, p. 226 & Jam'i-ul-Hadith, Vol: 4, p. 516

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- ^{xi} Shamail-e-Tirmidhi
^{xii} Bukhari
^{xiii} Muslim
^{xiv} Shamail-e-Tirmidhi. Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 610
^{xv} Bukhari & Muslim
^{xvi} Shamail-e-Rasool & Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 608
^{xvii} Naseem-mur-Riyaad
^{xviii} Ihya uloom ad-Deen
^{xix} Abu Dawood
^{xx} Tabarani
^{xxi} Shamail-e-Tirmidhi
^{xxii} Shamail-e-Rasool & Faizan-e-Sunnat, p. 608
^{xxiii} Muslim
^{xxiv} ibid