

CHAPTER SEVEN

Ablution and science ^{1 i}

O Allah (The Exalted) bless the One who will give people to drink from the Pool.

A Daily Ritual

Fourteen centuries ago, our Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) gave us a prescription of many washing movements to be carried out 5 times a day, to grant us optimum health. Before a Muslim performs his prayers, he carries out the ablution ritual in the way of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Ablution prevents skin diseases

The Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *“Whoever performed ablution properly his wrong doings will come out of his body till they come out from under his limb-nails”*. He also said *“Verily, on the Judgment day, My nation (Muslims) will come fair and surrounded by lights as a result of ablution. Whoever be able to prolong the retaining of ablution should do.”*

Rinsing the mouth

After a microscopic investigation of a microbe² plant for those who regularly perform ablution and those who do not, the modern science confirmed that the noses of those who perform ablution regularly remained clean, pure and empty from any microbes. Therefore, the microbe plants established for them appeared clean and empty from any microbe. Whereas, the microbe plants of those who did not perform ablution exposed a huge amount of different types of harmful microbes such as cluster microbes³, rosary microbes which spread quickly and organic microbes which cause many kinds of diseases. Some cases of self poisoning results from the harmful microbes which stays in the nose cavity. These microbes enter into the digestive system and the blood circulation and create inflammations and diseases. Therefore, Islam, asked Muslims to inhale water into the nose three times during each ablution.

As far as rinsing-out the mouth is concerned, it is proved that it protects mouth and throat from inflammations, gingivitis⁴, tooth decay and erosion by removing the remains of food. It is medically confirmed that 90% of those who lose their teeth, are those who don't clean their mouth & teeth. The pus material and the rottenness get mixed with the saliva and food. The stomach and the digestive system suck them. Then they get distributed to different parts of the body by the circulation of the blood; consequently it causes many types of diseases. It is proved that the rinsing-out of mouth strengthens some muscles of the face. Rather, the sport teachers mention this fact because they concentrate on the big muscles of the body. Washing of hands and legs also is very useful. It removes dust, germs and cleans the body from oily materials that come out through the skin glands. It also eliminates sweating. It is medically proved that microbes cannot attack human skin unless he neglects its cleaning.

If a man does not clean his body regularly then various harmful secretions remain on the surface of the skin and create severe scratching. In addition, it also becomes a fertile plant of microbes. Unclean finger nails scratch and injure the skin and open entries to the microbes. Therefore, ablution helps cleaning the body regularly. Bacteriologist⁵ who examined Bacteria and fungi that can be transferred to the mouth and nose. Therefore, hands should be cleaned properly before cleaning other parts of the body. This has already been explained by the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who said, *“When a person wakes up from sleeping, he should not dip his hand into the vessel before washing it thrice”* It is also found that blood circulation at limbs is weaker because they are far from the centre of blood pumping (the heart). Therefore, its washing will be a kind of a massage which helps to activate the blood circulation at these remote areas of the body consequently making the person physically strong. All these show the value of ablution that a Muslim performs.

¹ See Volume One, Chapter Seventeen for this Sunnah

² Any organism too small to be visible to the naked eye.

³ Many variants of any organism too small to be visible to the naked eye.

⁴ Inflammation of the gums caused by plague on the surfaces of the teeth at their necks.

⁵ Researchers who are concerned with bacteria study.

Dr. Ahmed Shawqi Ibraheem the member of the Royal Medical Association in London and the International consultant of heart diseases says that scientists came to know that the fall of the light in the water during ablution and also on the dots of water on the body gives birth to negative ions and reduces the positive ions and consequently it relaxes the nerves and muscle pain as well as tension and anxiety. This fact is also confirmed by an American scientist who says: "Water has a magical effect." Even the dazzle of water on the face and hands is the best means of achieving relaxation and eliminating tension.

High blood pressure

Khwaja Shamsudeen Azeemi states, "During Wudhu, whilst we wash the necessary limbs, the blood running internally acquires new life with which we get peace and when the limbs attain peace, blood pressure becomes normal and the limbs become beautiful. The eyes become beautiful and tiredness departs. This could be explained by water causing vasodilatation⁶ of the peripheral vessels⁷ thus lowering overall blood pressure. Done five times a day, it not only cleanses these vital parts of the body from dust and dirt but also "*softens*" and refreshes them."¹

Washing helps from skin cancer

Doctor Magomedov says, "Ablution helps prevent skin cancer⁸." He explains: "The areas that are washed during ablution are the parts of the body that are most prone to pollution, whether it is pollution from the internal secretions of the body on to the skin surface, such as sweat, or whether it is external. Ablution removes this 'pollution' five times a day, and hence maintains a clean outer skin, which in turn helps the cells underneath to function properly."

Ablution before sleeping

Interestingly enough, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also encouraged doing ablution before going to bed. A similar ritual is also encouraged by Yoga experts who say that washing important motor and sensory organs such as the hands, arms, eyes, legs, mouth and genitals before sleep using cool water relaxes the body preparing it for a deep sleep.²

Stimulating the Biological Rhythms

In an article entitled "Muslims Rituals and their effect on the Person's Health", Doctor Magomedov, assistant to the department of the Man's General Hygiene and Ecology in the Daghestan State Medical Academy, speaks about how ablution stimulates the biological rhythms of the body and specifically Biological Active Spots (BASes), very much like the idea behind Chinese reflexotherapy.

"Presently we know that a man is a complex system of electromagnetic fields⁹, meridians, biological rhythms and so on. Man's internal organs, in their turn, present a no less sophisticated bio-energetical whole; they all have indissoluble¹⁰ multi-channel bilateral connections with the skin, which hosts special spots, whose functions resemble those of buttons on "control" and "recharge boards" responsible for particular organs. These spots are called biologically active spots (BASes)."³

"Reflexotherapy is primarily used to cure diseases and very rarely for prevention, while, as we shall see, ablution has many preventive benefits. There was also a negative side to reflexotherapy", he says, "One that is not found in ablution; a patient was exposed to traumas¹¹ since doctors used cauterisation¹²."

"The majority of the most powerful BASes are being washed during the Muslim ritual. It is not the doctor, who had studied for many years, who does it, but every Muslim by himself. Besides, praying five times a day obliges a Muslim to take the preventive measures against diseases beforehand."⁴

According to Doctor Magomedov, Chinese medicine says that there are more than 700 BASes, and sixty-six of them have quick reflex therapy effects and are named the drastic (or aggression or antique or prime-

⁶ An increase in the diameter of blood results from activation of the Vaso-motor centre in the brain, which brings about relaxation of the arterial walls and a consequent lowering blood pressure.

⁷ A tube conveying a body fluid, specially a blood vessel or a lymphatic vessel.

⁸ About one cancer in a 100 is a malignant melanoma. These may occur on the skin or in the eye.

⁹ Having both electrical and magnetic properties.

¹⁰ Firm and lasting, not able to be dissolved or destroyed.

¹¹ Emotional shock.

¹² The deliberate destruction of tissue by the careful local application of heat.

elements) spots. Out of these sixty-six spots, sixty-one of them are located in zones required for ablution while the other five are located near the ankle. Thus, ablution becomes a kind of treatment complex, which includes the hydromassage of the BAS, their thermal and physical stimulation.⁵

Another aspect that Doctor Magomedov stresses is that Prophetic tradition emphasized the importance of massaging and applying pressure during ablution, which is something that has a scientifically-grounded explanation.

Doctor Magomedov said that his studies were triggered by his solemn belief that the five-time-a-day Muslim prayers not only were to have an “indisputable spiritual effect” but were also bound to “have a purely physical healing effect as well.”

Preventive Cleansing

From a non-alternative medicine perspective, Mukhtar Salem, in his book titled ‘Prayers: a Sport for the Body and Soul’, speaks about the health benefits of every aspect of ablution. “Washing with water helps refresh distant blood vessels, as well as the nerves and glands near the skin surface, and hence helps them perform their functions efficiently.”⁶ Salem adds that “Research has proven that one of the main reasons behind skin cancer is that the skin is exposed to chemicals, especially petrochemicals, and that the best way to prevent skin cancer is by constantly removing these chemicals.” Over all, he adds, “Ablution also has an exercising effect on all the muscles involved in its movement, which are thus being stimulated five times a day (or even more due to repetition).”

Benefits of ablution

A Muslim invited a student of a University in Belgium to Islam. To his surprise, the student asked regarding the benefits of ablution. The Muslim took him to a scholar, but he could not tell him. Eventually a person told this student many benefits of ablution (scientific) but couldn’t tell him the benefit of wiping the neck (masah). Few days later he came and said, “My Professor in a lecture said ‘If you wipe the back of your neck on both sides with few drops of water you will be saved from spinal illnesses.’” The student understood the virtue and benefit of wiping the neck in ablution and embraced Islam, *Subhanallah!*

In Western Germany a seminar took place. On depression and how it was on the rise as well as mental hospitals. A Physiotherapist¹³ who lived in Western Germany spoke about how he was investigating a cure for depression without using any medication. Another Doctor who went along to a seminar with his discussion papers surprised the audience as the Doctor was treating patients by washing their faces five times a day and within a short period the treatment started taking affect. At the end of his speech he mentioned that fewer Muslims suffer from depression as they wash their parts in ablution, five times a day.

Ablution and high blood pressure

A heart specialist stresses, those who have high blood pressure make them perform ablution and the blood pressure will become normal. A Muslim doctor says that the best cure for depression is ablution. The western doctors treat their patience by placing water on some parts of their body, just like ablution. We find that High blood pressure is lowered by ablution.

Washing the hands

In ablution the hands are washed first and there are many benefits. People come in contact things in their hands causing bacteria to spread and grow on the skin. If the hands are not washed during the day there is a possibility of getting many types of skin disease, heat spots, itchy skin, eczema, bad skin, change in the skin colour This is the reason hands are washed first. Hand washing is emphasized more and more in hospitals and is believed to be one of the most important measures to prevent the spread of MRSA¹⁴ (Super Bug).

Mouth wash

If the hands are not washed the bacteria will travel into the stomach via the mouth producing many illnesses in the stomach. Some bacteria stay in the mouth from bits of foods left between the teeth. By washing the

¹³ A health professional who uses physical methods such as active or passive exercises, for therapy.

¹⁴ The term means Methiailin-resistant S. aureus.

mouth and using a Miswak the bacteria will be removed. One who gargles will not get tonsillitis¹⁵ and be saved from cancer in the throat. Doctor Magomedov says, "The obvious reason behind washing the mouth during ablution, is to remove the food particles, which could cause teeth and gum problems. That is also the reason why Miswak is also encouraged before ablution."

Nose wash

The lungs need clean air free from pollution. In that air the lungs need 50% moisture and the air inhaled should be 90oF+. To attain these temperatures, Allah (The Exalted) has created for us a nose. To make the air moist the nose creates a quarter of a gallon of moisture and the hair in the nostrils stop dirt going inside the lungs. There is a microscopic suction in the nose. There are some particles in the nose that kill some bacteria. The job of these particles is to defend the Lysozium and this assists and saves the eyes from infections. Rinsing the nose the way the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did makes the particles stronger which saves one from all types of illnesses. Doctor Magomedov says, "When washing one's nostrils, one is performing a preventive health measure as the germs trapped in the nostrils are removed and do not pass on to the respiratory system."

According to a study conducted by a team of doctors in Alexandria University, the Prophetic tradition, which urges the exaggeration of washing the nostrils by introducing the water in the nostril, then blowing it out, positively affects the inner coating of the nostrils. Those who carried out the washing in the correct form had clean nostrils with no dust clinging to the small hair inside.

Washing the face

There's some moisture within the eyes. If the moisture dries up there is a possibility of irritation to the eyes which may cause infection and inflammation. A method to prevent this is to pass some water over the eyebrows. Doctor Magomedov says, "the BASes in the face (which are washed during ablution) "recharge" such organs as the intestines, stomach and bladder, in addition to having a positive effect on the nervous and reproductive systems", adding "the BAS responsible for the osseous system, intestine, nervous system, lumbar area¹⁶, stomach, pancreas¹⁷, gall-bladder, thyroid gland, solar plexus¹⁸ and others are situated on the right leg, another area reached by ablution."

Beard

Prof. George states; "When one washes the face and beard, the bacteria on the face and beard are cleansed. If one passes the fingers through the beard one will not get lice, not only that but if one leaves water in the beard, one will be saved from pain in the veins in the neck, Thyroid gland and other such illnesses of the neck."

Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) has related, "The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would apply oil to his head frequently and washed his beard with water.

Washing the arms

There are three major veins in the elbow that are connected to the heart. The elbow usually stays covered with clothing and if liquid (water) and oxygen (air) does not reach these parts, one may suffer from problems. To wash this part in ablution is obligatory and when the moisture reaches these veins it will strengthen the heart and save it from illnesses.

Wiping the head

There is a major vein in the body that lies between the back of the head and neck. This vein has a connection with the spinal cord. Wiping the back of the neck reduces the incidence of mental illness.

Wiping the ears

Doctor Magomedov says, "In the ear's cochlea¹⁹ are hundreds of BASes that harmonise the work of almost all organs, decrease high blood pressure and relieve tooth and throat pain."

¹⁵ Inflammation of the tonsils due to bacteria or viral infection, causing a sore throat, fever, and difficulty in swallowing.

¹⁶ Back and side of the body between the lowest rib and the pelvis.

¹⁷ A compound gland, about 15cm long, that lies behind the stomach.

¹⁸ A network of sympathetic nerves and ganglia high in the back of the abdomen.

¹⁹ The spiral organ of the labyrinth of the ear, which is concerned with the reception and analysis of sound.

Washing feet

A lot of dust gathers around the feet and infections usually start between the toes. By washing the feet, bacteria and dust from the feet will be cleansed. Washing the feet reduces the risk of insomnia and depression. The left leg has the BAS responsible for the work of the pituitary gland²⁰, the brain organ that regulates the functioning of the endocrine glands²¹ and controls growing.

“The Prophetic tradition of encouraging one to wash between the toes while washing the feet, is also extremely important,” says Salem, “as it prevents the foot, which in our modern times is trapped most of the day inside shoes, from acquiring fungal infection.”

We find that modern research tells us that ablution performed five times a day can prevent many illnesses. May Allah (the Exalted) give us the ability to perform ablution correctly.

ⁱ By Lamya Tawfik. 30/04/2003

²⁰ A small pea-size organ connected to the middle of the underside of the brain by a short stalk and lying in a hollow in the central bone of the base of the skull, just behind the nose cavity.

²¹ A gland that makes one or more hormones and secretes them directly into the blood stream.