

SUNAN AL-FITRAH (PROPHETS' NATURAL OR INNATE PRACTICES)

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I- DEFINITION

- Natural practices in tune with how Allah created human beings and urged them to follow. They are natural and innate.
- They are also from the practice that was followed and taught by all the prophets. Allah commands us to follow the guidance of the prophets.

II- PURPOSE

1. Allah the Almighty said:

“Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.” [Al-Baqarah, 2:222]

2. It is the path to health and strength: The Muslim is entrusted with his body and should not neglect it.

The Prophet (sa) said: “Your body has a right on you.” [Agreed upon]

3. It is a prerequisite to appearing in the way most loved by Allah (swt) and His Prophet (sa). Allah (swt) says:

“O children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes) while praying.” [Al-Araf, 7:31]

4. Lastly, cleanliness and pleasant appearance are conducive for cultivating healthy human relationships.

A man came to the Prophet (sa) with unkempt hair and untidy beard. The Prophet (sa) pointed to him, as if ordering him to straighten his hair and beard. He did so and returned. Thereupon the Prophet (sa) observed, ‘Is that not better than one of you coming with his hair unkempt, as if he were a devil?’ [Malik]

III- SOURCE

Complying with these practices ensure cleanliness of the body and purity from dirt and filth. They add honor to human beings and are listed in the following two *hadiths* of the Prophet:

“Five are from the natural practices: circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, cutting the moustache short, clipping the nails, and plucking the armpit hairs”
[Bukhari & Muslim]

“Ten are from natural practices: (1) clipping the moustache, (2) letting the beard grow, (3) using the tooth-stick, (4) cleaning by putting water in the nose, (5) clipping the nails, (6) washing the knuckles and finger joints, (7) plucking the hair under the armpits, (8) shaving the pubic hairs, (9) using water to clean one’s private parts (after urination).” The narrator said: ‘I have forgotten the tenth, unless it is (10) rinsing the mouth.’
[Bukhari & Muslim]

IV- SUNAN AL-FITRAH IN DETAILS

1. Clipping or trimming the mustache

The sunnah is to shorten the mustache. It can be done by trimming the edges so the lip becomes visible or lightening/trimming it from everywhere.

2. Growing the beard

Unlike the perception of some people, the beard is something natural and a full beard does not mean the person is untidy or unkept.

The Prophet said: ‘Cut the moustache and let the beards grow, and oppose the Magians.’
[Muslim]

3. Using the tooth-stick

- According to An-Nawawi(1), tooth brushing is the verb and the tool in which we use for this purpose is called tooth brush, or tooth stick"miswaak".

On the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: “Were it not that I might over-burden my people I would have ordered them to use siwak (tooth-stick) at every time of the prayer, and in another transmit, in every ablution”. [Bukhari & Muslim]

On the authority of Abdullah ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah said: "Keep on doing tooth brushing because it cleans the mouth and pleasures Allah" [Al-Byhaki & Bukhari].

And according to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “tooth brushing cleans the mouth and pleasures Allah" [Ibn Majah]

- When to toothbrush? After eating, before and after sleep, after giving a long talk, and in general, whenever you feel that tooth brushing is needed”.

Aicha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah used to toothbrush before entering his house” [Bukhari]

- Ibn al- Kayyim said: Tooth brushing is recommended act for both fasting and non fasting person in any time because it is not specified in hadiths, also it is needed for a person whose fasting in the sake of Allahs pleasure and His pleasure is demanding in fasting than any other time, so purification is the best deed for a fasting person. *[Ibn Al-Qayim Al-Jawziyah, in Zad Al-Maad]*

4. Cleaning by putting water in the nose

Inhaling water into someone’s nose during wudu (abulution) is one of the sunan of wudu. However, such practice is not restricted to wudu; meaning that it can be done whenever needed, because it keeps us close to the fitrah. It is highly recommended especially for those who are constantly exposed (i.e. during work) to dust, dirt or any products that may affect the respiratory system or one’s health in general.

5. Clipping nails of hand and feet

It’s an agreed upon sunnah for men and women. The purpose is to remove the dirt under the nails and also so they do not resemble the claws of animals. A Muslim woman should also trim the nails of her hands and feet every 40 days as it is closer to her innate human nature.

6. Washing the knuckles and finger joints

Knuckles and finger joints are places where dirt can gather and cause infections. So, it’s highly recommended to always clean them.

7. Plucking (pulling out) the hair under the armpits

The sunnah is to pull out the hair, however shaving is permissible because the purpose is cleanliness.

8. Shaving the pubic hairs

The pubic hair can be shaved, trimmed, or pulled out. Removal of pubic hair is a sunnah agreed upon by all Muslim scholars. It is also sunnah to shave the pubic hair, but other means are permissible. In other words, it is best to shave, but all other methods of hair removal are permissible.

*NB: It is preferred to cut the pubic hairs and pluck out the underarm hairs on a weekly basis, a practice which is most hygienic. If some unnecessary hair is left on the body for

a longer period of time, it may disturb the person. One may leave this action for forty days, but no longer.

9. Using water to clean one's private parts (after urination)

Ibn Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by two graves, and said: "They are being punished, but they are not being punished for any major sin. One of them used not to protect himself (i.e. keep himself clean from) his urine, and the other used to walk about spreading malicious gossip."
[Bukhari]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When any one of you urinates, he should not hold his penis in his right hand or clean it with his right hand; and (when drinking), he should not breathe into the vessel." *[Bukhari]*

10. Rinsing the mouth (al-madmadah)

It is not obligatory to toothbrush the mouth after eating or drinking, whether one wants to pray or read Quran. But it is mustahabb for him to do that, especially if what he ate or drank was at all greasy.

Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) drank some milk, then he called for water and rinsed out his mouth and said: "It is somewhat greasy." *[Muslim]*

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This indicates that it is mustahabb (liked) to rinse out the mouth after drinking milk. The scholars said: This also applies to other kinds of food and drink; it is mustahabb to rinse the mouth lest any traces of it be left that might be swallowed whilst praying.

11. Circumcision

It refers to the removal of the loose foreskin covering a male's penis. Circumcision prevents dirt from getting on one's penis, and also makes it easy to keep it clean. Uncircumcised penis can suffer from chronic irritation, infection, penile cancer, and other diseases.

Circumcision is recommended to be done on the 7th day after the birth of the child. However it is also permissible anytime after that. Circumcision is better when done at an early age as it heals quicker. Delayed circumcision becomes required (wajib) upon reaching the age of puberty when ablution and salah become compulsory (wajib). Prophet Muhammad said,

"Ibrahim circumcised himself after he was eighty years old." *[Bukhari]*

"Allah said, 'Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Ibrahim, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists.'" [Nahl:1 23]

*NB: If it is difficult for an adult new to Islam to get circumcised because he's a grown up, then he is not to be forced. None is to be circumcised after death.