

Purity and cleanliness

Islam has put great emphasis on cleanliness, both outer cleanliness and internal purification of the heart. In evidence of this, Allah, the Most Exalted, linked between those two kinds of purity, for He says, "Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves." (Al-Baqara: 222). In the same regard, the Prophet pbuh said, "Purity is half of faith." Thus, in this Hadith, the Prophet pbuh illustrates that by being clean, one will fulfil half of the demands of faith. This is because faith purifies the inner soul, Wudu (ablution) removes sins, and water cleanse cloths and body.

Truly, the relationship between the servant and their Lord is conducive to purify their hearts. The Messenger of Allah pbuh promised Paradise as an eternal dwelling for those who maintain the purity of their hearts from envy, enmity and other negative attributes. It was narrated in this regard that the Prophet pbuh once said to his companions, "A man from amongst the dwellers of Paradise will appear before you now." So, when the same noble companion was asked about the reason that made him from the people of Paradise, he said, "I have no feeling of hatred towards anyone and do not feel jealous from anybody for a blessing granted to them by Allah." Then, it was said to him, "Nothing made you reach that rank except this." So, congratulations for those who keep their hearts pure and their minds sound.

Islam urged for the physical cleanliness and made it a key requirement for prayer, one of Islam's pillars. Allah, the Almighty, says, "O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles." (Al-Maida: 6). Thus, Allah, the Most Exalted, enjoined upon us to wash the apparent limbs of our body for these are more vulnerable to infection. In fact, inseparable from prayers in Islam is Taharah (ritual purity). A Muslim is required to make ablution (wudu) five times a day before prayer. This way, one will be spirited, clean and pure all the day. As a result, they will draw closer to their Lord and He will bestow His love upon them. Allah, the Almighty, says, "men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves." (At-Tawba: 108). O Servants of Allah, the aspects of the great care given by the Prophet pbuh to one's cleanliness are many. It is advisable to wash hands before and after eating.

Equally important, taking care of the body's hygiene and purity is advised at all times, especially before establishing Friday prayer or praying in congregation. In this regard, Allah, the Almighty, enjoined upon us to choose the cleanest, most beautiful and appropriate clothes before coming to the masjid. The Most Exalted says, "O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid." (Al-Aaraf: 31). In this Aya, taking adornment means cleanliness of body and clothes. This is also required during Eid and other joyful events.

Please know that Islam put emphasis on taking adornment so that Muslims would be clean. Indeed, Allah, the Most Graceful, likes His servants to look good. It was narrated in this regard that a man said to the Prophet pbuh, "I like for my clothes to be nice, and my shoes to be nice?" So he pbuh said, "Indeed Allah is beautiful and loves beauty." More to the point, from Allah's favours upon people is that He ordained them to wear clothes in order to make their outer appearance more beautiful. It also called on Muslims to be pious, piety being an adornment to their inner souls. The Most Exalted says, "O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your body parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness - that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember." (Al-Aaraf: 26). Furthermore, applying perfume is also an important part of adornment. Our Master Muhammad pbuh advised Muslims to apply perfume, especially during assemblies so that they always smell good. He pbuh said, "Anyone who takes a bath on Friday and cleans himself as much as he can and puts oil (on his hair) or applies a touch of perfume; and then proceeds for the prayer and does not force his way between two persons (assembled in the mosque for the Friday prayer), and prays as much as is written for him and remains quiet when the Imam delivers the Khutba, all his sins in between the present and the last Friday will be forgiven." It is really such a great reward for those who keep themselves clean, make sure they smell nice and listen attentively to the Khateeb.

Not only the purity of man himself is important, but also the purity of the society in general. As such, one should maintain the cleanliness of the surrounding environment, neighbourhood, streets, gardens, schools and other public areas. In fact, keeping the streets clean is a right and removing all that may cause harm to people out of the way is considered as an act of charity. The Prophet pbuh said, "To remove a harmful thing from the way is Sadaqa (charity)." Thus, from a religious perspective, and as a responsible citizen it is a duty incumbent on all of us to keep the cleanliness of the public and private utilities as well as the environment in general. This way, we will help in maintaining a healthy

community whose members are happy, capable of giving and devoted to contributing to the development and prosperity of their country. Indeed, purity and cleanliness have a great effect on individuals and societies. Therefore, we are urged to observe both outer cleanliness and internal purification of the heart. It is also our duty to nurture such culture in the minds and hearts of our young generation.

We seek Allah's grace to make us amongst those who are pure and maintain their hygiene. May Allah guide us all to obey Him and obey His Messenger Muhammad pbuh and obey those He have commanded us to obey in line with His orders: "O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." (An-Nisaa: 59). May Allah direct us all to the blessings of the Glorious Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger pbuh. I say this and ask Allah for forgiveness for me and you, so invoke Him for forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire. O Servants of Allah "indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (An-Nahl: 90). Remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful of His benevolence and He will increase His blessings to you. Allah says, "and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do." (Al-Ankaboot: 45).