

## Purification and cleanliness

Cleanliness and personal hygiene are essential requirements in the Islamic faith.

"...Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (physically and spiritually)". The Quran, 2:222

"And your clothing purify." The Quran, 74:4

Performing ablution before praying is an essential requirement for prayers. It includes washing the hands, face, forearms up to the elbows, wiping the head and washing the feet.

Ghusul, complete body wash Performing "Ghusul" (washing the whole body) on a regular basis is strongly recommended and is considered as part of Muhammad's Sunnah (teachings and way of life). However, Ghusul is a must for purity on certain occasions (e.g. after marital contact and menstruation).

Muhammad emphasized cleanliness and purification in all aspects of life. He asked his companions to clean their homes and surroundings regularly. He taught them that removing harm or garbage from the road is a rewardable charity act. Also, Muhammad urged his companions to maintain high personal hygiene and cleanliness. His sayings in this context indicate the following:

- Dress in clean and tidy clothes but do not be prodigal
- Use perfumes (Teeb) to smell good
- Trim your nails, remove pubic and armpit hair
- Wash hands before and after eating. Do not touch food after waking up until hands are washed.

### **Miswak and dental care. Clean mouth and good breath during the whole day**

Muhammad said: "If it did not trouble you, I would ask you to brush your teeth with miswak before each prayer." (i.e. five times a day) (Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim)

#### **What is miswak ?**

Miswak is a common name for *Salvadore persica* (tooth brush tree, also known as the Arak tree). It is popularly used in Saudi Arabia. Miswak wicks clean between the teeth and do not break under pressure, rather they are flexible and strong. The chemical analysis of Miswak shows that it contains many useful minerals and elements such as fluorides in large amounts, silica, vitamin C and small quantities of chlorides, tannins, saponins, flavenoids and sterols.

**Note:** According to analytical research, Miswak helps fight plaques, recession and bleeding of gums. The Miswak stick releases fresh sap and silica (hard glossy material) which acts as an abrasive material to remove stains. Miswak can clean teeth gently and effectively, whitens the teeth without harming enamel or gum. The chloride content helps remove the plaque and tartar stains and vitamin C contributes to the healing and repair of the tissues. It is believed that Miswak extract relieves headache, common cold, nausea, tensions, and dizziness.