



## PERSONAL HYGIENE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

### LESSON I

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ...

*“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every mosque...”*

In this lesson we will discuss the above *āyah* and the importance of personal cleanliness in Islam. The *āyah* shows us that it is important to be clean in Islam. It is extra important to be clean and look good and presentable when we are attending the mosque or any Islamic gathering.

### PERSONAL HYGIENE

This issue is very significant in Islam. The Prophet (saw) has emphasised this issue in many of his narrations. In this lesson, we will look at some of the most important aspects of this obligation.

#### **DRESSING WELL AND SELF GROOMING**

As Muslims, we should look neat, clean and tidy when we appear in front of other people. It is important to do this when we meet other believers, because this will increase the love between believers. It is also important to do this when we meet with non-Muslims, because this will give them a good image of Islam.

The most important aspects of being clean and well-presented are:

- Using perfume and deodorant all the time. We should always remember to have deodorant handy if we are going to play sport. The importance of using perfume is seen from this narration related from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as):

#### **Objectives >>>**

#### **Students should:**

- Be reminded that Islam teaches us to be neat and tidy ourselves.
- Know that a Masjid (Islamic centre, place of prayer etc.) is a very special place and must be respected by dressing and grooming appropriately.
- Learn that we should groom ourselves (Smell good, comb hair, dress decently) well before going out or even at home
- Understand the importance of maintaining general hygiene to prevent the spread of germs, and the etiquette of coughing and sneezing
- Know that keeping their environment and room/house tidy and clean is an obligation
- Understand the concept of ‘Dress of Piety’

*“Using perfume is a practice of the messengers”<sup>ii</sup>*



- Our hair should be neat and combed. We should also try to get a neat haircut that makes us look good and avoid haircuts that look strange, messy or dirty. The Prophet (saw) would always comb his hair and keep it tidy. In fact, he would not even open the door to meet someone without first making sure his hair was neat and tidy.
- We should wear clean clothes. Our clothes should be respectable and appropriate, and we should not wear clothes that are considered abnormal in the society we live in.
- We should try to keep our mouth smelling good by regularly brushing our teeth, flossing our teeth and using mouthwash.
- We should wash our feet regularly so they do not stink. If we are going out for a long time, or are going to play sport, it can be a good idea to bring along a second pair of socks to wear after sport.
- We should take showers regularly. In summer, showering every day is important, and if we have played sport or are sweaty for some reason, it is good to take a shower as well.



## ETIQUETTES OF COUGHING AND SNEEZING

Islam has also given us recommendations on the etiquettes of sneezing or coughing. These recommendations are the same as those that science and medicine in this day and age have encouraged people to follow, since many diseases are spread through the uncleanliness of the body.

Influenza (flu) and other serious respiratory illnesses like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are spread by coughing, sneezing, or unclean hands<sup>iii</sup>.

### **TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS:**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- You may be asked to put on a facemask to protect others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

### **Review Questions:**

#### **Q1. The Prophet (saw) used to:**

- a) Always comb his hair before going out
- b) Never waste time combing his hair
- c) Only comb his hair on special occasions

#### **Q2. It is extra important to look neat and clean:**

- a) When at home
- b) When going to the mosque
- c) When playing sport

## LESSON II

<sup>iv</sup>In the previous lesson, we learnt the importance of dressing well and grooming ourselves when we go out, especially to the places of worship. However, we must know that dressing well does not mean dressing in an un-Islamic fashion outside the rules of *Hijāb*. We must observe modesty and decency in our dressing.

Allah (SWT) explains this beautifully in the Holy Qur'ān:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا  
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَذَكَّرُونَ

*“O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may remember” (7:26)*

### THE DRESS OF PIETY

In the verse of Holy Qur'ān we discussed above, Allah (SWT) mentions that the dress of piety is better than all other types of dressing. This means that we have to be careful of our Islamic obligations and duties at all times and with everything we do, including dressing. We cannot dress to attract people's attention especially between opposite genders, for this is sinful. Also, our dressing should be to please Allah (SWT) and to give Islam a good image, not to show-off and be proud of our wealth and status.

### CLEANLINESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSE

It is very important for Muslims not only to keep themselves clean and tidy, but to do the same for their environment and houses. Unfortunately, non-Muslim houses and suburbs are usually far more neat and tidy than our houses and suburbs –which gives a bad image to Islam. We must make sure that we follow our religion properly and keep our houses and neighbourhoods clean.

*The Prophet (saw) said: “do not leave garbage overnight in your houses, and take it out in the daytime, for it is the dwelling place of the devil.”<sup>v</sup>*

Here are some things we should make sure to do to keep our houses, streets, schools and mosques clean:

- Always tidy our room. We should not drive our mums crazy with our messy rooms and beds. We should make our bed and tidy our room on a daily basis.
- We should not dirty the bathroom when we use it, wherever it may be.
- We should clean up after ourselves when we eat. If this is at home, we should pick up our dishes and wash them ourselves if we can. We should not leave crumbs and leftovers on the table and especially not on the floor.
- We should not litter. Littering is a terrible habit that is discouraged in Islam as well.
- We should pick up any rubbish we see around us, even if it is not our rubbish.
- We should help our parents with mowing the lawn, keeping our gardens neat, and with big house clean-ups.

Even after a hard long day at work, Imam 'Ali (as) used to help his wife with housework when he got home. He would sweep the floor around the house and help his wife keep the house neat and clean.

We should learn from this to do the same and help our parents, especially our mums, with housework and cleaning.

### Review Questions

#### Q1. Islam encourages us to:

- Keep our houses clean and tidy
- Leave our houses dirty as there are more important things to do than clean up
- Neither of the above

#### Q2. Muslims suburbs should be:

- Average in cleanliness
- The cleanest
- The least clean

<sup>i</sup> References

Social Rules in Islam: Personal Hygiene – Lecture by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei  
A Bundle of Flowers –[www.al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org)  
Dar-al- Hadith, Cultural Scientific Institute -  
<http://www.darolhadith.com/index.php>  
Holy Qur'an  
Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> [al-Kafi, v. 6, p. 510, no. 2]

<sup>iii</sup> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

<sup>iv</sup> References

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<sup>v</sup> [al-Faqih, v. 4, p. 5, no. 4968]