

Cleanliness of Body and Soul

One of the most abhorrent criminals in human history was known to be obsessed with cleanliness. He ordered that factories should use Zyklon B, a powerful pesticide, to eradicate mice and other pests. Some years later, he used the same pesticide to kill thousands of people in his concentration camps. He even called this operation 'cleansing'. We may wonder that a person can be so made. The answer is that this is certainly true. The person we are talking about is Adolf Hitler.

When we wake up in the morning and look in the mirror, we see ourselves. Little wonder, then, that we spend much money on cleaning our bodies and homes, but we often take little care of our souls.

All you can do by way of keeping your dog, cat or horse clean is to wash them with soap and water. But a human being is not the same as a dog or a horse. Let us then ask: would anyone eat a thoroughly washed apple if it is infested with worms? Would you wear a beautiful designer shirt if it is dirty and has not been washed for a long time? Is a computer that used to sell for 10,000 dollars worth anything if it still works with the old fashioned operating system Windows 3.11?

Many of us reflect such contradiction in their lives. We take the best care of our 'hardware': well-built bodies, oiled hair, clean skin, deodorants, perfumes, etc. while our 'software' is neglected: a spirit that is controlled by deep-seated desires so that it cannot distinguish good from bad.

In the Qur'an, God says: 'God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure.' (2: 222) The verse reflects clear association between repentance from sin and purity. No wonder, for repentance is an exercise in purifying ourselves from the filth of sin.

God says in the Qur'an: 'Never set a foot there. Only a house of worship that from the very first day has been founded on piety is worthy of you standing to pray there. In it are men who love to grow in purity, for God loves those who purify themselves'. (9: 108)

It is amazing that some people who claimed to understand 'the reality of life' and believed that this present life is worth nothing decided to never clean themselves, take a bath or have a haircut. They led a Bohemian type of life and became drug addicts.

By contrast, Prophet Muhammad saw heaven and hell with his own eyes when he ascended to heaven and spoke to angels. He taught us that 'in God's sight, this whole world is not worth the span of a mosquito's wing'. He undertook the task of purging

all forms of disbelief and idolatry from human life. He is the one who instructed his followers, saying: 'Proper human nature requires five actions: circumcision, removing pubic hair, trimming one's moustache, clipping one's nails and removing armpit hair'. [Related by Muslim].

Do we find such perfect balance between the purity of soul and physical cleanliness in any way of life other than Islam?

A Muslim meets his Lord five times every day when he offers his obligatory prayers. Before each meeting, he washes his face, arms and feet. When you open any book of Islamic law, anywhere in the world, you will find that the first chapter deals with cleansing. This is due to the fact that in Islam, no act of worship is valid without ablution.

God wants you to keep your body and soul in pure condition. Isn't this your won wish?