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The Role of the Qur'an and Sunnah in Oral Health

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Abstract:	The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which the main texts in Islam; Holy Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) contribute to understandings of oral health. The AHadith provide a guidance for oral health related behaviour (OHRB) but were written at a time when their symbolic meanings were perhaps vastly different to those of today. In gaining more insight into the ways Islamic HRB shape oral health related practices and outcomes, if at all, we may be better placed to develop a more culturally sensitive and diverse dental public health and oral health promotion which takes into account religious dimensions, mediating factors, HRB and salutogenic mechanisms.

Thank you for your input; the section on symbolism and the wording has been amended as requested and highlighted in red (apologies for the colour) so it stands out from the original amendments.

The Role of the Qur'an and Sunnah in Oral Health

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1
2 **Introduction**
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5
6 The aim of this paper is to investigate the ways in which the main texts in Islam; Holy
7
8 Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) may contribute to
9
10 understandings of oral health and oral health practices. Recently, there has been an
11
12 integration of the influence of religion on health, with some research moving towards
13
14 exploring the influence of religious practices on health and health promotion (Asgary et al.,
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16 2000, Al-Kandari, 2003, Aboul-Enien 2014). Religion is also beginning to become more
17
18 predominant in medical studies, particularly in health psychology which uses religion and
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20 spirituality in the field of coping and resilience (Pargament, 1988, 1998, 2000), social
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22 psychological studies which explore the influence of religion on health (Miller and Thoresen,
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24 2003), public health studies focusing on health inequalities (Padela and Curlin 2013) and
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26 medical sociology exploring religiosity and health related behaviour (Levin 1996).
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35 [The rise in studies that discuss religion and spirituality as an influence on health and well-](#)
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37 [being mark a move away from a more biomedical and somewhat negative perception of](#)
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39 [health; where health is merely an absence of disease and towards a broader and more](#)
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41 [positive conception \(Wallace and Forman 1998\). This links with the concept of](#)
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43 [salutogenesis which is a more holistic approach to health and focuses on factors that](#)
44
45 [support human health and well-being, rather than on factors that cause disease](#)
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47 [\(Antonovsky 1979, 1987a\). One term that is often used to describe how religious a person is,](#)
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49 [rather than the ways; in terms of practicing rituals, retelling certain stories and accepting](#)
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51 [certain doctrines around life and death; is religiosity \(Cornwall et al., 1986\).](#)
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1 Although religiosity may be said to be multi-dimensional, it is often regarded as a protective
2 factor for health (Ellison and Levin 1998; George et al. 2002), mental health (Levin and
3 Chatters 1998; Samaan 2000) and reduced substance use (Wallace 1999). Religiosity has
4 been positively associated with health related behaviour (HRB) (Wallace and Forman 1998)
5 but it has also been argued that it is a barrier to utilising maternal health and child
6 immunisation services for some faiths (Ha et al., 2014). One suggestion here may be that
7 factors influencing moderators for HRB are not adequately controlled in many studies and
8 this may account for contrasting views. Another suggestion may be that faith groups are
9 not homogenous; many studies do not take into account the level of inequity in societies
10 and the importance of the role of culture as a moderator is often overlooked.
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26 For example, some studies in Slovakia argue that gender is a moderator of religiosity and
27 some HRB, particularly substance misuse (Pitel et al 2010, 2011, 2012) whilst some
28 American studies argue that there is no statistical significance regarding gender as a
29 moderator for certain HRB (Zaleski and Schiaffino 2000). Furthermore, it is claimed that
30 some HRB such as tooth brushing and oral health related practices are not associated with
31 religiosity and other practices only carry a weak association at best (Pitel et al 2012). This is
32 in contrast to a systematic review for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
33 (NICE) on resilience and health which suggested that religiosity contributed towards a range
34 of positive outcomes for health, particularly HRB and social relationships, but evidence of
35 moderators was weak and the authors cautioned that the majority of studies were biased
36 towards Christian denominations with little or no inclusion of other world religions such as
37 Islam (Harrop et al 2007).
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1 The Qur'an and Sunnah are the two main sources of Islam. The sayings, actions and the life
2 of the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam (SAW), together with the train of their
3 transmission are called AHadith. The strength of the hadith (singular) is dependent on the
4 reliability of the source. For example, Sahih Bhukairi's collection of Ahadith is considered to
5 be the most authentic because he included only strong testimonials from reliable and
6 trustworthy testifiers. The Sunnah is the way of life based on the teachings and practices of
7 the Prophet and exegesis of the Qur'an.
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9

10 One issue about interpreting the AHadith is related to their age and the differences in
11 knowledge about the mouth, healthcare, historical, cultural and soci-economic factors in the
12 21st Century compared to the time when they were written. What we may consider here is
13 that the AHadith contain guidance and teaching about health which fail to be acknowledged
14 by Western public health (Padeal and Curlin 2013). This is because Western public health is
15 constructed within a biomedical model concentrating on health and disease identification,
16 measurement, classification, explanation and so on, with the goals of clinical intervention
17 and prevention, contributing to the medicalisation of daily life (Quirke and Gaudillière
18 2008). With the introduction of salutogenesis, the concept of health in the West is slowly
19 evolving from disease-free biological functioning into something broader and more holistic
20 (Miller and Thoresen 2003). We could also suggest that employing a more socio-cultural
21 approach to health would involve the inclusion of the role of culture, its ways of preserving
22 and maintaining health, how culture and religion shape practices and behaviours and the
23 links with religious teachings and religiosity.
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54 The Qur'an provides guidance through the provision of general rules to regulate and guide
55 peoples' behaviour in their daily lives towards achieving better health and well-being (Elkadi
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1985). Some research suggests that Islamic teachings may assist us in gaining more insight into the Islamic world and in 'narrowing the information gap that separates the West and Islam' (Ashy 1999, p. 241). We can argue here that they may further provide a space whereby discussion may foster increased knowledge production and enhance understandings around public and dental public health globally.

For example, oral health is also a part of general health and there are number of sayings and practices by the Prophet Mohammed [pbuh] which encourages Muslims to clean their mouths daily by using a small piece of tree called "Siwak" or "Miswak" which comes from the Arabic word 'Saka' literally meaning to clean the teeth (Nordin, 2012). Muslims can often be seen using Miswak during Ramadan because toothpaste and mouthwash are considered an offensive act- *makruh* (Sirios et al 2013).

We can suggest here that some oral health practices appear to have become a natural and integrated part of Islamic cultural practices, but have so far received little attention within Western dental public health. What is unclear is the degree to which the Sunnah may exert an influence on oral health behaviours and practices. Therefore, the aim of the research was to uncover the extent of the guidance on oral health within the Sunnah.

Methods

Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) was used to explore and analyse the Sunnah; this approach is related to many different research approaches concerned with analysing communication in different contexts (Plummer 2001). ECA may be used to discuss and interpret common or shared meanings (Altheide 1987). Common or shared meanings are usually transmitted by a system of symbols; the most often used being that of language

1 (Mead 1934). Language is about relationships and structures, but ECA goes deeper than the
2 immediate relationship implied and is highly reflexive; exploring or uncovering different
3 structures such as power and inequality, and from differing perspectives such as psychology,
4 sociology, and ethnomethodology amongst others.
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10 We explored the hadith for narratives around the mouth and oral health and focused on the
11 relationship between religious knowledge and practices around the mouth and oral health.
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15 We then divided the analysis into three areas:
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- 18 • The repetition of the statements and the classification of what had been said
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- 21 • The boundaries of the AHadith in relation to the mouth
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- 24 • The possible facts/interpretations about the object described in the AHadith. A
25 construction of the statements around/related to the object looks at the ways in
26 which discourses are produced and the cultural and historical significance that they
27 may have
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37 We chose to focus on two books of Hadith; Sahih al- Bakhari and Sahih Muslim which are
38 considered to be the most authentic books of hadith, and are called "Sahihain"
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43 (www.sunnah.com). For the research we used sunnah.com; a website with its own search
44 engine for the AHadith which is translated into English. This made analysis easier for the
45 non-Arabic speaking researcher, although we are aware that meaning may be lost during
46 translation.
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53 **Results**

54 A series of tables were constructed to inform the analysis:
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1 The total number of Miswak or Siwak related AHadith in the Sahih al- Bukhari and Sahih
2 Muslim was 51. See *Table 1* (Appendix) for examples.

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6 The AHadith were read, analysed and classified into four main subtopics related to oral
7 health which focused on:

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11 • Time of use
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15 • Method of use (practices)
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19 • Advantage of use
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23 • Emphasis of use

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26 The total number of books of mouth rinsing related AHadith in the Sahih al- Bukhari and
27 Sahih Muslim was 34. (*see Table 2, Appendix*). Similar to the the AHadith of Miswak, these
28 were split into time of use, method, and importance (Fitra). Most have been narrated in the
29 books of ablution and purification within Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim respectively.

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Table 2 (See Appendix) shows the three main categories of the AHadith related to mouth
rinsing, which can positively affect oral health.

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- Method of mouth rinsing shows how the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) performed mouth rinsing by rinsing his mouth three times.
- Importance of mouth rinsing; this is considered to be an essential behaviour. This practice plays an important role in getting rid of sins and makes Muslims much closer to God, Allah (swt).

Table 3 (See Appendix) illustrates AHadith of other practices which could have an impact on the mouth, as narrated in the Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. The total number of AHadith are 14 and we included one; Hadith Qudsi; types of Hadith in which the real meaning comes from Allah (swt); while the text the punctuation from Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) are simultaneously narrated by Sahih al Bukhari and Muslim. What is apparent is that there are many AHadith that relate to care of the mouth and there may be many different ways that they can be interpreted.

Discussion

The mouth appears to be of importance in the AHadith because it is frequently mentioned in relation to oral health traditions, practices, and cultural perceptions. Using ethnographic content analysis enables us to decode how meaning may be encoded in a natural object such as water; leading us to firstly explore the symbolism of water, and relationship to oral health practices within Islam. We will then explore Miswak and the oral health practices recommended by the AHadith, and lastly other representations of the mouth that appear to construct the mouth as an area that requires monitoring and regulating.

Symbolism of water and its relationship to oral health practices

1
2
3 Water has an important and essential role in Islam, particularly in the process of ablution
4
5 and washing, but its spiritual symbolism is especially important. It is necessary for the
6
7 preparation of a Muslim to start his relationship with God. The parts of the body included in
8
9 the ritual of washing during ablution have many physical activities every day, such as
10
11 walking, speech, hearing and vision. These activities could be exposed to and produce
12
13 different impurities upon the soul which consequently may pollute through contact, and this
14
15 exemplifies the need for washing. When water comes into contact with body during
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ablution, Muslim people experience an inexplicable feeling. This emotion is thought to be a state of preparation and activation because ablution reminds Muslims about the prior status of the body because they believe that human beings were created from clay (water mixed with dust). Each time the water touches the body, it is a reminder of the primary resurrection when the first human being was created (Al Jabil 2013).

“It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term and a specified time [known] to Him; then [still] you are in dispute” (Al-'An`ām, Qur'an,6: 2).

Symbolism has a broad and long standing literature, starting with the works of Durkheim and Weber who alongside Clifford Geertz suggests that man is an animal entangled in the webs of significance that he himself spins. Geertz in particular, suggests that religion itself is a system of symbols which acts to 'establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting' effects on man by constructing a general order of existence which become established as facts and as such become 'uniquely realistic' (Geertz 1973, p. 90). 'Symbol' can refer to a variety of things; an object, an act, a quality, a conceptual meaning, or a dimension of an event. What appears important is the form a symbol may take at the time they are formulated.

1 For example, Islam emerged from the harsh deserts of Arabia where water was a precious
2 commodity and essential to sustain life; it was seen as a gift from God. The symbolic
3
4 example that appears in the Qur'an is when Hajjar, wife of the Prophet Ibrahim, was alone
5
6 and worried her son would die from thirst. God allowed a well to spring up at Zam Zam.
7
8 The well is a symbol of God's mercy and is visited today as a part of the pilgrimage called
9
10 Hajj that all Muslims should undertake at least once in their lifetime.
11
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14
15 For Islam, water **combines** a number of symbols; life, birth, death, purification, cleansing
16
17 and healing. Qur'anic metaphors also use water **as** symbols of paradise, righteousness,
18
19 God's mercy and moral integrity; "In the garden is no idle talk; there is a gushing fountain".
20
21 (Qur'an 88:11-12). This is in opposition to Hell where the waters are stagnant. Here the
22
23 **form of the water because it is flowing symbolises** purity (*mutlaq*) and is always provided at
24
25 mosques for ablutions.
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31
32 At the time much of the guidance for health was written in the Sunnah, Arabia was
33
34 dominated by warring tribes and Islam related strongly to social organisation and
35
36 cohesiveness; its aim was to unite and promote equality. Control of the religious life of the
37
38 community was exerted through the uniformity of practices. The patterns and regularities
39
40 of any religion, including Islam, provide a prototype for the relations between men and are
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42 highlighted by the system of symbols that it uses (Douglas 1970). One issue here is that
43
44 there is no way of controlling for cultural differences that appear and the concordance
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46 between symbolic and social experience within a given social environment. Healthcare
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48 systems are but one example of how a social environment may differ from country to
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50 country. For example, Islam arose in 622AD (Holt et al., 1977) and the social systems in
51
52 which the body as an organ of communication was used to reflect and enhance the
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individual's experience of society would have been vastly different to the systems of today.

We could suggest here that symbolism in some senses may become translated into a ritualistic act because the symbolic meaning may alter according to the situation, or be lost over time leaving behind the symbolic order. Much of this has yet to be explored with dental public health.

Purification is not the only use of water; there are other uses that are known and linked to areas such as health, particularly, oral health and the AHadith provide clear recommendations for rinsing the mouth with water after each meal. This behaviour is also suggested by medical research as an essential approach to possessing good oral health, and poor oral hygiene could be related to different types of oral health diseases, such as dental caries, periodontal inflammation and halitosis or bad breath (Van Der Weijden and Slot

Miswak and the mouth

The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) recommended using Miswak (Siwak) on different occasions, detailing instructions how to and the number of times it needed to be used. He urged his companions to use Miswak at least five times per day after each prayer. The regularity of using Miswak and the emphasis of modern medical science in relation to toothbrush (Poureslami et al., 2008) are both essential factors in gaining more effective results and improved oral health (Loë 2000). Although, it could also be argued that at the historical time that this was written the use of Miswak may also be symbolic in the ritual of purification, and even though it had a mechanistic function the symbolism is still present. For example, this is amplified during the holy month of Ramadam when Muslims carry Miswak around with them, routinely cleansing the mouth during the fasting period and maintaining its purity.

1 The Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was aware that all Muslims may not be able to use Miswak
2 and he acknowledges that everyone may not have the capacity and the skills to carry out
3
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5 the same level of mouth maintenance:
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8 Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, "*Were I not afraid that it would be hard on my followers, I*
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10 *would order them to use the siwak*" (al-Bukhari, book of wishes, Vol. 9, Book 90, and Hadith
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12 no. 346).
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17 It is a possibility that the guidance given in the Hadith for oral hygiene is important for a
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19 Muslim to care for his mouth and be accountable for it on the Day of Judgement-
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22 Alternatively, it could be that water is a sign of renewal and that it is more about ritual
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24 cleansing rather than oral hygiene and we have interpreted it by employing today's medical
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26 knowledge.
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29 30 *The mouth and Satan*

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32 Throughout history the mouth has been the site of good and evil. For example, in Japan
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34 pairs of stone Shisa (sort of lion dog) were placed at the gates of a house or on a roof; one
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36 with the mouth open to ward off evil spirits, the other with the mouth closed to keep good
37
38 spirits in (Ouweland 1985). This practice is now a tradition that is still observed today.
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43 There are reflections of the mouth being a place for wickedness and Satan to reside in the
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45 Hadiths;
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51 Bukhari: Book 4: Volume 54: Hadith 509
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54 "*Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Yawning is from Satan and if anyone of you*
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56 *yawns, he should check his yawning as much as possible, for if anyone of you (during the act*
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58 *of yawning) should say: 'Ha', Satan will laugh at him."*
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Muslim: Book 42: Hadith 7130

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3 *“The son of Abu Said al-Khudri reported on the authority of his father that Allah's Messenger*
4 *(pbuh) said: When one of you yawns, he should keep his mouth shut with the help of his*
5 *hand, for it is the devil that enters therein.”*

10
11 Muslims may have been discussing social etiquette when considering covering the mouth
12 with the hand when yawning, but yawning is also considered to be a sign of laziness and can
13 happen when the stomach is overfull and people feel sleepy. Another interpretation is that
14 yawning can release saliva that contaminates areas if the mouth is not covered. This is
15 highlighted in the Zoroastrian religion where saliva may not contaminate fire, which is
16 considered pure, and therefore a mask needs to be worn which covers the mouth when
17 praying before the sacred flame (Boyce 1979). A more theological explanation could be that
18 whilst someone is yawning they are not considering Allah and the guidance of his Prophet
19 and this is where there is room for Satan to enter. Evil thoughts, sayings and deeds may
20 occur as a result.

21
22 Evil and monsters are said to occupy liminal spaces (Gilmore 2002, p.95) which are
23 frequently damp or moist, and therefore the mouth may also be considered as a liminal
24 space where evil in the form of Satan can reside. This concept comes from Turner (1967)
25 who expanded original ideas around liminality because anything liminal is in a stage of
26 transition. It is ‘betwixt and between’ and ‘liminality’ is derived from the Latin word for
27 threshold so the mouth can be a threshold for evil but it can also be good. Liminal
28 individuals according to Douglas can also be polluting and impure and therefore dangerous
29 to those not having been through a liminal period (Douglas, 1966, p. 98). We can see that

1 this may be important if we think about prayer and a spiritual state because if the mouth is
2 impure then this pollutes the higher power.
3

4 5 6 *The regulated mouth* 7

8
9 Islam gives guidance concerning the mouth and oral hygiene and this appears to be based
10 on health and hygiene and also the mouth as a symbolic representation of purity. How the
11 mouth was viewed when the AHadith were written is very different from how we view the
12 mouth today, and therefore the ideas around hygiene, whilst fulfilling similar aims to
13 modern day, may have very different meanings. For example, our view of bacteria and
14 germ transmission emerged from the nineteenth century and the work in medicine (Last
15 2007). Hygiene after this time acquired a different meaning because of the new
16 understandings around germ theory. Prior to that dirt was seem as something that
17 disrupted order; it was out of place so maintaining order would involve the physical or
18 symbolic removal of dirt (Douglas 1966).
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36 Another interpretation could be linked to Foucault and his work on disciplined bodies
37 (Foucault 1977); Islam expects obedience from all Muslims and one aspect of obedience is
38 conformity. All Muslims will perform the same rituals of mouth washing before praying and
39 to some extent the mouth will become secondary to the ritual of washing and cleansing. So
40 whereas modern dental health relies on dental professionals to regulate the mouth through
41 surveillance, the AHadith survey and regulate the mouth through observances, teachings,
42 and rituals.
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55 [Ashy \(1999\) suggests that some Muslims interpret health through physical, social and](#)
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57 [spiritual domains, this means that engaging with healthcare guidance and professionals may](#)
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1 depend on where Muslims perceive their condition has come from. For some Muslims it
2 may be that health is perceived as emanating from God and it becomes a barrier to seeking
3 any professional guidance or care (DeShaw 2006). The religious aspect of seeking guidance
4 for oral health related problems is described in more depth in a study of a rural population
5 in Sudan (Owens and Saeed 2008). Islam also provides an ethico-legal framework to guide
6 treatment decision-making (Padela and Curlin 2013). For example, if we are trying to
7 promote oral health then Western dental public health perhaps needs to be aware of the
8 complexity of the Muslim belief system and the ways it may conflict with or complement
9 oral health promotion. This is where more challenges may occur because, as existing
10 studies indicate in the introduction, it is easy to measure religious affiliation, but measuring
11 religious practices and the ways these are implemented may not be as straightforward.
12
13 In response, Western dental public health may wish to consider developing Islam specific
14 measures of religiosity. This would involve a close ethnographic exploration of the ways in
15 which a Muslim may embrace a God centred framework for oral health, to promote or
16 evaluate their own oral health, as well as the extent to which a Muslim may live within
17 existing Islamic traditions and guidance for HRBs.
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43 **Conclusion**

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46 The AHadith do appear to provide a great deal of guidance for oral HRB, but the issue is that
47 at the time they were written the symbolic reason for the guidance was perhaps vastly
48 different to that which is understood today. Within Western dental public health there are
49 no studies which explore the aspect of religiosity and the positive or negative impact this
50 may have on oral health, or the extent to which a Muslim may live within existing Islamic
51 traditions and guidance for HRB. Developing Islam specific measures of religiosity may
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1 enable us to understand the ways in which religion acts as a protective factor or contributes
2 to oral health disparities where they exist. It may also help us to understand the oral health
3 decision-making processes for Muslims and whether or not the processes relate to a shared
4 religious understanding.
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10 In gaining more insight into the ways Islamic HRB shape oral health related practices and
11 outcomes, if at all, we may be better placed to develop a more culturally sensitive and
12 diverse dental public health and oral health promotion which takes into account religious
13 dimensions, mediating factors, HRB and salutogenic mechanisms.
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Appendix

Table 1: Four subtopics around the AHadith of Miswak

Miswak subtopic	Name of Hadith	Book	Examples
Method of Use	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Ablution, Vol. 1, Book 4, Hadith 245	<i>"I came to the Prophet (pbuh) and I saw him carrying a siwak in his hand and cleaning his teeth, saying, "u' u', as if he was retching while the siwak was in his mouth".</i>
	Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim	Riyad as-Salihin, The Book of Virtues, Hadith, Book 9, Hadith 1201	Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: <i>"I came to the Prophet (pbuh) once and noticed the tip of Miswak (tooth-stick) on his tongue"</i>
Recommended time	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Prayer at Night (Tahajjud), (Vol. 2, Book 21, Hadith 237).	Narrated Hudhaifa(May Allah be pleased with him): <i>"Whenever the Prophet (pbuh) got up for Tahajjud (at night) prayer he used to clean his mouth (and teeth) with Siwak"</i>
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Friday Prayer, Vol. 2, Book 13, Hadith 12	Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, <i>"If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with Siwak for every prayer"</i>
	Sahih Muslim	Book of Purification, Pertaining to tooth-stick, Hadith No. 488 & 489	<i>"I asked Aisyah: what the Prophet did first when he entered his house, and she replied: He used siwak (first of all)"</i>
	Sahih Muslim	The Book of Prayer Friday, Book 4, Hadith 1841	Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: <i>"Bathing on Friday for every adult, using of Miswak [...]".</i>
Advantage	Sahih Muslim	Book of Purification, Characteristics of Fitra, Hadith No. 502	<i>"Ten are the acts according to fitrah; clipping the mustache, letting the beard grow, using the siwak, snuffing up water in the nose, cutting the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking the hair under the</i>

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			<p><i>armpits, shaving the pubes, and cleaning one's private parts with water. The narrator said: I have forgotten the tenth, but it may have been rinsing the mouth"</i></p> <p><i>"The Prophet (pbuh) said, It (i.e siwak) is purification for the mouth and it is a way of seeking Allah's pleasures."</i></p>
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Fasting, Chapter dry or green siwak for fasting person	
Emphasis on use	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book Friday Prayer, Vol. 2, Book 13, Hadith 13	Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, "I have told you repeatedly to use the Siwak (The Prophet (pbuh) put emphasis on the use of the Siwak)"
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of wishes, Vol. 9, Book 90, and Hadith no. 346	Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, "Were I not afraid that it would be hard on my followers, I would order them to use the siwak" (as obligatory, for cleaning the mouth and the teeth)
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Military Expeditions led by the Prophet (pbuh) (Al-Maghaazi), Vol. 5, Book 59, Hadith 722	Narrated `Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her): "Abdur Rahman bin Abu Bakr entered upon the Prophet (pbuh) while I was supporting the Prophet (pbuh) on my chest. AbdurRahman had a fresh Siwak then and he was cleaning his teeth with it. Allah's Messenger (pbuh) looked at it, so I took the Siwak, cut it (chewed it with my teeth), shook it and made it soft (with water), and then gave it to the Prophet (pbuh) who cleaned his teeth with it. I had never seen Allah's Messenger (pbuh) cleaning his teeth in a better way. After finishing the brushing of his teeth, he lifted his hand or his finger and said thrice, O Allah! Let me be with the highest companions, and then died. `Aisha used to say, He died while his head was resting between my chest and chin."

Table 2: Three subtopics around the AHadith of mouth rinsing

Subtopic	Name	Book	Examples
Recommended time for mouth rinse	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Ablutions (Wudu), Vol. 1, Book 4, Hadith 210	Narrated Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him): <i>"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) drank milk, rinsed his mouth and said, "It has fat"</i>
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of food and meals, Vol. 1, Book 65, Hadith 365	Narrated Suwaid bin An Nu`man (May Allah be pleased with him): <i>"We went out with Allah's Messenger (pbuh) to Khaibar, and when we reached As-Sahba', the Prophet (pbuh) asked for food, and he was offered nothing but Sawiq (meal made of wheat, rice and barely). We ate, and then Allah's Messenger (pbuh) stood up for the prayer. He rinsed his mouth with water, and we too, rinsed our mouths"</i>
	Sahih Muslim	Book of Purification, Book 2, Hadith 457	'Abdullah b. Zaid b. 'Asim al-Mazini reported: <i>"He saw Allah's Messenger (pbuh) perform the ablution. He rinsed his mouth then cleaned his nose [...]"</i>
	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Bathing (Ghusl), Book 5, Hadith 12	Narrated Maimuna (prophet's wife): <i>"I placed water for the bath of the Prophet (pbuh) and he poured water with his right hand on his left and washed them. Then he washed his private parts and rubbed his hands on the ground, washed them with water, rinsed his mouth and washed his nose [...]"</i>
Method of mouth rinse	Sahih al-Bukhari	Sahih al-Bukhari	Narrated Al-Mughira bin Shu`ba: <i>"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) went out to answer the call of nature and on his return I brought some water to him. He performed the ablution while he was wearing a Sha'mi cloak. He rinsed his mouth and washed his nose [...]"</i>
		Book of Fighting for the Cause of Allah (Jihaad) ,Vol. 4, Book 52, Hadith 167).	Narrated `Amr bin Yahya:(on the authority of his father) `Abdullah bin Zaid poured water on his hands from a utensil containing water and

			<i>washed them and then with one handful of water he rinsed his mouth and cleaned his nose[...]</i> "
Importance of mouth rinse (Fitra)	Sahih Muslim	Book of Purification, Book 2, and Hadith 502	<i>The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: "Ten are the acts according to fitra: clipping the moustache, letting the beard grow, using the tooth-stick, snuffing water in the nose, cutting the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving the pubes and cleaning one's private parts with water. The narrator said: I have forgotten the tenth, but it may have been rinsing the mouth"</i>
	Sahih Musim	The Book of Prayer - Travellers, Book 4, Hadith 1812	<i>'Amr b. 'Abasa Sulami reported said: Apostle of Allah (pbuh), tell me about ablution also. He said: "None of you who uses water for ablution and rinses his mouth, snuffs up water and blows it, but the sins of his face, and his mouth and his nostrils fall out. When he washes his face, as Allah has commanded him, the sins of his face fallout from the end of his beard with water. [...]"</i>

Table 3: AHadith related to other practices concerning the mouth

Type of practice	Name of Hadith	Book	Examples	Total number of AHadith
Covering the mouth while yawning	Sahih Muslim	The Book of Zuhd and Softening of Hearts: Book 56, Hadith 7683	The son of Abu Said al-Khudri reported on the authority of his father that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: "When one of you yawns, he should keep his mouth shut with the help of his hand, for it is the devil that enters therein"	1
Prohibition of Drinking directly from the mouth of water skins	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Drinks: Vol. 7, Book 69, Hadith 530	Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: "I heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) forbidding the drinking of water by bending the mouths of water skins, i.e., drinking from the	5

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	Sahih Muslim	Book of Drinks: Book 23, Hadith 5015	<i>mouths directly"</i> <i>"Abu Sa'id Khudri reported that Allah's, Messenger (pbuh) forbade from turning the waterskins upside down and drinking from their mouths"</i>	2
The odour of mouth during fasting	Sahih al-Bukhari	Book of Dress, Oneness, Uniqueness of Allah (Tawheed), book of Fasting: Vol. 7, Book 72, Hadith 811 Hadith 10	Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (pbuh) said, "(Allah said), 'Every good deed of Adam's son is for him except fasting; it is for Me. and I shall reward (the fasting person) for it.' Verily, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allah than the smell of musk" <i>"On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (pbuh), who said: Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: Fasting is Mine and it is I who give reward for it. [A man] gives up his sexual passion, his food and his drink for my sake. Fasting is like a shield, and he who fasts has two joys: a joy when he breaks his fast and a joy when he meets his Lord. The change in the breath of the mouth of him who fasts is better in Allah's estimation than the smell of musk"</i>	5 1