

□ The Scientific Wisdom Behind Handwashing in Hadiths

More than **1400 years ago**, **Prophet Muhammad** □ provided guidance on personal hygiene that still resonates today — not only spiritually but scientifically. Among the most emphasized practices was handwashing, now globally recognized as **one of the most effective means of infection control**. This article explores the depth of hadiths on hand hygiene, the insights of classical scholars, and how modern science confirms their profound



truth.

□ Prophetic Teachings on Handwashing in Hadiths

Islamic tradition places extraordinary value on cleanliness. Prophet Muhammad □ repeatedly emphasized the importance of washing hands at key times — actions now



validated by microbiological research

1. Before and After Eating

“The blessing of food is in washing the hands before and after eating.”

— *Sunan Abi Dawood* 3760

[illegible]

Imam Al-Nawawi stated in his commentary on this hadith that handwashing is part of Islamic etiquette (Adab) and promotes both physical purity and spiritual humility before



partaking in sustenance.

2. After Waking Up

“When one of you wakes up from sleep, he should not put his hand into a utensil until he washes it three times...”

— *Sahih al-Bukhari* 162

Arabic: البريد الإلكتروني هو وسيلة اتصال إلكترونية تستخدم لإرسال واستقبال الرسائل النصية بين أجهزة الكمبيوتر المتصلة بالإنترنت.

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani commented that this ruling is partly due to the unseen — one may unknowingly touch impurities during sleep — highlighting the Prophet's foresight in unseen



hygiene risks, akin to modern germ theory.

3. Cleanliness is Half of Faith

“Cleanliness is half of faith.”

— *Sahih Muslim* 223

Arabic: □□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□

Imam Al-Ghazali in his *Ihya Ulum al-Din* wrote that physical purity is a reflection of one's inward purity, making acts like handwashing a form of worship when done with correct intention.

4. Avoiding Waste While Washing

“Do not waste water, even if you are by a flowing river.”

— *Sunan Ibn Majah 425*

Arabic: لا تضيع ماءً ولو كنت بجانب نهر

□ How to Save Water in Handwashing

Islam teaches balance in all acts — including cleanliness. Both **Prophetic Sunnah** and **scientific studies** promote conserving water while maintaining hygiene. Here’s how you can practice mindful handwashing:

□ Use Minimal Water (Sunnah)

The Prophet ﷺ performed ablution with just a **mudd** (approx. 650 ml)

□ No Waste — Even at a River

“Do not waste water, even if you are by a flowing river” — **Sunan Ibn Majah 425**

□ Turn Off the Tap

Close the tap while applying soap to prevent **liters of waste**.

□ 20 Seconds Rule

WHO recommends washing for **20 seconds** — enough & efficient

Saving water is both an act of **faith and sustainability**. The Prophet’s ﷺ guidance aligns beautifully with today’s environmental awareness.

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils.”
— **Qur’an, Surah Al-Isra (17:27)**

“He who performs ablution and does it well, his sins fall from his body.”
— **Sahih Muslim 244**

This hadith is often quoted by scholars like **Imam Ibn Qayyim**, who linked it to Islamic environmental consciousness — a principle modern sustainability advocates emphasize today.



□ 1400 Years of Hygiene

7th Century CE

Hadiths on handwashing by Prophet Muhammad □

19th Century

Germ theory by Louis Pasteur & Robert Koch

21st Century

WHO & CDC promote hand hygiene

By www.islamicsciencehub.in

□ Step-by-Step Sunnah of Handwashing

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized not only cleanliness but also the proper method of performing it. Handwashing was practiced with both intention and moderation, reflecting a deep understanding of hygiene that predates modern science. Here's a step-by-step guide to the Sunnah method of handwashing:

□ Make Intention (Niyyah)

Begin with a sincere intention for purification.

□ Wash Hands Three Times

Use clean water to wash both hands up to the wrists three times.

□ After Waking Up

Wash hands after sleep before touching any utensils or water.

□ Before & After Meals

Wash hands before and after eating for physical and spiritual cleanliness.

□ Avoid Wasting Water

Even on a riverbank, the Prophet ﷺ advised moderation in water use.

This routine is not only a hygienic act but a form of worship. By following the Sunnah, Muslims align themselves with prophetic guidance while simultaneously protecting their health.

☐ Prophetic Method of Handwashing

☐ Intention (Niyyah)

☐ Wash hands three times

☐ Avoid water wastage

☐ Before and after meals

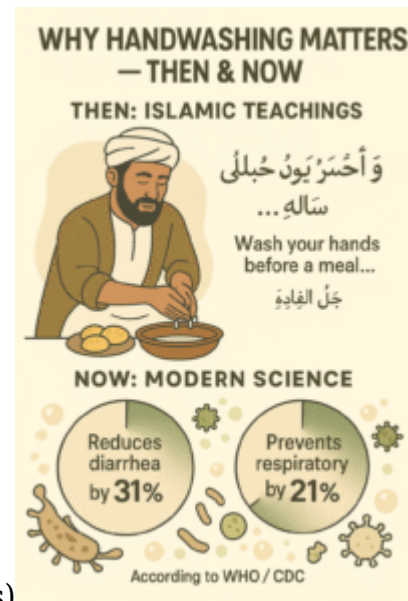
☐ After waking up

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☐ Scientific Insights on Handwashing

Modern science agrees wholeheartedly with the Islamic emphasis on hand hygiene. According to the **World Health Organization** and the **CDC**:

- ☐ Reduces diarrheal diseases by **31%**
- ☐ Reduces respiratory infections by **21%**



- Prevents healthcare-associated infections (HAIs)

□ Health Benefits of Handwashing

□ Respiratory infections reduced by **21%**

□ Diarrheal diseases reduced by **31%**

□ Source: *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, Curtis & Cairncross (2003)

□ Why Is Handwashing So Effective?

- Removes dirt, viruses (e.g., Norovirus, Influenza), and bacteria (e.g., E. coli, Salmonella)
- Interrupts transmission routes (hand-mouth, hand-eye)
- Creates awareness about other hygiene habits (like food safety)

Scientific studies have shown that washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds destroys lipid membranes of viruses — something Islam emphasized in its own context over 1400 years ago, by instructing washing thoroughly and multiple times.

□ Comparing Handwashing in Hadith and Modern Science

Islamic practice and modern hygiene science are not in conflict — they are complementary. Here is a comparison of specific steps:

Step	Hadith (Sunnah)	Modern Science
Before eating/sleeping	□ Emphasized	□ Strongly Recommended
Washing 3 times	□ Sunnah	□ Not fixed, but thorough washing is crucial
Scrubbing between fingers	□ Part of Wudhu	□ Required for effectiveness
Use of soap	□ Not mentioned (soap not widely used)	□ Critical for removing germs
Water conservation	□ Commanded by the Prophet □	□ Part of global sustainability goals

□ Spiritual Significance

Handwashing in Islam is not just about removing physical impurities — it's an act of devotion. Each time a believer washes their hands, they are reminded of humility, order, and gratitude. The Prophet □ turned simple acts into intentional worship — aligning body, mind, and soul with Allah's command.

Al-Ghazali states that every drop of water in ablution removes a sin, and the physical act awakens the heart. Handwashing, when paired with intention (niyyah), becomes a form of spiritual cleansing as much as physical hygiene.

□ Islam & Science on Handwashing

Aspect	Hadith	Scientific Insight
Wash after sleep	Sahih Bukhari 162	Prevents contamination
Wash before eating	Sunan Abi Dawood 3760	Stops disease transmission
Avoid water waste	Ibn Majah 425	Supports sustainable hygiene

□ Additional Perspectives to Consider

- **Psychological benefit:** Ritual handwashing may reduce anxiety by creating a sense of spiritual readiness
- **Community hygiene:** In communal societies like early Madinah, shared hygiene norms reduced outbreaks
- **Fitrah (natural disposition):** Cleanliness is a part of the innate human fitrah, and handwashing helps preserve it
- **Tawheed perspective:** Cleanliness represents the inner order and oneness Islam promotes — reflecting the Creator’s perfection in our habits

□ Additional Perspectives to Consider

□ Psychological Benefit

Ritual washing fosters calm and spiritual readiness

□ **Community Hygiene**

Shared cleanliness norms protected early Muslim society

□ **Fitrah (Natural Disposition)**

Cleanliness preserves our innate purity and health

☞ **Tawheed Perspective**

Clean habits reflect the perfection and unity of Allah □

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□ **References**

- Sahih al-Bukhari 162
- Sahih Muslim 223
- Sunan Abi Dawood 3760
- Sunan Ibn Majah 425
- Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani – *Fath al-Bari*
- Imam Nawawi – *Sharh Sahih Muslim*
- Imam Al-Ghazali – *Ihya Ulum al-Din*
- [WHO – Hand Hygiene Guidelines](#)
- [CDC – Handwashing Research Summaries](#)