



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The word *miswāk*/*siwak* is from the root letters 'sīn-waw-kāf' which means “to scrub”. In legal terminology (*istilah*), it refers to 'a tree twig used to clean the teeth and mouth'. *Miswak* was used by all the messengers of Allah, and remains a well-established and popular practice among Muslims all over the world till today.

Importance of *Miswāk*

The importance of *miswāk* can be inferred from the following narrations:

Part of Innate Human Nature (*Fitrah*):

Narrated `Aishah (رضي الله عنها) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ten [habits] are from the *fitrah*: (one of which is) *siwāk*." [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 604]

Means of Closeness to Allah:

`Aishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Siwāk* is a means of purification for the mouth and is [a means of attaining] pleasure of the Lord.” [Ṣunan An-Nasaʿī: 5]

Repeated & Emphasized Command to the Prophet (ﷺ):

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

- "I was commanded to use *Siwāk* to such an extent that I expected or I thought that some verse of the Qur'an would be revealed upon me regarding it." [Ṣunad Aḥmad: 2125, Vol. 4]
- "I was recommended to use *Siwāk* so repeatedly that I feared it would be made obligatory on me". [Ṣunad Aḥmad: 16007, Vol. 25]
- "I was ordered to use *Siwāk* to such an extent that I became fearful about my teeth." [Al-Mu`jam al-Kabīr liṭ-Ṭabṛānī: 12286, Vol. 11]

Motivation for the Ummah:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

لَوْلَا أَنِ اشْتَقَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي أَوْ عَلَى النَّاسِ لَأَمَرْتُهُمْ بِالسِّوَاكِ مَعَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ

“If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with *Siwāk* for every prayer.” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 887]

Last Act of the Prophet (ﷺ): The importance of *Miswāk* can be gauged from the fact that the last act of the Prophet (ﷺ) before his death was doing *Miswāk*. [Ref. Ṣunad Aḥmad : 26347, Vol. 43]

Types of *Miswāk*

Any soft tree twig can be used as *miswāk*. The fibers of the tree branch should be such that they do not cause dental abrasion or damage the gums. The best *miswāks* are obtained from the mustard tree (*salvadora persica*, *pīlu*), olive tree, neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) and the oleander plant.

Pīlu [Salvadora persica]:

`Abdullah bin Masūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "I used to pick a *Siwāk* from the *pīlu* tree for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)." [Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān: 7069, Vol. 15]

Miswāk from the *pīlu* tree has soft fibers and contains calcium and phosphorus. These minerals are absorbed by the saliva and strengthen the brain. The outer layer of the fresh *pīlu Miswāk* contains natural antibiotics with properties similar to Penicillin.

Olive: The olive tree is mentioned as the 'blessed tree' in the Qur'an. Its *Miswāk* is especially useful against tooth-ache.

Neem: The Neem *Miswāk* is quite beneficial due to its bitter taste. It is also an excellent disinfectant with antibacterial and antifungal properties. Its *Miswāk* is recommended as a preventive measure for controlling oral infections.

Oleander: The oleander plant has white or red flowers. Its *Miswāk* is very bitter, however, this is what makes it so beneficial for the teeth. It helps against most toothache, like pyorrhea

(periodontitis). It is also ideal for keeping the teeth strong and shiny.

Method of using *Miswāk*

- Use *Miswāk* with the right hand.

Narrated `Aishah (رضي الله عنها): The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) loved to start from the right side when purifying himself... [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 616]

- Clean the teeth starting from the right towards the left side.

Narrated Hudhaifa (رضي الله عنه):

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِذَا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ يَشْوُضُ فَاهُ بِالسِّوَاكِ

“Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) got up at night, he used to clean his mouth (and teeth) with *Siwāk*.” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 245]

- Clean the tongue with *Miswāk*.

Abu Musa (رضي الله عنه) reported: I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) once and noticed the tip of *Siwāk* on his tongue. [Agreed Upon, wordings are of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 592]

Abu Musa Al-Asha'ri (رضي الله عنه) narrated: My father said, "I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and saw him carrying a *Siwāk* in his hand and cleansing his teeth, saying, 'U' U'," as if he was retching while the *Siwāk* was in his mouth." [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 244]

Miswāk Care: Cleaning and Storing

- After use, wash the *miswāk* and keep it in a clean and dry place.

`Aishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated: "The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) would clean his teeth with the Siwak, then he would give me the *Siwāk* in order to wash it. So I would first use it myself, then wash it and return it. [Ṣunan Abī Dāwūd: 52]

- If the *Miswāk* becomes too soft and loses its flavor, cut off the overused portion.

According to research, the *Miswāk* should be kept at a distance of at least 6 feet away from the washroom area due to the presence of potentially harmful germs in such areas, which can initially accumulate in the fibers of the *Miswāk* and multiply rapidly due to moisture in the *Miswāk*.

Times of using *Miswāk*

Miswāk can be used any time, however, the following times are recommended:

Upon Waking Up:

Narrated Ibn `Umar (رضي الله عنه): The Prophet (ﷺ) always had a *Siwāk* near him when he (ﷺ) slept and upon waking up, the first thing he would do was use *miswāk*. [*Silsilatu al-Aḥadīth al-Saḥīḥah*: 2111]

Narrated Hudhaifa (رضي الله عنه): “Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) got up at night, he used to clean his mouth with a *Siwāk*.” [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: 245]

Before Every Ablution (Wudu):

Narrated `Aishah (رضي الله عنها): “Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) got up from sleep, whether at night or day, he would use the *Siwāk* before performing ablution.” [*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*: 57]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه): Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Were it not that it would be too difficult for my Ummah, I would have commanded them to use the *Siwāk* with every ablution."

Then Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said, "Ever since I heard this saying of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I use the *Siwāk* before going to bed and after waking up; before eating and after eating." [*Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. 15; 9194]

Before Every Prayer:

Abu Salamah (رضي الله عنه) said: “Zayd ibn Khalid (رضي الله عنه) used to attend the prayers in the mosque with his tooth-stick [resting] above his ear where a clerk carries a pen, and whenever he got up for prayer he used it.” [*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*: 47]

At Tahajjud:

Narrated Hudhaifa (رضي الله عنه): Whenever the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) got up for Tahajjud prayer he used to clean his mouth (and teeth) with *Siwāk*. [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 593]

Narrated Ibn `Abbas (رضي الله عنه): "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to pray in the night (*Qiyām ul-Layl*) two *rak`ah* by two, then when he finished he would use the *Siwāk*." [*Sunan Ibn Mājah*: 288]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “When any one of you wakes up to pray at night, he must use the *Siwāk* because when anyone of you recites the Qur'an in his prayer, an angel puts his mouth on their mouth.” [*Shu`b al-Imān*: 2117, Vol. 2]

On Fridays:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There are three rights on every Muslim: taking a bath, using the *Siwāk*, and applying fragrance on Friday." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jamī` al-Sagḥīr*: 3028]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said on a particular Friday: "O Muslims! Allah has made this day a festive day (eid), so do ghusl, and it will not harm whoever has perfume to apply some of it, and use a *Siwāk*." [*Mu`atta Imām Mālik*: 113]

Before Reciting the Qur'an:

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Verily, when the servant uses a *Siwāk* and then stands to pray, an angel stands behind him and listens to his recitation. The angel draws near until his lips are upon the lips of the reciter, and whatever of the Qur'an comes out of it enters into [the body] of the angel. Thus, purify your mouths for the Qur'an.” [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib wal Tarḥīb*: 215]

Narrated 'Ali bin Abī Talib (رضي الله عنه) said: "Your mouths are the paths of the Qur'an, so cleanse them with the *Siwāk*." [*Sunan Ibn Mājah*: 291]

While Fasting:

Use of *Miswāk* does not invalidate the fast.

Abdur Rahman Ibn Ghanam (رضي الله عنه) says, “I asked Muadh bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه), can I use *Siwāk* while fasting?”, He replied, “Yes”. I asked, “Which time of the day?”, He replied, “Anytime during the day or the night.”, I objected, “The people dislike using *Siwāk* in the evening and they say that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'The smell emanating from the mouth of the one fasting is better with Allah than the smell of musk.’” Muadh bin Jabal then said, “*Subḥān Allah*, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) himself instructed the people to use *Siwāk*, and he does not command people to deliberately leave their mouths smelling bad (and filthy). There is no goodness

whatsoever in that, rather there is evil in it.” [*Arwā al-Ghalīl*: 106/1]

Upon Entering the House:

`Aishah (رضي الله عنها) reported: Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) entered his house, the first thing he would do was to use a *Siwāk*. [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 591]

Benefits of *Miswāk*

Miswāk works as a toothbrush, tongue cleaner, mouthwash and floss simultaneously. Thus the use of *Miswāk* provides the benefit of comprehensive oral and dental hygiene.

Teeth: *Miswāk* cleans parts of the teeth where the toothbrush cannot normally reach, removing plaque and tartar, and polishing the teeth surface. It prevents formation of cavities, fights against infection and retards dental decay. It provides relief for toothaches. Hence, teeth and gums should be regularly and thoroughly cleaned with *Miswāk*.

Ibn `Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: Not using a toothpick weakens the teeth. He also said that [not removing] food particles stuck in between teeth weakens the gums. [*Arwā al-Ghalīl*: 1974]

Gums: *Miswāk* massages the gums and enhances blood circulation, as a result discolored gums start to take on a healthier color. Gradually, the gums stop bleeding and gum tissues thicken and strengthen, helping to prevent against future infections more effectively.

Tongue: Using a well-softened tip of the *Miswāk* to scrape the tongue removes the biofilm formed over the tongue by bacteria, and improves the function of the taste buds, making food more enjoyable. Mucus of the ears, nose and throat are eliminated, resulting in a pleasant change in voice and speech.

Regular use of *Miswāk* stimulates the glands of the mouth and the tongue, leading to increase in the

production of saliva and reducing the symptoms of dry mouth.

Digestive System: Natural ingredients present in *Miswāk* stimulate the salivary glands. When chewed, food travels down the digestive tract, this saliva activates the subsequent glands, thus keeps the digestive system functioning smoothly.

Cure for Chronic Colds: Use of *Miswāk* by patients with chronic colds enables them to expectorate mucus, which in turn relieves the congestion in the brain. Pathology confirms that *Miswāk* is no less than an antidote for chronic colds.

In conclusion, *Miswāk* is not only a way to attain the reward of following a sunnah but is also a source for health and well-being. We pray to Allah Almighty to grant us the ability to follow this sunnah in the best manner possible. Ameen.



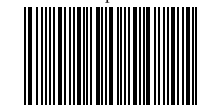
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