

# Pare Your Nails: A Study of an Early Tradition

The Islamic injunction that one should pare one's nails is usually given in the sources as belonging to the set of practices observed by the prophets before Muḥammad, enjoined by them for their people and thus known as one of the practices of the *fiṭra*.<sup>1</sup> These practices were followed by the Prophet and prescribed for his community. A widely current tradition, reported on the authority of the Prophet, recommended paring the nails by stressing that the Devil takes up his abode in the dirt originating between the nail and the flesh.<sup>2</sup> It is evident that the believer has to be alert to the dangers associated with the presence of the Devil; negligence or heedlessness in paring one's

---

1 See, e.g., al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, (Hyderabad 1344), I, 149; idem, *Maʿrifat al-sunan wa-l-ahār*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo 1390/1970), I, 390–91; al-Shaukānī, *Nayl al-auṭār* (Cairo 1372/1953), I, 130–33; al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl* (Hyderabad 1377/1958), VI, 371–74, nos. 2648–52, 2654, 2672–75; al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, (Cairo reprint), XXII, 44–46 (and see the definition of the *fiṭra* on p. 45: *al-fiṭra khamsun, ay khamsatu ašhyāʾa, wa-arāda bi-l-fiṭrati al-sunnata l-qadīma llati khtāraha l-anbiyāʾu ʿalayhim al-salām wa-ttafaṭat ʿalayhi l-sharāʾiḥu fa-ka-annahā amrun jalīyyun fuṭūrā ʿalayhi*); Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī* (Cairo 1301), X, 282–85; Faḍlullāh al-Jilānī, *Faḍlu llāhi l-ṣamad li-tauḍīḥi l-adabi l-mufrad*, (Ḥiṣṣ, 1388), II, 680, no. 1257; Abū Ṭālib al-Makki, *Qūt al-qulūb* (Cairo 1351/1932), IV, 8–9; al-Shaʿrānī, *Minah al-minna fi l-tamassuk bi-l-sharʿa wa-l-sunna* (Cairo, n.d.), 21; Taqī l-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abī l-Munā, *Nuzhat al-nāzīrin* (Cairo 1373/1954), 59; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zafar bi-qalmi l-zufr*, Ms. Bodley, Walker 8, fol. 368a; idem, *al-Isfār ʿan qalmi l-aẓfār*, Ms. Hebrew Univ., Yahuda Ar. 749/4, fols. lb–2a; al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr* (Beirut 1391/1972), III, 455, no. 2953. Cf. a different argument exposed by al-Waṣṣābī, *al-Baraka fi faḍli l-saʿyi wa-l-ḥaraka* (Cairo, 1354), 214–15: cleanliness is one of the conditions of faith (*wa-qāla ṣallā llāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam: buniya l-dīnu ʿalā l-naẓāfa*); one of the requirements of cleanliness is to pare one's nails. These injunctions, including paring of nails, are recorded in the commentaries of the Qurʾān as related to Sūra II, 124: “. . . and when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words”: see, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shākir (Cairo, n.d.), II, 9–10, nos. 1910–14; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr* (Cairo, 1314), I, 111–12; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr (= al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkāmī l-qurʾān)* (Cairo 1387/1967), II, 98; al-Jaṣṣaṣ, *Aḥkām al-qurʾān* (Istanbul, 1335), I, 66; al-Diyārbakrī, *Taʾrīkh al-khamīs* (Cairo, 1283), I, 208; al-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Ḥāshim Yamānī (al-Madīna, 1386/1966), I, 94–95; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdáđī, *Muḍīḥ auḥām* (Hyderabad, 1379/1960), II, 199, l. 14; *Juzʾ fhi aḥādīth abī muḥammad sufyān b. ʿuyayna*, Ms. Zāhiriyya, ḥad. 18, fol. 264b; cf. Ibn Bābūyah, *al-Khiṣāl*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1389), 271, no. 11; al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl*, IX, 170, no. 1375; Muḥammad al-Safārīnī, *Ghidhāʾu l-albāb li-sharḥi manzūmati l-adāb* (Cairo 1324), I, 381.

2 See the various versions: al-Daylamī, *Firdaus al-akḥbār*, Ms. Chester Beatty 3037, fol. 116b, infra (*qallim aẓfāraka fa-inna l-shayṭāna yaqʿudu ʿalā mā ʾāla minhā*); Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Iḥāḍu l-sāda l-*

nails may turn out to be harmful not only to the careless person, but also to other members of the Muslim community, and may even impede the continuous dispensation of God's grace or hamper the faithful from carrying out their religious duties.

A peculiar case in which the Prophet is said to have uttered his opinion about the detrimental effects of dirty nails is exposed in a tradition reported by al-Zuhri and recorded in a papyrus edited by Nabia Abbott, who read the text as follows:<sup>3</sup>

10. [قال و] حدثني الليث قال حدثني عقيل عن ابن شهاب قال بلغنا ان رسول الله عليه السلام .
11. كان يسال عن الرويا فيجبه الرجل فاذا ابوا يسالهم مرارا فلم يخبره احد منهم بشي .
12. فرا أظفارهم قد طالت ودخلها وسخ فقال تر[و]ن وتر[و]ن هذا في أظفارهم .

Professor Abbott did not translate the document. In her comments<sup>4</sup> she merely states that "the tradition has no parallel in the standard collections" and adduces a considerable number of references to demonstrate the preoccupation of the Prophet and of his contemporaries with dreams and their interpretation. Professor Abbott is indeed right in stating that this tradition has no parallel in the *standard* collections. Furthermore, because of the damaged state of the papyrus, serious difficulties have been incurred in deciphering the text of this tradition; some minor misreadings made a correct reading almost impossible to achieve and blurred the meaning of the tradition.

It is evident from the text as it was read that the tradition is based on an implied contrast between dirty nails and dreams. The thread can be grasped in a tradition recorded by Ibn Abi Ḥatim al-Rāzī:

...عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: كيف تصدق رؤياكم وأظفاركم مملوءة وسخا .

Abū Ḥatim marks this tradition as *munkar*,<sup>5</sup> the reason for this being that al-Faḍl b. al-

*muttaqin bi-sharhi asrari ihya'i 'ulūmi l-dīn* (Cairo, 1311), II, 410 infra (*al-shayṭān* of the tradition is glossed by *iblis*; another version of the tradition is recorded as well: *quṣṣū azāfirakum fa-inna l-shayṭāna yajr mā bayna l-laḥmi wa-zufri*, *ib.*, 410 ult.); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zafar*, fol. 368 a; idem, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 113, supra; al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nādira* (Najaf, 1384), V, 570 ('*an abi ja'farin 'alayhi l-salām, qāla: innamā quṣṣū l-azfāra li-annahā maqtlu l-shayṭān, wa-minhu l-nisyān, . . . . . ; . . . . . 'an abi 'abdi llāh 'alayhi l-salām, qāla: inna astara wa-akhfā mā yusallītu l-shayṭāna min ibni ādama in šāra yaskunu taḥta l-azāfiri.* . .); cf. Raḍī l-Dīn al-Ṭabarstī, *Makārim al-akhlaq* (Cairo, 1347), 25, ult.

<sup>3</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, II: Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition* (Chicago, 1967), p. 166, Document 6, no. 6, ll. 10–12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Abi Ḥatim, *ʿIlal al-ḥadīth* (reprint: Cairo, 1343), II, 282, no. 2349.

Mukhtār, the transmitter of the tradition, is considered *majhūl*.<sup>6</sup> The intent of the tradition is clear: people with dirty nails are unable to have true dreams (*ṣādiqa*); it may be concluded that they can have only false dreams (*bāṭila, adghāth al-aḥlām*).<sup>7</sup>

Identical in content with the tradition of the papyrus, but differently shaped, is the report given by Khargūshī:

فقد روى عن رسول الله (ص) أنه كان يسأل أصحابه كل يوم هل رأى أحد منكم رؤيا فيقصون عليه رؤياهم فيعبرها لهم، ثم سألتهم أياما فلم يقص أحد منهم رؤيا، فقال لهم: كيف ترون<sup>8</sup> في أظفاركم الرفع<sup>9</sup> وذلك أن أظفارهم قد طالت وتقلبيها من الفطرة.<sup>10</sup>

This is indeed the version recorded in the compilation of Ps. Ibn Sīrīn.<sup>11</sup>

In the light of these traditions the few errors in Miss Abbott's reading of the text of the papyrus can be rectified and the precise sense of al-Zuhrī's tradition provided:

10. [قال و] حدثني الليث قال حدثني عقيل عن بن شهاب قال بلغنا أن رسول الله عليه السلام

11. [كان يسأل] عن الرؤيا فيجيبه الرجل [ث]م [انهم]م أتو [او] سألهم مرارا فلم يخبره أحد منهم بشي

12. فرا أظفارهم قد طالت ودخلها وسذ فقال تر[و]ن وتر[و]ن وهذا في أظفاركم.

The Prophet used to ask [his Companions] about their dreams, and they would respond. Then [when] they [once] came<sup>12</sup> he asked them several times but none of them gave him any information (about his dreams - K.); then the Prophet noticed that their nails had lengthened and that dirt had penetrated them. "How will you see (dreams - K.) or be shown (dreams -K.)<sup>13</sup> while<sup>14</sup> this (i.e., the dirt) is underneath your nails," asked the Prophet.

6 See the negative opinions on him: Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl* (Hyderabad, 1361), III/II, 69, no. 391 (*aḥādīthuhu munkara, yuḥaddīthuhu bi-l-abāʿīl*); al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1382/1963), III, 358–59, no. 6750; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mizān* (Hyderabad, 1330), IV, 449, no. 1374.

7 On the distinction between true and false dreams, see, e.g., ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Taʿqīr al-anām fi taʿbīri l-manām* (Cairo, 1384), I, 3–4.

8 The "و" missing in text.

9 In text: الرفع

10 Al-Kharqūshī, *al-Bishāra wa-l-nidhāra*, Ms. Br. Mus., Or. 6262, fol. 6a.

11 Ps. Ibn Sīrīn, *Tafstru l-aḥlāmī l-kabīr* (Cairo, 1382/1963), 23.

12 Miss Abbott's reading! أبو, "they refused", seems to be unbased.

13 Cf. this expression about dreams: al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, III, 311–12 (*yarāḥā l-muʿmināu turā lahu*); al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabaʿ* (Beirut, 1961), I, 149 (*yarāḥā l-rajul au turā lahu*); al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-mawāhib al-adunniyya* (Cairo, 1328), VII, 163.

14 This "و" omitted in the reading of Miss Abbott blurred, of course, the meaning of the tradition.

The intent of the tradition is obvious: believers with long nails<sup>15</sup> are barred from seeing true, veridical dreams.

The dirt under the nails of the believers was even more harmful for the religious practices of the Prophet himself, as pointed out in another tradition. The Prophet was once heedless and committed an error in his prayer; he explained his error by the fact that some people attending the prayer had not cleaned their nails.<sup>16</sup>

Another serious event, which might have endangered the continuity of the prophetic revelation, is connected, according to one tradition, with the injunction to pare one's nails. When the angel Jibrīl had ceased for a period to convey the revelation to the Prophet, he explained to his worried believers that this was a result of the fact that they were not careful in paring their nails, trimming their moustaches, and cleaning their finger-joints.<sup>17</sup>

This, however, is a fragmentary tradition in which no details about the time of the event and its circumstances are given. The current reports concerning the pause in the revelation usually refer to Sūra XVIII, 24–25: "And do not say, regarding anything, 'I am going to do that tomorrow', but only 'If God will'; and mention thy Lord when thou forgettest. . ."; or to Sūra XCIII, 3: "Thy Lord has neither forsaken thee nor hates thee. . ."; and differ in their setting and details. The reason for the suspension of the revelation was, according to one of the reports, an illness of the Prophet lasting two or three nights. A woman then came and derided him by saying that God had forsaken him. Some traditions name the woman: she was Umm Jamil, the wife of Abū Lahab. A version of this tradition links the story of Umm Jamil and the verses of Sūra CXI about her ( . . . "and his wife, the carrier of the firewood. . .") with the verses of Sūra XCIII: the revelation was delayed after a short time after her talk with the Prophet, in which the latter asserted that the verses about her were revealed by God. When the revelation was suspended, she came to the Prophet and mocked him, stating that his Devil had left him. Then the verses of Sūra XCIII were revealed. Another tradition presents an opposing point of view: when the pause in the revelation occurred, it was Khadija who

15 Some Shi'f compendia draw a clear line between men and women: while men were enjoined to pare their nails, women were ordered to let their nails grow because "it is nicer for them." See al-Bāhrāni, *al-Hadā'iq al-nādira*, V, 571 ult.–572, l. 1: *l: qāla rasūlu llāhi (ṣ) li-l-rijāli: quṣṣū azfārukum, wa-li-l-nisā'i: trukna, fa-innahu azyanu lakunna*; al-Ṭabarsī, *Makarim al-akhlaq*, 26, l. 1 (but curiously: *wa-qāla li-l-nisā'i: lā tatrunka min azāfrikunna*, which seems to be an error).

16 See Thābit b. Abī Thābit, *Khalq l-insān*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Farrāj, (Kuwayt, 1965), 229; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl* (Istanbul, 1293), 45 ( . . . *annahu saḥā fi ṣalātihi fa-qāla: mā li lā ūhimu warufghu aḥadikum bayna zufrīhi wa-anmulātihi. . .*); al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā'iḳ*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1971), IV, 83 (*fa-auhama fi ṣalātihi. . . wa-kayfa lā ūhimu. . . : auhama* is glossed by: *auhama fi kalāmīhi wa-kitābihi idhā asqata minhu shay'an*); al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, VI, 375, nos. 2682–83; Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī, *Majma' al-zawā'id* (Beirut, 1967), I, 238; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, X, 291; al-Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 113; L'A, s.v. *r-f-gh, w-h-m* (see the variants recorded: *lā ahimu, lā aghamu, lā ūhimu*); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fi gharibi l-ḥadīth*, s.v. *w-h-m, r-f-gh*; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafstr*, II, 102; al-Jaṣṣaṣ, *Aḥkam al-qur'ān*, I, 66 *infra*.

17 Al-Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 112; Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 399; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā'iḳ*, IV, 83; al-Bāhrānī, *al-Hadā'iq*, V, 569; al-Muttaqī l-Hindī, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, VI, 375, no. 2681; 'Alī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-daula*, ed. 'Ādil Nuwayhidī, (Beirut, 1393/1973), 62; al-Ṭabarsī, *Makarim al-akhlaq*, 25 *infra*.

worried about it and asked the Prophet whether God had forsaken him; the verses of Sūra XCIII came as an authoritative answer. Another tradition links the verses of Sūra XCIII with Sūra XVIII, 24–25, recording a different report: the Jews, consulted by the unbelievers of Mecca, advised them to ask the Prophet certain questions in order to test whether he was a true Prophet. Having come and put these questions to him, the Prophet promised to give an answer the next day without adding the clause *in shā'a llāhu*. Then the revelation was suspended, only to resume after a time. A peculiar tradition says that the Prophet, hit by a stone, his finger bleeding, recited the well known verse: *hal anti illā iṣba'un damitti*. . .; then God withheld the revelation. After being mocked by a woman about that, the Prophet uttered the revealed verses. Finally, there is a tradition according to which Jibrīl could not enter the Prophet's abode and deliver the revelation to him because there was a dead whelp under his bed. The period of the delay is given, according to contradictory reports, as two or three days, twelve days, fifteen days or forty days.<sup>18</sup>

The tradition recorded by Muqātil in his *Tafsīr*, giving the reason for the revelation of the verses in Sūra XCIII, is different. It is, in fact, the tradition mentioned above (see note 17) with some additional details. The Prophet missed Jibrīl, who used to convey to him the revelation, for forty days (or three days, according to another report). The unbelievers in Mecca claimed that Muḥammad's revelation was not from God and that Muḥammad had his revelation withheld, proving that God had abandoned him and hated him. When the Muslims (in Mecca - K.) asked the Prophet, he replied that the revelation had stopped because some of them did not clean the joints of their fingers and did not pare their nails.<sup>19</sup>

It is evident that this tradition, recorded in a commentary of the second century and echoed in some later commentaries,<sup>20</sup> shows the importance attached to the paring of nails in the early period of Islam; negligence on the part of the believers could endanger the continuity of the revelation granted to the Prophet by God.

Mujāhid (d. 104 H) comments on Sūra XIX, 64: "We come not down save at the commandment of thy Lord" that the revelation was suspended and that it was Jibrīl who explained to the Prophet that the reason was that the believers were careless in paring their nails, trimming their moustaches, cleansing their teeth (with a *siwāk*) and cleaning their finger-joints.<sup>21</sup>

---

18 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Bulāq) XXX, 148; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XX, 92–93; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* (Beirut, 1385/1966), IV, 365–66, VII, 313; al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl* (Cairo, 1388/1968), 301–2; al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al-nuqūl fī asbābi l-nuzūl* (Cairo, 1373/1954), 144–45, 237–38; idem, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, VI, 360–61; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Kāfi l-shāf fī takhrījī aḥādīthi l-kashshāf*, (Cairo, 1354), 102, no. 306; 185, nos. 325–26; al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, Ms. Chester Beatty 3668, II, 326a; al-Khāzin, *Tafsīr (Lubāb al-ta'wīl fī ma'āni l-tanzīl)* (Cairo 1381), VII, 214–15; al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr (= Maḥāṭiṭ al-ghayb)* (Cairo, 1357/1938), XXXI, 210–11; al-Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib al-qur'ān*, ed. Ibrāhīm 'Aṭwa 'Awaḍ (Cairo, 1390/1970), XXX, 115–16.

19 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, Ms. Ahmet III, 74/II, fol. 242b.

20 See al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XX, 93 infra; al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, XXXI, 211; al-Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib al-qur'ān*, XXX, 115 infra.

21 See al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 203; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XI, 127; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, IV, 279, II, 9–14.

Muslim scholars, of course regarded it as necessary to classify the practice of paring one's nails, establishing its rank and position in relation to other practices bearing on cleanliness and purity, like trimming one's moustache, plucking out the hair of the armpits, and shaving the privates. It was necessary to decide whether the practice is obligatory and forms part of the *sunna*. The mandatory character of the practice was derived from a tradition quoted from the compilation of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and attributed to the Prophet: "He who does not shave his privates, pare his nails, and trim his moustache is not of us."<sup>22</sup> This tradition was, however, sharply criticized. Scholars pointed out that one of the transmitters, Ibn Lahī'a,<sup>23</sup> was considered unreliable and that another version of this tradition, recorded by al-Tirmidhī,<sup>24</sup> does not include the paring of nails (it only mentions the trimming of the moustache). Even granted that the *ḥadīth* is trustworthy, the expression *fa-laysa minnā* 'he is not one of us' merely denotes that the man does not follow the *sunna* of the Prophet. Al-Munāwī concludes that the tradition does not establish the mandatory character of the practice. It is a commendable practice (*mandūbun nadban mu'akkadan*), and failure to carry out the injunction of the *ḥadīth* can only be considered as neglect of the *sunna*.<sup>25</sup>

However, there was a problem in connection with the paring of nails which caused division of opinions among the scholars: if the water of ablution (*wuḍū'*) does not reach the place blocked by the dirt, should one repeat the ablution or not.<sup>26</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī gives an unequivocal decision concerning one specific question: if someone performs the ablution and subsequently trims his beard and pares his nails, does he have to repeat the ablution? According to al-Shāfi'ī the answer is negative.<sup>27</sup>

Scholars were not unanimous about the period prescribed by the Prophet for performing the practices of the *fiṭra* (trimming the moustache, shaving the privates, paring the nails, and pulling out the hairs of the armpits). According to a current tradition it is enjoined every forty days.<sup>28</sup> The problem under discussion was whether this was the prescribed period or whether it was a maximum which one should not exceed but which can be shortened according to need.<sup>29</sup> The tradition recorded by al-Bukhārī states that Ibn 'Umar used to pare his nails every two weeks,<sup>30</sup> implying that the Prophet himself practiced it in this way. Another report says that the Prophet used to trim his moustache and pare his nails on Friday before going out to perform the Friday prayer.<sup>31</sup> The latter tradition is contradicted by an opinion recorded in the

22 Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 411, 413; al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, VI, 223, no. 9021: *man lam yaḥliq 'anatahu wa-yuqallim azfāruhu wa-yajuzza shāribahu fa-laysa minnā*.

23 See on him *El*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. Ibn Lahī'a (F. Rosenthal).

24 See al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, VI, 222, no. 9016.

25 See the commentary of al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, VI, 223; Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, 411, 413.

26 See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, X, 291; Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 411 sup.; Faḍlullāh al-Jilānī *Faḍlu* . . . II, 685.

27 Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm* (reprint: Cairo, 1388/1968), I, 18.

28 See e.g. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 112; idem, *al-Isfār*, fol. 2a; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, I, 150; Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya, *Zād al-ma'ād* (reprint: Beirut, n.d.) I, 45; Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 399 supra.

29 Al-Shaukānī, *Nayl al-auṭār*, I, 131-32; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, X, 292.

30 Faḍlullāh al-Jilānī, *Faḍlu* . . . II, 685, no. 1258.

31 See Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Wafā bi-aḥwālī l-muṣṭafa*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo, 1386/1966), 591;

*Fatāwī Tātārkhāniyya*, which disapproves of paring the nails before the morning prayer on Friday. The argument of this statement is of some interest: prayer partakes of the idea of *ḥajj*. As shaving the hair and paring the nails are forbidden during the *ḥajj* and only permitted afterwards, these practices must also be considered unlawful before prayer. This opinion is further corroborated by a tradition saying that he who pares his nails *after* the Friday prayer has merit equal to that of one who, having performed the pilgrimage and the *ʿumra*, shaves his hair and pares his nails.<sup>32</sup>

As against the tradition which sets a period of forty days between one performance of these practices and the next, we have a more elaborate tradition attributed to the Prophet. He is said to have established the following periods: shaving the privates every forty days, pulling out the hairs of the armpits whenever hair is seen, trimming the moustache as it grows long, paring the nails every Friday, and cleaning of the finger-joints at every *wuḍūʿ*.<sup>33</sup>

The widely circulated tradition of the paring on Friday was contradicted by traditions which recommend paring the nails on Thursday.<sup>34</sup> The Prophet is said to have pronounced that whoever wants to escape from poverty, disease of the eyes, leprosy and madness should pare his nails on Thursday afternoon.<sup>35</sup> An explicit opinion against paring the nails on Friday is recorded on the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa: he disapproved of Friday as the day of paring; the moustache has to be trimmed and the nails pared only when needed.<sup>36</sup> The tradition assuring rewards to those who pare their nails on Friday is somewhat more generous, though its fulfillment is slightly delayed. "He who picks his teeth, trims his moustache, pares his nails, pulls out the hair of his armpit, and washes (the prescribed *ghusl*) on Friday, deserves Paradise," says a tradition attributed to the Prophet.<sup>37</sup> More reserved was a tradition promising those who pare their nails on Friday that God will banish disease from them and instill in them remedy.<sup>38</sup> A harmonizing tradition attributed to the Prophet states that nails should be pared on Thursday and Friday as this assures one of wealth.<sup>39</sup> Reconciling as well seems to be the tradition that enjoins paring the nails, trimming the moustache, pulling out the hair

---

al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zaḥāb*, fol. 368b ult.–369a, l.1; idem, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 112 ult.; al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-qurʾān*, I, 66 ult.; al-Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 208; al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadr*, V, 238, no. 7131 (and see the contradictory traditions in the commentary); cf. Abbott, *Studies*, II, 200, no. 9 (and see the notes of the Editor, 203–04).

32 See Anonymous, Ms. Univ. of Istanbul, 6258, fol. 9b–10a (quoted from *Risālat aḥkām al-ḥajra l-islāmiyya*).

33 Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 399, 413 supra; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, X, 292 infra; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, I, 113, ll. 1–2; idem, *al-Isfār*, fol. 2a (and cf. *ibid.*, fol. 3b, another schedule for the performance of these practices); al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, I, 33, no. 95.

34 See, e. g., Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 413–14; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zaḥāb*, fol. 370a–b.

35 Al-Waṣṣābī, *al-Baraka*, 216; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zaḥāb*, fol. 369b supra.

36 Anonymous, Ms. Univ. of Istanbul 6258, fol. 9b.

37 Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zaḥāb*, fol. 369a; al-Tabarī, *Makārim al-akhḥāq*, 25.

38 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq Afghānī (Hyderabad, 1387/1967), II, 159; Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, I, 98; al-Jilānī, *al-Ghunya* (Cairo, 1322), I, 17; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zaḥāb*, fol. 369b. But this very reward was promised the Saturday nail-parers; al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, XXII, 46 supra.

39 Al-Waṣṣābī, *al-Baraka*, 216.

of the armpit, and shaving the privates on Thursday; on Friday the believer has to wash (*ghusl*) his body, to perfume himself, and to wear nice clothes.<sup>40</sup>

The most liberal tradition is reported on the authority of Abū Hurayra. The Prophet gives a detailed account of the rewards which will be granted the believers who pare their nails on any day of the week; no special day for paring is singled out.<sup>41</sup>

Special importance is attached to the order of paring the nails.<sup>42</sup> Scholars of *ḥadīth* stress that there is no sound tradition concerning the order of paring the nails,<sup>43</sup> but there exist certain utterances of early scholars and some verse compositions serving as mnemonic devices for knowing the right order.<sup>44</sup>

There are scholarly disputes over the problem of how to dispose of the parings. The accepted opinion is that, according to the utterances of the Prophet, the parings should be buried. While there is nothing wrong in discarding them, to dispose of them in the privy or in the wash-house is reprehensible.<sup>45</sup> The reason for the injunction to bury the parings was that it would not allow sorcerers to play with them. Ibn Ḥajar records another reason for burying: they are a part of the human body and have to be buried like the body itself.<sup>46</sup> The verses of Sūra LXXVII, 26–27 (*a-lam najʿali l-arḍa kifātan aḥyāʾan wa-amwātan*) “made we not the earth to be a housing for the living and for the dead?” refer to nail-parings and hair, according to one of the commentaries.<sup>47</sup> Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī records a tradition on the authority of ʿĀʾisha, stating that the Prophet ordered the burial of seven things from the human body: hair, parings, blood, menstruation. . . ., (fallen) teeth, prepuce, and placenta. The reverence for the body of the believer should be extended to the elements extracted from it.<sup>48</sup>

Though the paring of nails is commonly accepted as a commendable *sunna* it must be performed privately; the paring of nails in mosques is condemned.<sup>49</sup>

Abraham is said to have been the first person in humanity who pared his nails.<sup>50</sup> This practice, one of the usages which belong to the observances of the *fiṭra*, is carefully observed by believers until today.

40 Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 414.

41 Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, XXII, 46 supra; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zafar*, fol. 370b–71a; idem, *al-Isfār*, fol. 3a; al-Shaukānī, *al-Fawāʾid al-majmūʿa fī l-ḥadīth al-mawḍūʿa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muʿallamī l-Yamānī (repr.: Beirut, 1392), 197, no. 569 (marked as forged, *mauḍūʿ*); Ibn al-Jauzī, *al-Mawḍūʿat*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ʿUthmān (Cairo, 1386/1966), III, 53 (marked as *mauḍūʿ*); cf. al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, 25: . . . *khudhha in shiʿta fī l-jumʿati wa-in shiʿta fī saʿiri l-ayyami*.

42 Al-Waṣṣābī, *al-Baraka* 216; al-Jīlānī, *al-Ghunya*, 17; al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, 25.

43 See, e.g., Murtaḍā l-Zabīdī, *Ithāfu*, II, 411.

44 See, e.g., al-Waṣṣābī, *al-Baraka*, 216.

45 Faḍlullāh al-Jīlānī, *Faḍlu*. . . , II, 685; cf. al-Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, 26 supra; al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadaʾiq*, V, 573.

46 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, X, 292 ult.–293, II, 1–3.

47 Sulaymān b. Ismāʿīl al-Baḥrānī al-Taubalī al-Katakānī, *al-Burhān fī tafstri l-qurʾān*, Qumm IV, 417; al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadaʾiq*, V, 573.

48 Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl*, 45; al-Qurṭubī, *Tafstr*, II, 102 (quoting *Nawādir al-uṣūl*).

49 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīburrāhmān al-Aʿzamī, (Beirut, 1390/1970), I, 439, no. 1718; and see Ibn al-Ḥajjī, *al-Madkhal* (Beirut, 1972), II, 240.

50 Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Zafar*, fol. 368a.