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# The Ritual and Spiritual Purity

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Important guide for Muslims explaining the rules and spiritual significance of Najasat and Taharat, Wudu, Ghusl and Tayammum.

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# Introduction

## The Book

In 1984 I published a series known as `The Laws of the *Shari'ah*' which included booklets on *The Tendency of Rationalizing the Shari`ah Laws, Ijtihad, Taqlid, Taharat & Najasat, Wudu & Ghusl,* and *Khums*. The books were very well received by the readers in various parts of the world, *al-hamdu li ' l-lah.* Imam Mahdi Association of Bombay has translated the first three booklets in Urdu and is using it as a text in its study circle programs.

In 1987 when the time for the third printing of *Taharat & Najasat* and *Wudu & Ghusl* came, I decided to combine the two into one. But while combining, I thought of rewriting the two booklets and add some more discussions in them. But the rewriting was put off because of my studies and various other activities. Finally, this year Allah blessed me with an opportunity to rewrite and finalize this book, and the result is what you see in your hands.

The booklets *Taharat & Najasat* and Wudu & *Ghusl* were just simple explanations of the rules of ritual purity in Islam. In this book, I have extensively quoted the relevant Qur'anic verses and the *ahadith*. Moreover, I have added two new discussions: a section on "Our Outlook Towards the *Najasat*" which deals with an issue which is very important for the Muslims living in a non-Muslim society, and a chapter "From Ritual to Spiritual" which attempts to relate the ritual purification to the spiritual purification.

This chapter is in response to a need which I observed in the Muslim communities of various places with whom I have been working during the last seven years. Fortunately, the rituals are practiced by many; but unfortunately they are considered as just ritual and nothing more. I think it is very essential for the Muslims to know how to utilize the daily rituals of *taharat, wudu, ghusl* and *salat* for their spiritual upliftment.

The new chapter could still be expanded by including the spiritual significance of the daily prayers, an issue which I discussed in twelve lectures during the Muharram of this year. But in this book I wanted to confine myself to the spiritual purification that was relevant to the ritual purifications. And so I left the other aspects of spiritualism for some future work, *insha Allah.*

I hope the readers will find this new chapter informative and useful; and I would specially like to urge the leaders of the Muslim organizations in the West to read this chapter and try to implement its teachings in the way they think, behave and deal with the people.

## The Sources of the Shari`ah

This is a book of Islamic laws, known as the *shari`ah.* The sources of the Islamic laws are the Qur'an and the *sunnah. By* the *sunnah,* we mean the sayings, actions and silent approval of the Prophet and the *Ahlu 'l-bayt*.

The Qur'an describes the basic rules only and the *sunnah* elaborates upon them. The Qur'an introduces the Prophet of Islam as *follows:*

***"He (Allah) raised up among the common people a Messenger from among themselves to recite to them His revelations, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom;" (62:2)***

***"And We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) the Reminder (i.e., the Qur'an) so that you may clarify to the people what has been revealed to them, and so that they may reflect." (16:44)***

These two verses are enough to prove that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not just a `mail-man' whose only job was to deliver the Book to us. He was a teacher and a commentator of the Qur'an. Even his actions are a source of guidance for us:

***"You have a good example in Allah's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the last day, and remembers God oft."(33:21)***

The obedience to the Prophet has been considered as the proof of loving Allah:

***“Say (O Muhammad): `If you love Allah, then follow me; (if you do so,) Allah will love you and forgive for you your sins.”' (3:31)***

The Qur'an further says,

***“Whoever obeys the Messenger has surely obeyed Allah.” (4:80)***

The Muslims who lived during the Prophet's time had easy excess to his *sunnah*. What about us who were born hundreds of years after the Prophet's death? Well, the Muslims of the early days realized the importance of the Prophet's *sunnah* and started preserving his sayings in books of *hadith*. Even the actions of the Prophet, observed by the companions, were preserved in writing. But this process of preserving the *sunnah* of the Prophet was not immune from mistakes and even forgery. Many sayings were invented and wrongfully attributed to the Prophet during the early period of the Islamic history.
Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to find an authentic and, at the same time, informed source for the *sunnah* of the Prophet. When you look at the Muslims of the Prophet's days, you can find no one who may be more knowledgeable, informed, reliable and closer to the Prophet than the Ahlu ' l-bayt, the family of the Prophet. After all, it is the Qur'an which testifies to their spiritual purity of highest category by saying,

***“Verily Allah intends to purify you, 0 the Ahlu ' 1-bayt, a thorough purification.” (33:33)***

Combine this verse about *Ahlu 'l-bayt*'s purity with the following:

***“It the holy Qur'an in a preserved tablet, none shall touch it but the purified ones.” (56:79)***

This shows that the Ahlu '1-bayt could understand the Qur'an better than any other follower of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah says,

***“Say (0 Muhammad), `I do not ask from you any reward (for bringing the message to you) except to love my near ones.”' (42:23)***

See that it is Allah who is commanding His messenger to ask the people to love his family. If they were not truthful, reliable, and worthy of following, would Allah command us to love them?

These few verses are enough to show that the best commentators of the Qur'an and the most authentic source for the Prophet's *sunnah* are the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt*. The Prophet himself said, “I am leaving among you two worthy things. As long as you hold on to them both, you will never be led astray after me. One of these two is greater than the other: the Book of Allah (which is a rope hanging from the heaven to the earth) and my descendants, my *Ahlu 'l-bayt*. These two things will not separate from each other until they come to me at the (fountain of) Kauthar (in the hereafter). Therefore, see how you recompense me by the way you deal with them.”

This is not the place to discuss about the authenticity of this *hadith*, but I will just quote Ibn Hajar al-Makki, a famous anti-Shi'ah polemicist. After recording this above-mentioned *hadith* through many companions who had heard it from the Prophet at various places and times, Ibn Hajar says, “And there is no contradiction in this [numerous reports] since there

was nothing to prevent the Prophet from repeating [this statement] in those various places because of the importance of the holy Book and the pure Family." 11

We can conclude from these verses and the *hadith* mentioned above that the Ahlu '1-bayt are the most authentic and the best source for the *sunnah*, and therefore we prefer them to all other sources. Whenever we quote a *hadith* from the Imams, it is not actually from themselves, instead it is the *hadith* of the Prophet which they had preserved as the true successors of the last messenger of Allah. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) says, "My *hadith* is the *hadith* of my father, the *hadith* of my father is that of my grandfather, the *hadith* of my grandfather is that of al Husayn [bin 'Ali], the *hadith* of al-Husayn is that of al-Hasan [bin 'Ali], the *hadith* of al-Hasan is that of Amiru '1-mu'minin ['Ali bin Abi Talib] (as), the *hadith* of Amiru '1-mu'minin is that of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w), and the hadiith of the Messenger is a statement of Allah, the Almighty, the Great." 22

## Ijtihad & Taqlid

After the twelfth Imam al-Mahdi (as) went into occultation, the responsibility of guiding the Shi`ahs in the *shari'ah* matter came upon the *mujtahids,* the religious scholars specializing in Islamic laws. The *mujtahid*s derive the Islamic laws from the two sources mentioned above. This may sound very simple, but it is not so. They do not just open the Qur'an and the books of *hadith*, and start giving fatwas. They must first of all come up with a methodology (discussed in a subject known as *Usulu 'l fiqh).*

In their methodology, they decide how to study the Qur'anic verses and the *ahadith*. Should they take the literal meanings only? Have they to find out which verse came first and which came second on a same issue? Will the latter verse abrogate the former, or will it just put some limitations on it? Is every *hadith* to be considered authentic? If not, what are the means of verifying the authenticity of a given *hadith*? If they come up on two authentic *ahadith* on a single issue which contradict each other, then what should they do? If the Qur'an and the sunnah are silent on an issue, what recourse should be followed? All such problems have to be solved while designing the methodology of *ijtihad*, and only then can a *mujtahid* correctly and responsibly derive a law from the Qur'an and the sunnah.

It is obvious that not all have the ability or the time to specialize in the *shari'ah* laws; and therefore, for such people it is necessary to follow a *mujtahid* in the matters of the *shari'ah*. The laws on ritual purity presented in this book can be followed by the followers of most high-ranking *mujtahid*s of our time, in particular Ayatullah al-`uzma Sayyid Abu 'l-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khu'i and the late Ayatullah al-`uzma al-Imam Sayyid Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni.

The differences, if any, among the present *mujtahid*s on the matters of ritual purity are on the level of *makruh* and *mustahab,* but not on the level of *wajib* and *haram.* Wherever the differences among the *mujtahid*s are of extreme nature, I have given their opinions separately.

The *ahadith* you find in this book have not been selected at random; I have tried my best to ascertain their authenticity and acceptability before using them. One reason for writing the relevant verses and *ahadith* in the book was to make the readers familiar with some of the sources which the *mujtahid*s use in reaching to their conclusions. This, I believe, will also help in dispelling the idea voiced by some misinformed people that the *shari'ah* laws are nothing but an invention of the *`ulama'.*

I hope this book proves useful to those who want to learn about Islam; and I pray to Allah, *subhanahu wa ta`a1a,* to accepted it as a small contribution towards serving Islam from this most humble servant of His. *Inna rabbi la Sami `u ' d-du`a.*

## S. M. Rizvi

Richmond, B.C.
Rabi'u '1-Awwal 1410
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1. Ibn Hajar al-Makki, as-Sawa'iqu '1-Muhriqah, chapter 11, section 1. For further reading on this issue, see Rizvi, S.S.A., Imamat; Sharafu 'd-Din, S.A.H., The Right Path; and Jafri, S.M.H., The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam.
2. al-Kulayni, Usulu 'l-Kafi, book 2, chapter 17, hadith No. 14; ash-Sha'rani, at-Tabaqatu 'l-Kubra, vol. 1, p. 28; Abu
Nu'aym, Hilyatu 'l-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 193, 197

# I. Najasat & Taharat

## A. Some Important Terms

*"Najasat" (pl. najasat)* means uncleanliness, impurity.

In Islamic laws, the *najasat* is of two types: inherent and acquired. To differentiate between the two, a thing which is inherently unclean is known as *"`ayn najis,"* whereas a thing whose uncleanliness is acquired is known as *"najis".* A pure thing acquires impurity by coming into contact with one of the *`ayn najis*. For example: blood is considered an *`ayn najis,* whereas milk is considered pure. Now, if a drop of blood falls into a glass of milk, the milk will become *najis* because of the blood which is an *`ayn najis.*

The plural of *`ayn najis* is *"a`yan najisah."*

*"Taharat" is* opposite of "*najasat*," it means cleanliness and purity.

"*Tahir*" is opposite of "*najis*," it means a thing which is clean and pure.

## B. The A`yan Najisah (The Inherently Unclean Things)

According to the Islamic laws, the *a`yan najisah* are nine in number. The nine *a`yan najisah* can be divided into four groups as follows:

**i. Common between Men & Animal:**

1. urine;
2. stool;
3. semen;
4. blood;
5. corpses;

**ii. In Animals only:**

6. dogs;
7. pigs;

**iii. In Man only:**

8. *kafir*;

**iv. Drinks:**

9. intoxicating liquids.

The implication of this law for a Muslim is that he or she must refrain from the *a`yan najisah* in three things: acts of worship, food and drink.

In the following pages, we shall explain the rules regarding the nine inherently impure things.

## 1. & 2. Urine And Stool

The urine and stool of human beings are *`ayn najis.*

Most people of the world consider urine and stool as unclean, but Islam has gone one step further in declaring them to be ritually unclean. For example, in the matters of worship a Muslim who has passed urine or emptied his bowels cannot pray even after cleaning his body from urine and stool-he must also do wudu, a minor ablution which will be discussed in chapter 2.

The Islamic *shari'ah* has prescribed certain rules on how to cleanse oneself of urine and stool.

1. The organ of urination can be made *tahir* only by the pouring of water on it at least twice. It is better to wash it three times.

2. As far as the anus is concerned, a person can clean himself/herself with water, or with three pieces of papers, or three pieces of rags or three stones. The papers, rags and stones can be used only if the anus is not more than normally dirtied, i.e., the excrement has not spread more than normal. If the area dirtied is large, or the excrement is mixed with some other *najasat* like blood, then only water can be used to purify oneself.

However, it is always better to wash oneself with water. While praising the people who built Masjid Quba, Allah says,

***"Therein are men who love to cleanse themselves; and Allah loves those who cleanse themselves."* (9:108)**

When this verse was revealed, the Prophet asked the people of Quba, "What do you do when cleaning yourselves that Allah has praised you for it?" They said, "We cleanse ourselves after emptying the bowels with water." [1]3

3. In case of cleaning oneself with three pieces of papers, rags or stones, it is obligatory to use all the three pieces even if the body becomes clean by one or two of them. However, if

the body is not clean even after using the three pieces, then extra pieces must be used till the body becomes clean.

4. It is recommended for men to do *istibra*' after urinating. *Istibra*' means to clean something, to get rid of something. Here it means getting rid of the remaining drops of urine from penis. The method of *istibra*': Squeeze with the middle-finger of the left hand from the anus to the root of the penis three times; then holding the penis between the thumb and the fore-finger, squeeze three times from the root up to the glans; and squeeze the glans itself three times.

The benefit of *istibra*': If a liquid comes out of a man's penis after urinating and he doubts whether this is urine or something else, then he can assume it to be *tahir* if he has done *istibra*'. But if he has not done *istibra*', then he must consider it *najis*.

5. In western toilets, there is no water, only tissue paper is available. As far as stool is concerned, it can be cleaned with tissue paper as explained above. *In case of urinating, would it be enough to wipe the related part with tissue paper? No,* wiping with tissue paper would not purify the organ of urination. Nonetheless, in such a case, one should do *istibra*' and then wipe the organ with tissue paper, and later on when it becomes possible, he or she must purify the organ with water. The benefit of *istibra*' and wiping with tissue paper is that the organ will become dry and not make the underwear or the thighs *najis*.

However, in the above case, if the person's private parts sweat, then he or she must purify the organ, the immediately surrounding area and the underwear with water. `Ays bin al-Qasim asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about a person who urinated in a place where there was no water and so he dried his penis with a stone, but later he started sweating in the same area. The Imam said, “He should wash his penis and thighs.” 24

6. While urinating or emptying the bowels, it is necessary to conceal one's private parts from the on-lookers. This condition is easily taken care of in normal toilets, but one must be careful while on the call of nature in an open area, e.g., during a picnic or while travelling, etc.

7. A Muslim should also realize that even for such a trivial thing as using toilet, Islam emphasizes that either you must be the owner of the washroom or you must have the permission of the owner; otherwise, it will be *haram* for you to fulfill your natural needs in that place.

8. It is *haram* to face the *qiblah* or to keep the *qiblah* on the back side while urinating or evacuating the bowels. *Qiblah* means the direction of the Ka'bah (Mecca). Therefore, a Muslim must make sure that the toilet of his house is not built in such a way that when he sits on the toilet, his front or back side is towards the *qiblah*. If the circumstances make it necessary to use a toilet on which a person will either be facing the *qiblah* or will have his back towards it, then he should refrain from facing the *qiblah.*

The urine and excrement of the animals are also *najis* if they belong to the group of animals **(1)** whose meat is forbidden in Islam *and* **(2)** whose blood spurts out when a blood-vessel is cut. Therefore, if these two conditions are not found together in an animal, its urine and excrement are not *najis*. For example, even though its blood spurts out, sheep's urine and stool are not *najis* because it's meat is not forbidden.

However, the droppings of all the birds are *tahir*.

What should a person do if he finds animal stool or excrement on his dress or person and doesn't know from which type of animal it originated? In all the cases of ignorance and doubt, one can assume that it came from an animal whose urine or excrement is *tahir*.

Abu Agharr an-Nahhas, a veterinarian, said to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as): “I treat the animals. Sometimes I have to go (to treat them) at night. The animal may have urinated and emptied its bowels; and when it jumps on its own refuse and urine, it splashes on my dress. Then in the morning, I see its trace on my dress. [What should I do?]” The Imam said, “There is nothing on you.” 3 This answer can be explained in two ways: Abu Agharr could assume that his dress was still pure because in the darkness of night he could not have been sure of what come on his dress, or because the animals were domesticated and thus their refuse and urine is not *najis*.

## 3. Semen

Semen is also one of the `*ayn najis*.

There are many *ahadith* on this issue, but here I will just describe a historical event and its relevant Qur'anic verse which proves that semen is *najis*.

In the battle of Badr, the unbelievers of Mecca had camped near the spring of Badr and the ground of their camp-site was firm. On the other hand, the Muslims were far from the spring and thus experienced difficulty in getting water; and the ground under them was sandy which made their stand and maneuvers difficult. To make the matters worse, many of the Muslims had nocturnal discharge in their sleep and became impure *(najis).* Then came Allah's help which the Qur'an describes as follows:

***“And (remember) when He spread a cover of drowsiness over you as a security from Him (and thus you slept peacefully). And He sent down upon you water from heaven to purify you with it, to take away from you the unclean (insinuation) of the Shaytan, to strengthen your hearts and to plant you feet firmly with it.” (8:11)***

The words relevant to our subject are: “He sent down upon you water from heaven to purify you with it.” The least that this verse proves is that semen is *najis,* and with its discharge a man becomes ritually impure.

`Abdullah ibn Abi Ya'fur asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about a dress which had come into contact with semen. The Imam said, “If you know the particular part *of* the dress which came into contact with semen, then wash that area only; but if that part is unknown to you, then wash the whole dress.” 46

Sometimes a liquid, other then semen and urine, is discharged from man; this type of liquid is not *najis*. These liquids are of three types:

**1.** *Mazi:* a whitish liquid which is discharged from penis during sexual fore-play.

**2.** *Wazi*: a liquid which comes out after the discharge of semen.

**3.** *Wadi*: a liquid which comes out after urinating.

All these discharges are *tahir*.

## 4. Blood

Blood of human being is *najis*.

Blood of the animals whose blood spurts out is also considered *najis*. But the blood of an animal whose blood does not spurt out is *tahir*, e.g., the blood of fish or the body-fluid of a mosquito. Ibn Abi Yafur asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as), “What do you say about the blood of fleas?” The Imam said, “There is no objection in it.” Ibn Abi Ya'fur, “Even if it is more and excessive?” The Imam, “Yes, even if it is more.” 57

After an animal has been slaughtered and the normal amount of its blood has flowed out, the blood remaining in its body is *tahir*.

The blood found in an egg is also *najis*.

If there is blood on someone's dress or on his person and he doubts whether it is of an animal whose blood spurts out or not, then he should consider it *tahir*.

If a yellowish liquid comes out of a wound and one doubts whether it is blood or something else, then he should consider it *tahir*.

Even though blood is considered *najis*, one is still permitted to donate or sell his blood. Doctors, nurses, and scientists can work and experiment with blood. The only important thing is that at the time of praying, one's body and dress must be free from this *najasat*.

## 5. Corpses

The dead body of a Muslim becomes *najis* after becoming cold and before being washed (*ghusl mayyit*).

al-Halabi asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about a person whose dress had fallen upon the body of a dead human being. The Imam said, “If the dead body had been given the ritual bath (*ghusl mayyit*), then there is no need to wash your dress which touched it; but if the body had not been given the ritual bath, then wash whatever part of your dress that had touched it.” 68

A *kafir* is *najis* both during his life-time and after his death.

If a part of a living human being's body or of a living animal's body is cut off, it will be considered *najis*. This law, however, does not apply to the dry skin which comes off the lips or the skin which comes off from a healing wound, or pimples, dandruff, etc.

A miscarried fetus is also *najis*.

“Dead body-*maytah*” in case of the animals means: an animal which had died naturally or was slaughtered in a non-Islamic way.

The dead body of an animal whose blood spurts out is also *najis* with the exception of those of its parts which have no life (feeling) in them during life-time, e.g., hair, nails, bones, beak, horn and teeth. Of course, these parts become *najis* by being in contact with the dead body; so after separating them from the animal's body they must be purified.

The dead body of the animal whose blood does not spurt out is *tahir*; for example, a dead

fish. `Amman as-Sabati says that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked about a beetle, a fly, a locust, an ant and other similar things that die in a well, oil, butter or other such things: The Imam answered, “There is no objection concerning all (the animals) that do not have (spurting) blood.” 79

If someone buys a dress, a belt, or a wallet, etc, made of an animal's skin and does not know for sure whether or not the animal was slaughtered Islamically, then in such a case there are two possibilities:

**1**. Either he has bought it from a Muslim or from a Muslim market, then he can assume that the animal was slaughtered according to the *shari'ah*.

**2.** Or he has bought it from a *kafir*. In such a case if there is a probability that the skin or hide has been taken from an animal which was slaughtered according to the *shari'ah*, then he can consider it *tahir* and use it. However, he still cannot use such a thing in salat (prayers). And if there is no such probability, then he cannot consider it *tahir*, it should be regarded as *najis*.

## 6. & 7. Pigs And Dogs

Pigs and dogs are also counted as `*ayn najis*.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

***“(O Muhammad) say, “I do not find in what is revealed to me anything forbidden for a person to eat except (1) what has died of itself, (2) outpoured blood, (3) the flesh of pig --for it is unclean and (4) an ungodly thing (i.e., the animal) slaughtered (with the name) of other than Allah” (6:146)***

Although this verse is related to the forbidden food, but it clearly defines the pig as an unclean animal. Khayran al-Khadim wrote to Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (as)
asking about a dress which had come into contact with intoxicating liquid and flesh of pig: “can a person pray in that dress? Our companions had different opinions: some say you can pray in it because Allah has only forbidden the drinking of the intoxicants, while others say you cannot pray in it.” The Imam answered, “Do not pray in that dress because it is *najis*.” 810

Abu Sahl al-Qarshi asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about the dog: “Is the dog *haram?”* The Imam said, “It is *najis*.” Abu Sahl repeated this question three times and the Imam always replied, “It is *najis*.” 911

Based on such teachings, our *mujtahid*s have ruled that all parts of pigs and dogs, even the nails, hair, teeth and bones, and their saliva, milk, urine and excrement are *najis*. Therefore, all things made from pig's fat, skin, hair, and other parts of its body (e.g., belt, gloves, jackets, and shoes) are *najis*. Similarly, all the food items produced from the meat and fat of pig is *najis*.

## 8. The Kafirs

What is the meaning of “*kafir*?” *Kafir* (pl. kuffar) means an infidel, an unbeliever as opposed to a Muslim, a believer. “Muslim” is defined as a person who believes in Oneness of God, prophethood of Prophet Muhammad, and the Day of Judgment. A person who rejects any of

these three principles is a *kafir*.

From Muslims' perspective, the kuffar are divided into two main groups: *kafir dhimmi* and *kafir harbi*. "*Kafir dhimmi" is* a *kafir* who lives under the protection of an Islamic government. "*Kafir harbi"* is a *kafir* who does not have such a protection. I must also mention a third, but rare, category of *kafir*: *murtad*. "*Murtad*" means an apostate; there are two types of *murtad*: *"Murtad fitri*" a person who was born of a Muslim parent, but then declared his disbelief in Islam. *"Murtad milli"* a non Muslim who had accepted the religion of Islam and then apostates from it.

While discussing the ritual purity or impurity of the non-Muslims, the *mujtahid*s divide all the *kuffar--dhimmi, harbi, murtad fitri* and *milli*-into two distinct groups: *mushrik* and ahlu '1-kitab.

*Mushrik (pl. mushrikin) means* a polytheist, a person who believes that God has partner(s). It is used for the idol-worshippers also. The followers of Hinduism, of most far eastern religions and of the tribal religions fall in the category of *mushrik*in. *Ahlu* ' *l-kitab* means the people of the Book; it is a name given to those who believe in any of the Books revealed by Allah before the Qur'an. Under Islamic system, the Ahlu '1-kitab have a preferred status in comparison to other non-Muslims. The people who are unanimously counted as Ahlu '1-kitab are: the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians.

As for the *mushrikfn,* the *mujtahid*s are unanimous that they are *najis*. This is so because Allah has clearly declared in the Qur'an that:

***"O you who believe! The polytheists (mushrikun) are indeed unclean; therefore, they should not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs (i.e., 9 AH)."* (9:28)**

Some Muslims try to interpret the word "unclean" in spiritual sense only. They are wrong because one cannot ignore the literal meaning of a word unless the context supports the departure from a literal to a symbolic meaning. The context of the verse does not leave any room for an exclusively symbolic or spiritual interpretation of the word "unclean." It immediately says that "they should not approach the Sacred Mosque." This reflects the physical uncleanliness. However, our interpretation does not exclude the spiritual impurity of the *mushrikin* along side the physical, ritual impurity.

When we move on to the *Ahlu* ' *1-kitab,* we find that the *mujtahid*s disagree about their ritual purity or impurity. There are three different views on the Ahlu 1-kitab.

**(1)** A minority group says that the Ahlu '1-kitab are pure and *tahir*, just like Muslims. To this group belong the late Ayatullah al-`uzma Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim at Tabataba'i (d. 1970) and the late Ayatullah ash-Shahid Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr (d. 1980). 10

**(2**) The majority view says that the Ahlu '1-kitab have become corrupt in their beliefs and are not different from *mushrik*in; therefore, they are *najis*. Those who belong to this group from the present *mujtahid*s are: Ayatullah al-`uzma Sayyid Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni and Ayatullah al-`uzma Sayyid Muhammad Riza alGulpaygani. 11

**(3)** The third group is of those *mujtahid*s who theoretically agree with the first view but when it comes to issuing a fatwa for their followers, they tread on the path of precaution and side with the majority. The most prominent among this group is the Ayatullah al`uzma

Sayyid Abu '1-Qasim al-Musawi al-Khu'i.

Ayatullah al-Khu'i, in his lectures on *fiqh,* says: “It is apparent from what we have discussed above that the purity (taharat) of the Ahlu '1-kitab was taken for granted by the narrators of *hadith* till the end of the era of our Imams [i. e., till the minor occultation], and whatever they asked the Imams concerning the works of the Ahlu '1kitab was just because of the doubts they had about external *najasat* which might have affected them.

“Therefore, it is *difficult to* give a fatwa on basis of the *ahadith* which apparently say that the Ahlu '1-kitab are *najis*; however, on the other hand, to gave a ruling on basis of the *ahadith* which say that they are *tahir* is even more difficult because the majority of our jurist companions, both from the early days and the later days, believe in the *najasat* of Ahlu '1-kitab. And so there is no escape from a binding precautionary measure on this issue.” 12 And therefore we see that while issuing the *fatwa* for his followers, Ayatullah al-Khu'i writes, “As for the *kiadbi (kafir),* the famous view says that he is *najis*; and it is precautionarily necessary (to consider him as such).” 1315

With all due respect to the great *marja* ' *of* our time, I would just repeat what the famous *mujtahid* of the 10th Islamic century, ash-Shahid ath-Thani Shaykh Zaynu'd Din al-`Amili, said on this issue: “To act in contradiction to the majority view is *difficult* but to agree to their view without any convincing proof is *even more difficult.”* 1416

Irrespective of the view to which I am inclined, the reader is advised to follow the opinion of his own *mujtahid* on this issue.

There are three other groups -*ghulat*, *nawasib*, and *khawarij*- who are also considered *kafir* and *najis* by the Shi'ah *fiqh,* in spite of the fact that these groups were off shoots of Muslims during the early stage of the Islamic history.

*Ghulat (s. ghali)* are those who declare their faith in Islam but exaggerate in their beliefs about some prophets or Imams, e.g., those who believe that an Imam is an incarnation of God. This is against the fundamental belief of Islam that God cannot incarnate into anyone or anything.

*Nawasib (s. nasibi)* are those who declare their faith in Islam but display enmity toward the Ahlu'1-bayt (peace be upon them). This goes completely against the Qur'anic order which says,

***“(O Muhammad) say, `I do not ask from you any reward for it (i.e., conveying the message) except the love for my near ones.”* (42:23)**

The Prophet has said, “Whosoever dies in enmity to the family of Muhammad, dies as an unbeliever (*kafir*). Whosoever dies in enmity to the family of Muhammad, will not smell the scent of Paradise.” 15 However, one must realize that if a person is not a Shi'ah Muslim it does not automatically follow that he also hates our Imams. There are many Sunnis who do not believe in our Imams as the leaders and the caliphs after the Prophet, but neither do they hate them---on the contrary many of them respect and even love the Imams of the Ahlu '1-bayt.

*Khawarij* (*s. khariji*) are those who rebelled against Imam 'Ali bin Abi
Talib in the battle of Siffin. Finally, Imam 'Ali had to fight against them in the battle known as Naharwan. They believed that Imam 'Ali had become a *kafir* by accepting the

intermediaries during the battle against Mu`awiyah. The verse and the *hadith* mentioned above is equally applicable to the khawarij, and therefore, they are also *kafir* and *najis*.

There is one more category of a *kafir*. The person who rejects the unanimously accepted tenets of Islam (for example, the obligation of *salat* or *haj*), is also regarded as a *kafir* and *najis*. Such a person will become *kafir* provided he realizes that rejecting such Islamic tenets amounts to believing that the Qur'anic verses on salat and hajj are not part of Allah's Book, and this in turn means that Prophet Muhammad had not been faithful in fulfilling the mission of Allah. In short, such a person becomes a *kafir* only if he realizes the consequence of his rejection of the unanimously accepted tenets of Islam. However, one must note that negligence and rejection are two different things; so if a person believes in the unanimously accepted tenets of Islam but neglects them, he is not a *kafir*, he is only a sinner.

### 9. Intoxicating Liquids

Every intoxicating liquid is *najis*.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

***"O you who believe! Surely intoxicants, games of chance, idols and divining arrows are unclean (and) work of Shaytan, so shun it; may be you will prosper."* (5:90)**

The word "unclean" in this verse, at least as far as the intoxicants are concerned, has a spiritual as well as a ritual connotation to it. And ritual uncleanliness is another word for *najis*. Moreover, the answer of Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (a, s.) to Khayran's letter quoted earlier clearly says that intoxicants are not just *haram* but also *najis*.

Beer is also *najis*. But all non-intoxicating drink made from barley are *tahir*.

The non-liquid intoxicants are *haram* (forbidden) but not *najis*. Methyl alcohol (also known as wood alcohol or wood spirit) is *tahir*; it is mostly used for industrial solvents, and for making synthetic rubber, chemicals, rubbing alcohol, inks, dyes and stains, antifreeze and other similar products.

## C. Some general rules

Buying or selling the following *najasat* is *haram*: all types of intoxicating liquids, dead bodies, pigs and dogs (except the dogs used for hunting).

However, one is allowed to buy or sell the other *najasat* if there is any lawful benefit in them, e.g., buying or selling excrement for manure. It is also permitted to buy or sell those parts of a dead animal's body (other than dog and pig) which have no feeling in them during life-time. It is *haram* to sell grapes or dates to a person who purchases it for producing wine.

If a clean (*tahir*) thing comes into contact with any of the *najasat*, then it will not become *najis* unless one of those two things was wet.

The medicines, perfumes, soap and waxes purchased from a non-Muslim country can be considered *tahir* unless one becomes sure that they are *najis*.

# D. The Mutahhirat (The Purifying Agents)

What you have read above was about *a`yan najisah,* the ten inherently unclean things. You also came to know that other things can become ritually impure (*najis*) by coming into contact with one of the ten *a'yan najisah*.

*Is it possible to purify the najis things?* Yes. We can purify a thing which has become *najis* by coming into contact with the one of the *a'yan najisah*. Is *it possible to purify the a `ayan najisah?* Some *a'yan najisah* can be purified easily, while other *a'yan najisah* can be purified only through a long process of change and transformation. The function of purifying such things is done by the *mutahhirat.*

*Mutahhirat is* plural of *mutahhir.* It means a thing or a process which can ritually purify the *najis* things and the *a'yan najisah*. *"Mutahhirat"* can be translated into English as "the purifying agents." The *mutahhirat are* eleven in number. These *mutahhirat* can be divided into three groups:

**i. The Nature:**

*1.* water;
*2.* the earth;
*3.* the sun;

ii. **Physical Change:**

*4. istihalah* (chemical change);
*5. inqilab* (change in properties);
*6. intiqal* (change in place);
*7. zawalull-`ayni n-najasah* (disappearance of the *najasat*);
*8. istibra*' (quarantining);

iii. **Spiritual Change:**

*9.* Islam;
*10. taba`iyyah* (to follow);
*11. ghaybatu ' 1-muslim* (disappearance of a Muslim).

Not all of these *mutahhirat* can purify every *najis* or every *`ayn najis* thing. Only water is the most universal purifying agent, whereas other *mutahhirat* are very limited in scope. In the following pages we shall explain the rules about these eleven *mutahhirat*.

## 1. Water

First among the *mutahhirat* is water. The Qur'an says:

***"He (Allah) is the one who sends the winds as good news before His mercy; and We send down pure water from the cloud." (25:48)***

Water is indeed the most common and widely used purifying agent. However, the way water can purify a *najis* thing depends on its type and quantity. So first we will describe the various types of water and then explain the rules of purification.

According to the *shari'ah,* water can be of two types: *mutlaq* and *muzaf.*

*Mutlaq* means pure water, a water which is not mixed with any other liquid. When we use the term pure, in the present context, we do not mean scientifically pure water, i.e., H20, a liquid compound consisting of 2 part of hydrogen and 16 of oxygen. By *mutlaq* we mean a water which people in general would consider pure, without putting it to a scientific test.

*Muzaf* is opposite of *mutlaq*, it means a water which is mixed with some other liquid, e.g., orange juice, tea.

For the purpose of purifying a *najis* thing, only the *mutlaq* water can be used. Therefore, muzaf water is not one of the *mutahhirat*.

The *mutlaq* water can be found in five different forms:

1. Rain.

2. Well water.

3. Running or flowing water, e.g., river, stream. The water running from the pipes in the houses is treated as `running water' as long as it is running.

4. *Kur* water: a body of water which is still (not moving). It must be at least 377 k.g. in weight, or must occupy at least 27 cubic span space. Examples of kur water: a swimming pool, a pond, a lake, a sea or an ocean.

5. Less than *kur.* A body of still water which is less than the kur.

The first four types of pure water are known as *Kathir* water, and the last one is known as *qalil* water. *Kathir* means abundant or plentiful; qalil means less.

Water can make a *najis* thing *tahir* on the following conditions:

1. it must be *mutlaq*;

2. it must be *tahir*;

3. it must not become muzaf by coming in contact with the *najasat*;

4. the *najasat* must be washed away from the *najis* thing.

Because of its quantity, the *Kathir* water is immune from becoming *najis* by contact with a *najasat* except when the *najasat* is so strong or so much that it changes the taste, or the color or the smell of the water. When cleaning a *najis* thing with the *Kathir* water, it is enough to wash it just once after removing the *najasat*.

Unlike the *Kathir* water, qalil water becomes *najis* as soon as it comes into contact with a *najasat*. When cleaning a *najis* thing with qalil water, it is necessary to wash it twice. However, it is better to wash three times.

Almost all solid things that become *najis* can be purified by washing once with *Kathir* water or twice with qalil water. Examples of solid things: clothes and shoes, curtains and sofas, carpets and furniture, fruits and vegetables, utensils and pots.

However, there are a few things which have to be washed in a different way

1. A piece of cloth that has become *najis* by urine must be washed once in running water or twice with other types of water, and it must also be squeezed after each wash.

2. A pot licked by a dog must be rubbed with wet and clean earth thoroughly; then, after washing away the earth, it must be washed once with *Kathir* water or twice with qalil water.

3. A pot that has become *najis* by intoxicating liquid must be washed three times with *Kathir* or qalil water; however, it is better to wash it seven times.

4. A pot licked by a pig must be washed seven times with *Kathir* or qalil water.

As for the liquid things that may become *najis* (e.g, milk), they cannot be purified with water. The only possible way for purifying a *najis* liquid is its complete transformation or change-the purifying methods which will be discussed later on.

## 2. The Earth

The second among *mutahhirat* is the earth.

However, the earth is not a universal purifying agent like water. It's purifying scope is very limited. It can only purify the sole of the shoes and the sole of the feet provided:

1. the shoe or the foot had become *najis* by a *najasat* on the earth;

2. the *najis* element is removed from the soles by walking on the earth;

3. the earth is dry and *tahir*.

## 3. The Sun

The sun is the third and last among “the natural *mutahhirat*.”

The sun is also a limited mutahhir like the earth. It can purify only the following things that become *najis*: 'the earth and all the immovable things on the earth like trees, the fruits on the trees, the grass. It can also purify the immovable things of a house like walls and doors.

The sun can purify the above mentioned things provided:

1.the *najasat* has been removed;

2. the *najis* place or thing is wet. So if a *najis* place or thing has become dry and you wish to purify it by the sun, then you will have to pour water on it and let it dry up by direct rays of the sun.

3. the *najis* thing or place must become dry by the direct rays of the sun.

## 4. Istihalah (Chemical Change)

*Istihalah is* the fourth *mutahhirat*. Istihalah means change or more precisely, a chemical change. It is the most universal *mutahhirat* in the category of `physical change'.

An `*ayn najis* or a *najis* thing can become *tahir* by changing chemically into another *tahir* thing.

A few examples of an *`ayn najis* changing into a *tahir* thing: Urine evaporates, becomes steam and then changes into liquid form. A dog's body changes into earth. A pig's body thrown into a salt mine changes into salt. The manure made from the excrement changes, in a long process, into grass and fruits.

A few examples of a *najis* thing changing into a *tahir* thing: A *najis* wood changes into ashes. The *najis* water changes into steam and becomes water again. The *najis* water which a cow drank changes into its urine or mills.

## 5. Inqilab (Change in Properties)

*Inqilab* like istihalah means change. The difference is in the degree of change. In istihalah, the shape and form, all are changed; whereas in inqilab, only the properties change but the shape is not entirely changed. Its only example is of the wine changing into vinegar. When this change takes place, the vinegar becomes *tahir*.

## 6. Intiqal (Change in Place)

*Intiqal* means change of place. Certain *`ayn najis* things can become ritually pure by change in its location or place. For example, human blood is *najis*. Now, if a mosquito sucks the blood of a man and the blood becomes `blood of mosquito', then it will become *tahir*. Similarly, if an organ of a *kafir* is transplanted to a Muslim (and after some time the organ becomes a part of the Muslim's body), then it will become *tahir*.

## 7. Zawa lu `l-'ayni 'n-Najasah (Disappearance of the Najasat)

*Zawalu ' 1- `ayni ' n-najasah* means disappearance of the *najis* element. This mutahhir is mostly useful in case of animals.

If there is any *najasat* on the body of an animal, it will become *tahir* just by the removal of, or rubbing out, the *najasat* from its body.

Likewise, the inner parts of human body (like inside of the mouth, nose and eyelids) become *tahir* as soon as the *najasat* is removed from them. However, dentures are not included in this rule because they are foreign to mouth.

## 8. Istibra' (Quarantining)

Istibra' means to clean something or to get rid of something.

This mutahhir is limited to certain animals. You already know that the urine and excrement of the *halal* animal are not *najis*. However, such animals loose their status of purity if they start eating human refuse. And when this happens, then the only way to make them *tahir* is istibra'.

Istibra', in this context, means keeping these animal away from eating human refuse for a specified number of days. The number of days depends on the type of the animal: the camel for 40 days, the cow for 20 days, the sheep or goat for 10 days, the duck or fowl for 5 or 7 days, and the chicken for 3 days.

## 9. Islam

Islam is the first among “the spiritual *mutahhirat*.”

One of the a'yan *najis*ah was a *kafir*. The only way a *kafir* can become *tahir* is for him/her to accept Islam. With the acceptance of Islam, he or she will immediately become *tahir*. However, if the person's clothes were *najis*, then the declaration of faith in Islam will not purify them; he will have to make them *tahir* with water.

### 10. Taba`Iyyah (To follow)

*Taba`iyyah* means to follow. In the present context, it means that when a *najis* thing or person becomes *tahir*, the things which are related to them also become *tahir* automatically.

When a *kafir* becomes Muslim, his minor children become *tahir* automatically. If a well becomes *najis*, and the required amount of water is taken out of it to purify it, then the wall of the well, the bucket and the rope will also become *tahir*.

While washing a *najis* thing, our hands become *najis* also; but when that thing become *tahir*, our hands will also become *tahir* automatically. If the wine become vinegar, this change will make it *tahir*; and the pot which contained it, becomes *tahir* automatically .

The wooden plank or cement slab upon which the dead body of a Muslim is washed, as well as the piece of cloth used for covering his private parts, and also the hands of the person washing the dead body becomes clean when the ritual bath is completed.

### 11. Ghaybatu 'l-Muslim (Disappearance of a Muslim)

The last among the *mutahhirat* is *ghaybatu ' l-Muslim.* I have counted it as one of the spiritual mutahhir because it is based on a most important moral teachings of Islam which says that one must be positive in judging other Muslims.

*Ghaybatu 'l-Muslim* means disappearance or absence of a Muslim. In the present context, it means the following: Suppose the body or anything related to a Muslim (who is serious in following the *shari'ah*) becomes *najis*.

Then that person goes out of your sight long enough for him to purify himself or his belongings. Now, he comes back and you see him using that particular thing, then you should consider it *tahir*.

## E. Our outlook towards The Najasat

What should be our general outlook towards the *najasat*? This is a question of utmost importance to the Muslims, especially for those who live in a society which is predominantly *kafir*. Usually we get two types of responses to this question: On the one hand is a group which has adopted a `liberal' view and says that such *shari'ah* laws are no longer relevant during our time. It is needless to say that this view has no support in the Islamic sources. The essence of Islam is a voluntary submission to the will of God and `liberal' attitude is opposite of that idea. The liberal view results partly from the ignorance about the dynamics and the adoptive nature of the *shari'ah*, it is the result of confusing the form for the substance; and partly from the influence of western liberal tradition. There is, on the other hand, a group which has adopted the holier-than-thou attitude and says that we must totally abstain from the *najasat* in all spheres of our lives. This view is based on some

misconceived ideas about the *shari'ah* and the Islamic world-view in general. It ignores or is ignorant of the fact that Islam itself has described its *shari'ah* as *"shari'atu 'n-sahla"* or it *shari`atu 'n-samha,"* a simple *shari'ah*, a lenient shari `ah.

While every informed Muslim recognizes the need to combat the liberal view, it is equally important to fight against the rigidity of the holier-than-thou mentality. The latter group is not without blame in pushing many ordinary Muslims towards the so-called liberal group. Between these two extremes lies the Islamic view, a view which can be named as the straight path-the path of those on whom Allah has showered His blessing, not of those with whom He is angry, nor of those who have gone astray! It is this view which I shall try, with the help of *Allah subhanahu wa ta`ala, to* explain here.

Let me begin by raising the following question: Should we start with the assumption that everything is *najis* and *haram* unless we come to know otherwise? OR Should we start with the assumption that everything is *tahir* and *halal* unless we come to know otherwise?

My answer to this question is that we should start with the assumption that everything is *tahir* and *halal* unless we come to know otherwise. Anyone familiar with the principles of the *shari'ah* cannot but agree with me. However, as all general rules have exceptions, the view I have adopted also has one exception. What I have said is valid at all times except in case of animal products obtained from non-Muslims. As for the animal products obtained from Muslims, we still start with the assumption that it is *tahir* and *halal*. It is only in case of the animal products obtained from the kuffar that we must start with the assumption that everything is *najis* and *haram* unless we come to know otherwise. This view is supported fully by all the *mujtahid*s of our time, including Ayatullah al-Khu'i and Ayatullah al-Khumayni.

Here I wish to just quote Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Kazim at-Tabataba'i al-Yazdi a prominent Shi`a *mujtahid* of the early present century whose book *al- `Urwatu' 1-wuthqa* is used by later *mujtahid*s as a text for their *ijtihad* lectures. Ayatullah al-Yazdi writes:

"**(1)** The utensils of the *mushrik*in and other kuff"ar are to be considered *tahir* as long as it is not known that they have touched them with flowing wetness. [This rule is valid] provided the utensils are not made from leather, otherwise they will be considered *najis* unless it is known that the animal [from which the leather originated] had been slaughtered Islamically or that it had been in possession of a Muslim [before coming into the *kafir*'s possession].

"**(2)** Similarly other things that need to be slaughtered Islamically (e.g., meat and fat), if found in the possession of the kuff'ar must be considered *najis* unless it is known that the animal has been slaughtered Islamically or that it had been in possession of a Muslim [before coming to the *kafir*'s possession].

"**(3)** However, a thing that does not need slaughtering is to be considered *tahir* unless you have knowledge that it is *najis*. And the conjecture that the kuff"ar may have touched it with wetness is not sufficient [to consider such a thing *najis*].

"**(4)** An item about which one is not sure whether or not it is from animal's .skin, flesh or fat is to be considered as a non-animal product and *tahir*, even if it is obtained from a *kafir*." [16]18

All the *mujtahid*s of our time have annotated the *al-`Urwatu 'l-wuthqa* and all of them have

agreed with the above views of Ayatullah al-Yazdi. Although the above quotation is sufficient, but for the sake of clarity I would like to quote Ayatullah al-Khu'i. In the first volume *of Minhaju 's-Salihiyn,* under the section *of najasat*, he writes:

“What is obtained from the hands *of* the kafirs -like bread, oil, honey and other similar things, whether they are liquid or solid- is *tahir* unless you come to know that they have touched it with flowing wetness. The same applies to their clothes and utensils. And conjecture about *najasat* [in such cases] should not be taken into account.” 1719

But while discussing the rules of food and drinks, in the second volume of *Minhaj,* he writes:

“The skin, flesh and fat that is obtained from the hands of a *kafir* is to be considered *najis* even if he informs you that it has been slaughtered Islamically.” 1820

What our *mujtahid*s have said that you can assume everything --except the animal products obtained from a *kafir*- as *tahir* and *halal* unless you come to know otherwise is based on the clear guide-lines provided by our Imams (as).

Fuzayl bin Yasar, Zurarah bin A'yan and Muhammad bin Muslim, the three highly respected companions of the fifth and sixth Imams, asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) about buying meat from the markets while they do not know what the butchers do when slaughtering the animals. The Imam said, “Eat if it is from a Muslim market and do not question about it.” 1921

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abi 'n-Nasr asked Imam 'Ali ar-Riza (as) about the [leather] shoes which have come in the [Muslim] market and a person buys a shoe while he does not know whether it [originated from an animal that] had been slaughtered Islamically or not. What do you say about praying in such a shoe while the person does not know [whether it is from a slaughtered animal]? Can he pray in it? The Imam said, “Yes; I also buy the shoes from the market, and it is made for me and I pray in it. You do not have to ask [whether it is from an Islamically slaughtered animal or not].”' 2022

al-Hasan ibn al-Jahm asked Imam 'Ali ar-Riza (as) a similar question about leather shoes and upon hearing the same answer, he said, “I am more restrained than this (in dealing with *najasat*).” Imam 'Ali ar-Riza (as) said, “Do you dislike what Abu '1-Hasan [i.e. Imam Musa al-Kazim] used to do?!”
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'Ali bin Abi Hamzah heard a person asking Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about a man who was praying while he was carrying a sword-can he pray with it? The Imam said, “Yes.” Then the person asked, even if its sheathe was made of leather from an animal which might have or might not have been slaughtered Islamically? The Imam said, “If you know that it is from an un-Islamically slaughtered animal, then do not pray in it.” 2224

An interesting incident is narrated by Mu'awiyah bin `Amman, one the famous companions of the sixth Imam. Mu'awiyah asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) about the dress which is made by the Magi who are unclean, who drink intoxicants and their women are also of the same type: “Can I wear such a dress without washing it and pray in it?” The Imam said, “Yes.” Thereafter, Mu'awiyah cut a shirt for the Imam from the cloth obtained from a Maji, designed it, and also prepared a waist-band and a robe from it. Then on a Friday, just before the noon time, he sent the dress to the Imam. He wanted to see whether or not the Imam puts it on without washing it. In Mu'awiyah's own words, “It seemed the Imam had

understood my intentions, and came out with that same dress for the Friday prayer." 23 A somewhat similar question was put in writing to Imam Mahdi (as) about praying in a dress made by a Maji without washing. Imam Mahdi (as) replied, "There is no problem in praying in it." 2426

`Abdullah bin Sanari narrates that my father asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as), "I loaned my dress to a dhimmi *kafir* whom I know that he drinks intoxicants and eats pork, and then he returns it to me-do I have to wash that dress before praying in it?" The Imam said, "Pray in that dress and do not wash it for that particular reason because when you loaned it to him, it was *tahir* and now you are not sure about its becoming *najis*." 2527

The first four *ahadith* make it clear that whatever you get from a Muslim or a Muslim market -whether a non-animal product or an animal product- you can assume that it is *tahir* and *halal*, you do not even have to inquire about it. The last three *ahadith* make it quite clear that whatever non-animal products you get from a *kafir* is to be considered *tahir* and *halal* unless you come to know for sure that it is *najis* and *haram*.

The restrictions of a Muslim or Muslim market found in the first three *ahadith* clearly indicates that animal products can be assumed as *tahir* and *halal* provided they are from the Muslim market. It automatically follows that animal products from non-Muslim sources cannot be considered *tahir* and *halal* unless we come to know otherwise. Here I will just quote two more *hadith* on this specific issue:

Husayn bin al-Mundhir said to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.): We are a people who frequently go to the mountains and the distance is great between us and the mountains. We therefore buy animals in large number for food, and we ask the herdsmen about their religion and they reply that they are Christians. "So what do you say about the slaughtering of animals by the Jews and the Christians?" The Imam said, "O Husayn! The Islamic slaughtering can be done with Allah's name only and no one can be trusted with that except the people of tawhid (i.e., Muslims)." 2628

Once Ibn Abi Ya'fur and Mu'alla bin Khunays were travelling on the Nile and disagreed with each other about eating the meat slaughtered by the Jews. Mu'alla ate that meat while Ibn Abi Ya'fur refrained. Finally, they came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) and informed him about their disagreement. The Imam approved the decision of Ibn Abi Ya'fur and disapproved Mu'alla's decision to eat that meat. 2729

I would like to end this section with an interesting comment by Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abi 'n-Nasr al-Bizanti on the holier-than-thou attitude. Ahmad al Bizanti was a very trustworthy and educated companion of Imam Riza (as) and Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (as). Ahmad bin Muhammad bin `Isa asked Ahmad al-Bizanti about a person who buys a leather robe while he does not
know whether it is from an animal that was slaughtered Islamically or not--can he pray in it? It is obvious that the question is about buying such a thing in a Muslim society. Ahmad al-Bizanti answered, "Yes, and you do not have to question about it. Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (as) used to say, `The Khawarij had put much restrictions upon themselves out of ignorance, whereas the religion is broader [in its outlook] than that."' The statement about the Khawarij has also been narrated from Imam Musa al-Kazim by Shaykh as-Saduq. 2830

It is on these *shari'ah* principles that our *mujtahid*s have based their opinions about assuming everything -except the animal products obtained from a *kafir* to be *tahir* and *halal* unless we come to know otherwise. Islam does not expect us to totally abstain from

*najasat*, it only wants us to be free from *najasat* in our food and drink, and during the salat.

1. at-Tabataba'i, al-Mizan, vol. 9, p. 416; al-`Amili, Wasa'il vol. 1, pp. 249-51; al-Kadhimi, Masalik, p. 85.
2. al-`Amili, Wasa'il, vol. 1, pp. 247, 1034.
3. al-`Amili, Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1009.
4. Masalik, p. 86; al-Ardibili, Zubdah, p. 31.
5. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1030.
6. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1050.
7. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1051.
8. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1055.
9. Ibid, p. 1016.
10. al-Jannati, Taharatu ' l-kitabi, p. 22-3; as-Sadr, al-Fatawa al-Wadiha, p. 221
11. al-Yazdi, al-'Urwah, p. 24; al-Khumayni, Tahriru 'l Wasilah, vol. 1, p. 118.
12. al-Gharawi, at-Tanqih fi Sharhi '1-`Urwati '1-Wuthqa (Lectures of Ayatullah al-Khu'i), vol. 2, p. 64; also see al Jannati, Taharatu ' l-Kitabi, p.27.
13. al-Khu'i, Minhaju 's-Salihiyn, vol. 1 (Beirut, Daru 'z Zahra, 22nd ed.) p. 111.
14. As quoted by Muhammad Jawad al-Mughniyya in Fiqhu '1-Imam Jafar as-Sadiq, vol. 1, p. 28.
15. ar-Razi, Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 27, p. 166.
16. al-Yazdi, al-`Urwah, p. 52.
17. al-Khu'i, Minhaj, vol. 1, p. 114.
18. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 332.
19. Wasa'il, vol. 16, p. 294.
20. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1072.
21. Ibid, p. 1073.
22. Ibid, p. 1072.
23. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1093.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid, p. 1095.
26. Wasa'il, vol. 16, p. 279-80.
27. Ibid, p. 285.
28. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 1071

# II. Wudu

## A. Introduction

*Wudu* and *ghusl* both are ritual ablutions; the former is a minor ablution while the latter is a major ablution. In Islamic laws, the *wudu* is considered a ritual act of worship which is done with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah.

The act of *wudu* consists of washing the face and the fore-arms, and wiping the head and the feet. These six parts of human body -face, both fore-arms, head and both feet are known as “the organs of *wudu*”.

*Wudu* by itself is always a recommendable act in Islamic rituals, but it becomes obligatory in certain circumstances. One of such circumstances is the daily ritual prayers; and therefore it is important for every Muslim to know the method of *wudu* and its rules.

The Qur'an says:

***“O you who believe! When you stand up for ritual prayer (sala), wash your face and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your head and your feet up to ankles.” (5:6)***

# B. Manner of performing Wudu

The manner of performing *wudu* as explained below is based on the Qur'an and the authentic *sunnah of* the holy Prophet as narrated by his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* and his most reliable companions. The relevant verse *of* the Qur'an and the *ahadith will* be discussed in section J.

*Wudu* is done in the following four stages :

## 1. Washing the face

After doing the *niyyat* [Intention], pour water over the face from the top. Then using the right hand, wipe the face from the top to bottom, in such a way that the water reaches all parts vertically from the hairline to chin, and every place horizontally within the reach *of* the span *of* the hand from the middle-finger to the thumb.

It is not obligatory to wash the parts which do not come within the middle-finger and the thumb; however, there is no harm in including those parts to ensure that all the necessary parts have been washed.

It is not obligatory to wash the inside *of* the eyes, the lips, the mouth, the nose, and the eyelids. *If* one has beard or mustache, it is enough to wash the hair which are apparent; it is not necessary to make the water reach the inside of the hair or to the skin. However, if the hair are so sparse that they do not hide the skin, then one should make the water reach the skin.

Bald person or those with receding hair-line should wash their face as *if* the hair were growing normally. If someone's face is larger, or smaller, than normal, then he should wash the part which comes within his middle finger and the thumb.

## 2. Washing the fore-arms

Pour water over the right fore-arm from the elbow to the finger-tips; and using the left hand, wipe the water over the arm to ensure that all the necessary parts are washed. Then do the same with the left fore-arm. The washing must be done from the elbows to the finger-tips and not vice versa.

The water should be poured from a little above the elbow to ensure that the whole fore-arm is covered. It is necessary to wash the fore-arms in such a way that the water penetrates the hair, if any, and reaches the skin.

The right fore-arm should be washed before the left.

## 3. Wiping of the head

Wiping of the head means to wipe a wet finger of the right hand from the crown of the head to the hair-line. Wiping of the head can be performed on any part of the quarter of the head which is over the fore-head.

The act of wiping can be done with one finger only, but it is recommended to use three fingers together. The water must reach the root of the hair. However, if the hair are so short that they cannot be combed then it is enough to wipe the hair.

While wiping the head, your hand should not touch your fore-head; otherwise, the water of the fore-head will mix with the wetness of your hand, and this will render the act of wiping the right foot invalid. Why? Because the act of wiping must be done with the wetness of the hands only.

### 4. Wiping of the feet

Again using the wetness of the hands, wipe the right foot with the right hand, and then the left foot with the left hand.

In wiping the feet, place the palm or the fingers of the hand on the finger-tips of the foot and then wipe to the base of the ankle. One can even wipe from the base of the ankle to the finger-tips. In wiping the feet, your palms should wipe your feet; it is not enough to move your feet against your palms.

## C. Some general rules

The face and the fore-arms: Enough care should be taken so that all the necessary parts are washed; the *wudu* will become invalid if any part (even though it be equal to a pin-point) is left out.

The wiping of the head and the feet: As mentioned earlier, the wiping must be done with the wetness of the palms, i. e., after washing both the fore-arms, one is not permitted to wet his hands with another `new' water. Likewise, the wiping will become invalid if the wetness of the palms is mixed with the water from other organs of *wudu*.

What if the palms become dry before one can wipe the head or the feet? In such a case, the palms can be made wet by the water from beard, mustache, eye-brows or the other organs of *wudu*. What if the weather is so hot that one's face and hands become dry immediately? In such a case, one should do *tayammum* instead of *wudu*.

If it is not possible to wipe the head or feet with the palms due to injury, etc., then the following organs may be used (in order of preference): the upper part of the hands and the inner part of the fore-arm.

Before starting the *wudu*, make sure that the front part of your head and the top side of your feet are dry; otherwise your *wudu* will not correct because the water on your head or feet is `new' water. However, slight wetness or dampness can do no harm to your *wudu* unless it is so much that the wetness of palms, while wiping the head or feet, is immediately mixed with it.

## D. Recommendable acts of Wudu

What you read above was concerning the obligatory *(wajib)* acts of *wudu*. Now we shall describe the acts which are recommendable *(mustahab, sunnat)* during the *wudu*.

**1.** Washing the hands two time before washing the face.

**2.** Gargling three times before washing the face.

**3.** Rinsing the nose three times before washing the face.

**4.** While washing the face and the fore-arms, it is recommended to wash each part twice before proceeding to the next stage of the *wudu*. One should realize that washing these organs of *wudu* once is obligatory, while washing them twice is recommendable; but to wash them for the third time is forbidden *(haram).* Determining the first or the second washing depends on the intention of the individual himself. And so, it is possible that a person may pour water on his right fore-arm five times and wipe his left hand on it twice, and still count this washing as the first one.

**5.** It is recommended for men to start washing their fore-arms from the apparent side of the arms, and for the women to start washing their fore-arms from the inner side.

**6.** Reciting the following du'as as taught by Imam 'Ali (a.s.) at various stages of the *wudu*:

• at the beginning of the *wudu*:
*Bis mil-lahi wa bil-lahi; wal hamdu lil-lahil lazi ja `alal ma'a tahilran wa lam yaj`alhu najisa.* = [I am doing this *wudu*] in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah; all praise be to Allah who made the water pure and did not make it impure.

• at the time of the washing the hands two times before washing the face:
*Allahummaj `alni minat tawwabiyna, waj `alni minal mutatah-hiriyn.* = O Allah place me among those who ask for forgiveness and among those who are pure.

• at the time of gargling:
*Allahumma laqqini hujjaty yawma alqaka, wat liq lisani bi zikrik.* = O Allah teach me the correct answer for the day I shall meet You and open my tongue for Your praise.

• at the time of rinsing the nose.

*Allahumma la tuharrim 'alayya riyhal jannah, waj `alni mim man yashummu riyhaha wa rawhaha wa tiybaha.* = O Allah! Do not deprive me from the smell of the Paradise, and place me among those who will sniff its smell, its refreshments and perfume.

• at the time of washing the face:
*Allahumma bayyiz wajhiy yawma tusawwidul wujuh; wa la tusawwid wajhiy yawma tubayyizul wujuh.* = O Allah ! Brighten my face on the day You will disgrace the faces; and do not disgrace my face on the day You will brighten the faces.

• at the time of the washing the right fore-arm:
*Allahumma `atiniy kitabi bi yaminiy, wal khulda fil jinani bi yasariy, wa hasibniy hisaban yasira.* = O Allah! Place my scroll of deeds in my right hand and (the certificate of) permanency in the Paradise on my left; and do the reckoning of my account leniently.

• at the time of washing the left fore-arm:
*Allahumma la tu `tiniy kitabiy bi shimaliy, wa la min wara'i zahriy, wa la taj'alha maghluqatan ila `unuqiy; wa a `uzu bika min muqatta `atin niyran.* = O Allah! Do not place my scroll of deeds in my left hand nor on my back; and do not make it strap around my neck. And I seek refuge with You from the fierce fire.

• at the time of the wiping the head
*Allahumma ghash-shiniy bi rahmatika wa barakatika wa `afwika.* = O Allah! Cover me with Your mercy, Your blessings and Your pardon.

• at the time of the wiping the feet:

*Allahumma thab-bitniy `alas sirati yawma tuzillu fiyhil aqdam; waj `al sa`iy fi ma urziyka `anniy; ya zul jalali wal ikram.* = O Allah, keep me steadfast on my path on the day when the feet shall slip; and make my efforts (in the way) that will please you -O the Master of power and honor. 131

# E. A summary of Wudu

The following is a summary of the *wudu*. The recommendable acts of *wudu* are in italics.

**1.** Making the intention *(niyyat)* in one's mind.

**2.** *Washing the hands two times*

**3.** *Gargling three times*

**4***. Rinsing the nose three times.*

**5.** Washing the face first time *and then the second time.*

**6.** Washing the right fore-arm the first time *and then the second time.*

**7.** Washing the left fore-arm the first time *and then the second time.*

**8.** Wiping the head with one finger or *with three fingers together.*

**9.** Wiping the right foot with the right hand.

**10.** Wiping the left foot with the left hand.

# F. The conditions for the validity of Wudu

The performance of *wudu* depends on certain conditions which are known in Islamic laws as “the conditions for the validity of *wudu*”. These conditions are ten in number: three are related to the water, three to the person; and four to the act of *wudu* itself.

## i. The Water

**1.** The water must be *mutlaq. “Mutlaq”* means pure or unmixed; in the present context, it refers to the liquid which is normally considered by people as water. (It does not have to be pure chemically.) The opposite of *mutlaq* is “muzaf' which refers to the water which is not considered pure by the people, e. g., orange juice.

**2.** The water must be *tahir* (ritually clean, not *najis*).

**3.** The water must be *mubah* (lawful), that is, you must be its owner or you must have the permission to use it.

The *wudu* performed with mixed, *najis* or non-mubah water is invalid even if it was done unknowingly. Likewise it is difficult to approve the validity of the *wudu* performed with the water which was in an utensil made of gold or silver.

### ii. The Person

**4.** *Niyyat : Niyyat* means intention As *wudu* is an act of ritual worship *(`ibadat),* it is necessary to perform it with *niyyat. Niyyat,* in this context, means that one must have the intention to do the *wudu* in obedience to the command of Allah. Sincerity is an essential condition for *niyyat;* one should do *wudu* only for seeking the pleasure of Allah and in obedience to His command. If someone performs *wudu* for any other purpose, e.g., making himself cool in summer, then his *wudu* is invalid.

In *niyyat,* it is not necessary to utter the words; the mere intention of doing the *wudu* in obedience to the command of Allah is enough; nor is it necessary to mention that the *wudu* is *wajib* or *mustahab.*

**5.** The organs of *wudu* must be ritually clean (*tahir*) before washing or wiping them.

Besides the ritual cleanliness *(raharat)* of the organs of *wudu*, they must also be exposed. In other words, there should be nothing on them which might prevent the water from reaching the skin. Special care should be taken by women in case the lipstick, nail-polish, kohl, and eye shadow are such that the water does not reach the skin. If the dirt under the long nails is not more than normal, then it will not harm the *wudu*.

**6.** Use of the water should not be harmful to the person who wants to do *wudu*. If the person fears that he will become ill or his illness will be prolonged by the use of cold water or warm water in *wudu*, then he should do *tayammum*.

### iii. The Acts of Wudu:

**7.** The place where *wudu* is being performed must be *mubdh* (lawful).

**8.** In normal situation, it is *wajib* for one to perform *wudu* by himself, without the help of others. However, help in the preliminaries such as fetching the water, pouring out the water, is allowed.

In case of disability because of illness, etc., someone else may help; but in such a case, it is necessary for both, the helper and the helped, to do the *niyyat.*

**9.** Correct Order *(tartib):* Every act in performing the *wudu* must be done in the prescribed order: first the washing of the face, then of the right fore-arm, and then of the left fore-arm, followed by the wiping of the head, then of the right foot, and lastly of the left foot.

**10.** Continuity *(muwalat):* The acts of *wudu* must follow each other so that, in normal weather, when each part is commenced the previous parts are still wet.

## G. The Nawaqiz of Wudu

After having done the *wudu* once, for how long can a person be considered to be in the state of ritual purity? Is a Muslim required to do a separate *wudu* for each of his prayers, or is one *wudu* sufficient for the whole day? Once a person has done *wudu*, he can consider himself in the state of ritual purity until one of the *nawaqiz* takes place. *Nawaqiz (pl.* of *naqiz)* means those things which end the effectiveness of *wudu* and make it null and void *(batil).*

The *nawaqiz* of *wudu* are ten. Six are related to the discharges which take place from the sexual organs, and four are related to the factors which cause temporary or permanent disability of the mind.

### i. The Discharges:

*(a) Common between man and women:*
**1**. Urine (and semen).
**2.** Stool.
**3.** Farting.

*(b) In women only:*
**4.** Menstruation.
**5.** Irregular bleeding.
**6.** Post-natal bleeding.

### ii. The Mental Disability Factors:

**7.** Sound sleep (in which one cannot hear anything).
**8.** Drunkenness (from alcohol or drugs, etc.).
**9.** Unconsciousness.
**10.** Insanity.

These *nawaqiz* have been deduced from the following *ahadith* of the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (may peace be upon them): Zurarah bin A'yun quotes from the fifth or sixth Imam as follows: “Nothing invalidates the *wudu* except what comes out of both sides [of the sexual organs] or sleep.” 232

In another *hadith*, Zurarah asked both the fifth and the sixth Imams, “What invalidates the *wudu*?” They answered, “Whatever comes out from both of your lower organs like stool, urine, semen or wind; or the sleep which prevents the functioning of the mind...” 333

The first *six nawaqiz (i.* e., the discharges from the sexual organs) can easily be deduced from these two narrations. Analyzing the last sentence of the second *hadith* (“or sleep which prevents the functioning of the mind”) proves that the sleep has been counted as one of the *nawaqiz* because it prevents the functioning of the mind. This gives a criterion in the hands of the *mujtahids* to extend the list to include the other three things, i.e., insanity, unconsciousness and drunkenness. The *hadith* has just mentioned sleeping because it is the most obvious and common factor that causes `disability' of the mind, of course, temporarily.

It is needless to say that other than the ten things mentioned above, nothing invalidates the *wudu*. Some Muslims think that if a person touches his wife or his own private parts, his *wudu* becomes invalid. This is not correct. The Imams of Ahlu '1-bayt, who are the most reliable source for the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the best guides of the Qur'an, have clearly explained that nothing else affects the *wudu* in any way.

## H. When does the wudu become wajib?

As mentioned earlier, performing the *wudu* is always a recommendable deed, but it becomes obligatory *(wajib)* in certain circumstances. There are five circumstances under which *wudu* becomes obligatory; and whenever a Muslim finds himself in any one

these circumstances, he must do *wudu*.

The five circumstances are as follows:-

**1.** *For obligatory prayers, e.g., the five daily prayers.*

*Wudu* is not wajib for *sunnat* (recommended) prayers; but as the prayers whether obligatory or recommended are invalid without *wudu*, so we have to pray the *sunnat* prayers also with *wudu*. In other words, if you do not do *wudu* for the sunnat prayer you will not have sinned-although your prayer will be incorrect. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said, “There can be no prayer except with ritual ablution (i. e. *wudu*).” 434

*Salatu 'l-mayyit* (the ritual prayer said for the dead person before the burial) is an exception to this rule; this obligatory prayer can be performed even if one is in a state of ritual impurity.

**2.** *For the wajib circumambulation (tawaf) of the Ka`bah in hajj.* 'Ali bin Ja`far asked his father (the sixth Imam) about a person who was doing the *tawaf* and then remembered that he had not done *wudu*. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, “He should stop the tawaf and not count (whatever he had done as valid). 535

**3***. For touching the writings of the Qur' an.* The Qur'an is not just a book, it is the revelation of God, it is the word of God, and therefore it is sacred. Its sacredness demands that before you touch the writing of the Qur'an, you must ritually purify yourself. Allah says,

***“None shall touch it except the purified ones.” (56:79)***

On basis of the extrinsic meaning of this verse and the *ahadith,* the *mujtahids* have reached the opinion that it is forbidden to
touch the writings of the Qur' an without being in the state of *wudu*.

However, this law of the *shari`ah* should not become an excuse for not reading the Qur'an. There is no harm in reading the Qur'an without doing *wudu* provided one does not touch the writing of the holy book, i.e., just hold the cover or the border of the page. Once Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) told his son Isma'il to read the Qur'an . Isma'il said, “I am not in the state of *wudu*.” The Imam said, “Do not touch the writing, just hold the paper and then read the book.” 636

Likewise, there is no harm in touching the translations of the Qur'an, because the translations do not qualify as the word of God. Neither is it wajib to prevent the children from touching the writings of the Qur'an unless such an act is considered a disrespect to the Sacred Book-and this differs according to the culture and the society' in which the Muslims live.

**4.** *For touching the names and the attributes of Allah.*
It is forbidden to touch the names and the attributes of Allah, in any script, without being in the state of ritual purity *(wudu).*

By looking at the sacredness which the Prophets, the Imams of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt*
and also Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet) have acquired due to their being chosen by Allah, our *mujtahids* have recommended that the names of these holy persons also should not be touched without *wudu*.

**5.** *For making promise, oath and vow* to stay in the state of ritual purity (i.e., in *wudu*) for a certain period of time. If a person makes such a promise or vow, then he must fulfill it when his conditions have materialized. For example, someone says, “If I pass my exams, I will stay with *wudu* for a whole day.” So if this person passes his exams, then he must stay with *wudu* for one full day.

## I. Wudu'u'l-Jabirah (Wudu On A Bandage)

*Jabirah* literally means a splint, but in the present context, it means the material or the medicine used for bandaging a wound, etc. *Wudu' u ' l jabirah* means the *wudu* which is done on the bandage that has been fixed on the organs of *wudu*.

Before writing about *wudu'u '1 jabirah,* it is necessary to mention the following two points:

**(1)** If it is possible to wash the wound by taking off the bandage, then one has to perform *wudu* as normally. If it is not possible to take off the bandage, then it will suffice to completely wipe the hand on the bandage.

**(2)** If someone has a wound which is not bandaged, and there is no harm in washing it, then he should do *wudu* normally; but if it is not possible to wash the wound, then the person has to wash only around the wound as normally. However, in the latter case, it is better to wipe the hand on the wound and then place a piece of cloth on it and wipe the hand over it.

It is needless to say that *wudu'u 'l 'jabirah is* relevant only in the case where the use of water is not harmful for the person. If the use of water is harmful, then one should do *tayammum*.

*Wudu' u ' 1 jabirah* can be done only in the following cases:

**1.** If the bandage is on a wound in which the skin is cut or torn. So *wudu*'u '*l-jabirah* cannot be done on a bandage that has been fixed only for pain or swelling - in such a case, one has either to do *wudu* as normally if possible or to do *tayammum.*

**2.** If it is a splint for keeping a fractured limb in a proper position.

**3.** If the bandage or the splint does not completely conceal any one of the organs of *wudu*. So if the bandage or the splint is completely concealing any one of the organs of *wudu*, then the following procedure should be followed:
**(a)** if it is concealing a foot or both feet, then the person should do *tayammum;*

**(b)** if it is concealing a fore-arm or face, then the person should precautionarily do both *wudu' u l jabfrah* and *tayammum.*

The same applies to a case where all the organs of *wudu* are covered with bandage.

## J. Wudu in the Qur'an & the Sunnah

As mentioned earlier, *wudu* is an act consisting of two stages (i) washing the face and hands; and (ii) wiping a part of the head and feet. This is clearly evident from the verse No. 6 of the suratu '1-Ma'idah:

***“O you who believe! When you stand up for prayer, (i) wash your face and hands up to the elbows, (ii) and wipe a part of your head and your feet up to the ankles.” (5:6)***

In this verse, two imperative forms have been used: (i) `*faghsilu*” which means “wash!”; and (ii)*”wamsuhu”* which means “wipe!”. It is obvious that the first imperative form (“wash!”) refers to the two objects which are “your face” *(wujuhukum*) and “your hands” *(aydiyakum*); while the second imperative form refers to a two objects which are “a part of your head” *(by*' *ru*'*usikum*) and “your feet” (*arjulakum*).

The word "face" means the front portion of the head, comprising in man the surface between top of the forehead and the bottom of the chin, and extending from ear to ear. In its legal definition, as explained in the *ahadith* of the Imams of Ahlu'1-bayt, it covers the surface of the face vertically from the hair-line to the bottom of the chin, and horizontally the parts which come within the reach of the span of the hand from the middle-finger to the thumb. 737

The word “hand” means the organ especially adapted for grasping, and comprising the upper limb between the shoulder and the finger-tips. So we see that from the linguistic point of view, the word “*yad*“ is common between arm, fore-arm and hands.

When a word is commonly used in more than one meaning, it becomes necessary for the speaker to provide an associate (or a context) to specify the meaning. And thus we see the words *“ila* '*1-marafiq* up to the elbow” in the verse; these words were necessary to specify the part of the “hands“ which is to be included in *wudu*'.

Now we come to one of the main differences among the Shi`ahs and the Sunnis in the manner of performing *wudu*'. The Sunnis wash their fore-arm from the fingertips up to the elbows, and the Shi`ahs wash their fore-arm from the elbows to the finger-tips. As mentioned above the words “up to the elbows“ do not tell us to wash from the finger-tips to the elbow or vice verse; these words are there just to specify the part of the “hands” which is to be included in *wudu*'.

Then how should we wash our fore-arm-from the elbow or from the finger-tips? The answer of this problem is provided by the *sunnah.* One of the responsibilities of the Prophet was to explain the details of, and practically demonstrate how to follow, the laws explained in the Qur'an. And, indeed, the most authentic way of learning the Prophet's method of performing *wudu*' is through the *ahadith* of the Imams of *Ahlu* '*l-bayt* (the family of the Prophet). Zurarah bin A'yun narrates the following *hadith*:
“Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said, `Shouldn't I describe to you the *wudu*' of the Messenger of Allah?' We said, `Yes.' When the water was brought, the Imam washed his hands, then he uncovered his fore-arms. He dipped his right hand in the vessel ....then scooped it full with water and poured it on his fore-head .... He let the water drop on to the end of his beard and then he passed his hand on his face and fore-head once.

“Then he dipped his left hand (in the vessel), filled it up (with water), poured it on his right elbow and then passed his palm on the fore-arm until the water dripped to the finger-tips. Then he fully scooped (the water) with his right hand, pour it on his left elbow and then passed his palm on the fore-arm until the water dripped to the finger-tips.

“Then he wiped the front part of his head and the apparent side of his feet by the wetness of his left and right hands.” 838

In another *hadith* Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) narrates the same manner of performing *wudu*' which Arnim l-minin 'Ali had demonstrated when a person inquired about the Prophet's manner of performing *wudu*'. 939

The imperative *“wamsahu* = wipe” means to directly wipe the hands, etc, on something. When a word like “*wamsahu*“ is used alone in a transitive form it denotes comprehensiveness and totality of the act; e.g.““ “would mean “wipe all of your head.” But whenever this verb is followed by the letter “*ba*” it denotes partiality e.g ““ would mean “wipe a *part* of your head.” In the verse mentioned above ““ has been used with the letter "*ba*” and thus the correct translation would be “wipe a part of your head”.

Here again we come across another difference between the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis. The Sunnis wipe all of their head whereas the Shi'ahs wipe only a part of their heads.

Which part of the head is to be wiped in *wudu*? The Qur'an is silent on this; the *sunnah* has explained it. Many *ahadith* from the Imams of *Ahlu* '*l-bayt* have explained that “a part of the head” is “the front part”.
1040

The word *“arjulakum*“ means “feet, leg”. To specify its meaning, it was necessary to add the words *“ila* ' *1-ka* `*bayn* up to the ankles”. The word *“ar-julakum” is* connected to *“bi ru*'*usikum* a part of your heads” by the coordinate conjunction *“wa = and”*. And thus the sentence would mean “wipe a part of your feet.”

Here again we come to two more differences among the Sunnis and the Shi`ahs. The Sunnis *wash* their *whole* feet in *wudu* whereas the Shi`ahs *wipe* only the *apparent side* of their feet up to the ankles. As far as the Qur'an and the *ahadith* of the *Ahlu* '*l-bayt* are concerned, “wiping a part of your feet” is the only correct interpretation of the verse of *wudu*. And this interpretation has also been accepted by the famous Sunni scholar Imam Fakhru'd Din ar-Razi in his *Tafsir al-Kabir.* 1141

The only basis for the Sunnis' point of view about “washing the feet” are some `*ahadith*' recorded in their books of tradition. These adadith cannot be accepted because:

**Firstly,** they are contrary to the injunction of the Qur'an. And the Prophet has said, “If a *hadith* is narrated to you from me, then put it before the Book of Allah. If it is according to the Book of Allah, then accept it; otherwise reject it.” 1242

**Secondly**, they are against the *sunnah* of the Prophet as explained by the Imam of the *Ahlu* '*l-bayt* who have been accepted as reliable by all the Muslims. Even some companions of the Prophet have clearly stated that it is wrong to ascribe the “washing of the feet” to the Prophet. For example, the famous companion Abdullah ibn `Abbas said, “Allah has enjoined two washings and two wipings (in *wudu*). Don't you see that when Allah mentions the *tayammum*, He places two wipings in place of two washings (of face and hands) and leaves out the wipings (of head and feet).” 1343

**Thirdly**, the *ahadith* of the Sunnis in this matter are contradictory. Some *ahadith* mention “the washing of the feet” like those of Humran quoted by Imam al-Bukhari 14 and of Ibn `Asim quoted by Imam Muslim. While some other *ahadith* say that the Prophet “wiped his feet” like that of `Ibad bin Tamim which says that “I saw the Prophet performing the *wudu*, and he wiped his feet.” This last *hadith* has been recorded by *Ta*'*rikh* of al-Bukhari, *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Sunan* of Ibn Abi Shaybah, and *Mu*'*jamu* '*1-Kabir* of at-Tabarani; and

all of its narrators are considered trustworthy. 15 And it is an accepted rule of the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (*usulu' 1-fiqh)* that if there are contradictory *ahadith,* then those which conform to the Qur'an are to be accepted and the others are to be rejected.

Thus, we can conclude that the correct manner of performing the *wudu*, according to the Qur'an and the authentic sunnah of the Prophet, is the manner which has been explained by the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* .

1. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 282-3.
2. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 177
3. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 177
4. Wasa'il, vol. 1, pp. 256, 483.
5. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 444
6. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 269.
7. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 283-6 sections 17-19 of the chapter on wudu.
8. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 272
9. Ibid.
10. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 289.
11. ar-Razi, Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 3, p. 370.
12. Ibid, p. 371.
13. Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanzu '1-'Ummal, vol. 5, p. 103 (hadith no. 2213). Also see Musnad Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 108.
14. al-Bukhari, Sahih, vol. 1 (Beirut, Darul Arabia, n.d.) p. 113.
15. al-'Asqalani, al-'Isabah, vol. 1, p. 193; see also his Tahdhib at-Tahdhib.

# III. Ghusl

## A. Introduction

*Ghusl* is a major ablution as opposed to wudu which is a minor ablution. In Islamic laws, *ghusl* is considered an act of worship; it is an act of purifying oneself from the ritual impurity *(najasat)* caused by sexual intercourse, discharge of semen or blood, and by touching the dead body. The ritual bath given to a dead Muslim before burial is also known as *ghusl*.

The *ghusl* for each of these causes has different names: Purification from the impurity caused by sexual intercourse or discharge of semen is known as *ghusl janabat.* Purification from the impurity caused by menstruation is known as *ghusl hayd.* Purification from the impurity caused by irregular bleeding is known as *ghusl istihadah.* Purification from the impurity caused by post-natal bleeding is known as *ghusl nifas.*

In Islamic laws, death is also considered a cause of ritual impurity of a Muslim's body. Therefore, a dead Muslim has to be washed ritually before the burial ceremony. Such a ritualistic bath for a dead Muslim is known as *ghusl mayyit.* Touching a dead body, before the ritualistic bath, also makes one impure *(najis).* Purification from this impurity is known as *ghusl mass mayyit.*

In this chapter we shall explain the method and the general rules of *ghusl*. In chapter 4, we shall discuss the rules of *ghusl* janabat. The *ghusl*s related to women have been discussed extensively in my *The Ritual Ablutions for Women (Taharatu ' n-Nisa' ).*

# B. Manner of performing Ghusl

Before explaining the rules of performing the *ghusl* it is necessary to mention that all the *ghusl*s are performed in the same manner; the difference is only in the niyyat of each *ghusl*. For example, for purifying oneself from the ritual impurity of sexual intercourse, one has to make the niyyat that `he is doing *ghusl* janabat'.

*Ghusl* is a ritual bath; it involves washing of the whole body. There are two methods of performing *ghusl*. One is known as *ghusl tartibi,* and the other is known as *ghusl irtimasi.*

## 1. Ghusl Tartibi:

*"Ghusl tartibi"* means an ordinal bath, performed in three stages.

After washing away the najasat (e.g., semen or blood) from the body and after niyyat, the body has to be washed in three stages: First, head down to the neck; then the right side of the body from the shoulder down to the foot; and lastly, the left side of the body.

Each part should be washed thoroughly in such a way that the water reaches the skin. Special care should be taken while washing the head; the hair should be combed (e.g., with your fingers) so that water reached the hair roots. While washing the right side of the body, some part of the left side must be washed too, and also, while washing the left side of the body, some part of the right side must be washed.

## 2. Ghusl Irtimasi:

"*Ghusl* irtimasi" means a bath involving immersion of the whole body in the water. It is needless to say that such a *ghusl* can only be done in a body of water, e.g., a pool, river, lake or sea.

After washing away the semen or blood from the body and after niyyat, the whole body should be completely immersed in the water all at once, not gradually. One has to make sure that the water reaches all parts of the body, including hair and the skin under it.

However, *ghusl* tartibi is preferred to *ghusl* irtimasi.

# C. Recommendable acts of Ghusl

What has been mentioned above are the wajib acts of *ghusl*; here we shall explain the things which are recommendable *(mustahab, sunnat)* during the *ghusl*. These recommendable acts are five:

**1**. Washing both hands up to the elbows three times before the *ghusl*.

**2.** Gargling three times.

**3.** Wiping the hands on the whole body to ensure that every part has been thoroughly washed.

**4.** Combing the hair with the fingers to ensure that the water reaches the hair-roots..

**5.** (For men only) Doing *istibra*' before *ghusl* janabat. *Istibra*', in the present context, means

“urinating.” The benefit of *istibra*': If a liquid comes out of one's penis after completing the *ghusl*, and he doubts whether it is semen or urine, then should he repeat the *ghusl* or not? If he had done *istibra*' before the *ghusl*, then he can assume that the liquid is urine -he will not have to repeat the *ghusl*; he just has to do wudu for his salat. But, on the other hand, if he had not done *istibra*' before the *ghusl*, then he has to assume that it is the remnant of semen-he will have to do the *ghusl* again.

`Ubaydullah al-Halabi narrates that someone asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) about a man who performs *ghusl* and then finds some (doubtful) drops (on his penis) while he had already urinated before performing the *ghusl*. (That is, should he consider the drops as urine or semen?) The Imam said, “He will just have to do wudu (for his salat). But if he had not passed urine before the *ghusl*, then he must repeat the *ghusl*.” 146

This rule of *istibra*' applies only to men. Sulayman bin Khalid asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) about a man who became ritually impure because of sexual intercourse and then performed *ghusl* without urinating. Then some drops came out of him. The Imam said, “He must repeat the *ghusl*.” Sulayman: “What if similar drops come out of a woman after she has performed *ghusl*?” The Imam said, “She does not have to repeat the *ghusl*.” Sulayman: “What is the difference between the two?” The Imam said, “(A woman does not have to repeat *ghusl* janabat) because what comes out of her is certainly from the (remnants of the) discharge of man.” 247

## D. A summary of Ghusl

This is a summary of *ghusl*. The recommendable acts of *ghusl* are in italics type-face.

**1.** Remove the najasat (semen, blood) from the body.

**2.** Niyyat.

**3.** *Wash the hands up to the elbows three time.*

**4.** *Gargle three times.*

**5.** Wash the head down to the neck; *wipe your hand on the face and neck, and comb the hair with your fingers.*

**6.** Wash the right side of your body from the shoulders down to the feet; *include some part of the left side also. While washing, wipe the body with your hand.*

**7.** Wash the left side of your body from the shoulders down to the feet; *include some part of the right side also. While washing, wipe the body with your hand.*

## E. The conditions for the validity of Ghusl

The validity of *ghusl* depends on certain conditions which are known as “the conditions for the validity of *ghusl*”. These conditions are ten in number: three conditions are related to the water, four are related to the person and three to the act of *ghusl* itself.

**i. The Water:**

**1.** The water must be *mutlaq* (unmixed, pure).

**2.** The water must be *tahir* (ritually clean).

**3.** The water must be *mubah* (lawful). The details of these conditions are same as the conditions of the water of wudu.

**ii. The Person:**

**4**. Niyyat.

**5.** All parts of the body must be clean from the impurity (e.g., semen, blood) before starting the *ghusl*.

**6.** Use of water should not be harmful to the person who wants to perform *ghusl*.

**7.** The *ghusl* must be performed by the person himself. (The details are same as in wudu)

**iii. The Ghusl**

**8.** The place where *ghusl* is being performed must be *mubah* (lawful).

**9.** The *ghusl* should be performed either in *tartibi* manner or in *irtimasi* manner.

**10**. All parts of the body must be washed thoroughly as explained above.

## F. Some general rules

**1.** If more than one *ghusl* become wajib on a person, e.g., janabat, mass mayyit, etc., then one *ghusl* with the niyyat of all of them will suffice. Zurarah bin A'yun quotes Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) as follows: "When you perform *ghusl* (for example, after dawn), that one *ghusl* suffices for the (*ghusl*s of) janabat, jum`ah, `Arafah, nahr, halq, sacrifice and ziyarat. When various *ghusl*s become wajib upon you then one *ghusl* will suffice ...And the same (rule) is for the woman; one *ghusl* will suffice for her *ghusl* of janabat, ihram, jum'ah, and her *ghusl* for *hayz* and `*idd*." 348

**2.** All the *ghusl*s, except the *ghusl* for "medium *istihazah,"* suffices the performer from wudu-provided none of the nawaqiz of wudu' have taken place after the *ghusl*. So a person who has done *ghusl* janabat, for example, can pray without doing wudu'. Zurarah quotes Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) about the method of performing *ghusl* janabat as follows: "...there is no wudu, neither before it nor after it." 449

**3.** If one of the nawaqiz of wudu' (e.g., passing of urine) takes place during *ghusl* janabat, then one must perform the *ghusl* again, and in such a case he is also recommended to do wudu' after the *ghusl*. If one of the nawaqiz of wudu' takes place during the second *ghusl*, then the *ghusl* will not be affected; but one has to do wudu after it for salat..

**4.** If one of the causes which makes *ghusl* wajib takes place during a *ghusl*, then there are two possibilities: (a) either the cause is similar to the cause which necessitated the present *ghusl*, then one has to perform the *ghusl* again; (b) or cause is dissimilar to the cause of the present *ghusl*, then he should complete the *ghusl* and then do another *ghusl*.

**5.** Before washing the right side of the body, if one doubts whether or not he has washed the head and the neck, then he should start again from the beginning. But if he doubts after commencing to wash the right side, then he should disregard his doubt. While

washing the left side of the body if one doubts whether or not he has washed the right side, then he should wash the right side and then wash the left.

**6.** *Ghuslu ' l-Jabirah:* If one has a bandage on his body, then how should he or she do *ghusl*? Such a person will do *ghuslu ' 1 jabirah. Ghusl* jabirah can be done by observing the rules mentioned in *wudu'u 'l jabirah:* either one lifts the bandage and washes the wound normally, or he washes only around the wound or over the bandage, etc.

1. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 517.
2. Ibid, p. 482.
3. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 526.
4. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 515; also see p. 50

# IV. Ghusl Janabat

## A. Introduction

*"Janabat" is* a ritual impurity caused by the discharge of semen or by sexual intercourse; and the person on whom *ghusl janabat* becomes *wajib* is known as *"junub".* The Qur'an says:

***"O you who believe! Do not go near prayers (salat) when you are ... junub until you have washed yourselves. (4:43)***
***O you who believe! When you stand up for prayers (salat) ... if you are junub, then purify (yourselves)." (5:6)***

## B. The causes of Ghusl Janabat

There are two causes of *janabat:*

**1. Discharge of semen.** It does not make any difference whether this discharge is while awake or in a wet-dream, slight or profuse, intentionally or otherwise, in lawful way or unlawful (e.g., masturbation). In all these cases *ghusl janabat* becomes obligatory *(wajib).*

If a liquid comes out from a man and he does not know whether or not it is semen, then he should look for the following three signs: (1) emission with passion; (2) spurting discharge; (3) feeling relaxed after the discharge. If these signs are found together on him, then he should consider the liquid as semen, otherwise not.

If a secretion is discharged from a woman, then it is precautionary *wajib* for her to do *ghusl janabat* provided it came with sexual passion *and* she felt relaxed after it. But if the secretion comes without the sexual passion or without the feeling of relaxation after the discharge, then it is not najis and therefore *ghusl* is not *wajib* upon her.

**2. Sexual Intercourse.** It does not make any difference whether the intercourse was lawful or unlawful, and with or without discharge of semen. In Islamic laws, sexual intercourse is defined as the penetration of the glans into the vagina or anus of the woman. That is, for *ghusl janabat* to become *wajib* it is not necessary that full penetration or discharge of semen should take place.

In case of sexual intercourse, *ghusl janabat* becomes *wajib* on both the man and the woman.

## C. The things which are forbidden for a Junub

There are certain things in Islam which are so sacred that a Muslim cannot come into contact with them unless he or she is ritually pure and clean. Based on this concept of sacredness, a *junub is* forbidden from coming into contact, in various ways, with two of the most sacred things in Islam: the Qur'an and the mosque.

The following four acts are haram for the *junub* before performing the *ghusl*. Two are related to the Qur'an and the other two are related to mosques.

**1.** *Touching the writing of the Qur'an,* the names and attributes of Allah, the names of the Prophet, the Imams and Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet). This has already been explained on page 48 of this book.

**2.** *Reciting the verses of the Qur'an in which sajdah (prostration) is wajib.* These verses are: verse 15 of chapter 32; verse 15 of chapter 41; verse 62 of chapter 53; and verse 19 of chapter 96. It is better not to recite even a single verse from these chapters.

**3.** *Entering or staying in the mosque.* The Qur'an says,

***"O you who believe! ...Nor (are you allowed to enter the masjid) if you are junub until you have washed yourself except passing through." (4:43)***

Based on this verse and relevant ahadith, the mujtahids have concluded that a *junub* is totally forbidden from staying in the mosque.

Of course, as the verse says, one can pass through the mosques (by entering from one door and leaving from the other). However, this exception of passing through does not apply to the following places: the Masjidu'l-Haram (the Sacred Mosque at Mecca), Masjidu'n-Nabi (the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina), and shrines of the Imams-a junub cannot even pass through them. Jamil asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) whether or not a junub can sit in mosques? The Imam said, "No! But he may pass through all of them except the Sacred Mosque (at Mecca) and the Prophet's Mosque (at Medina)." 1

Bakr bin Muhammad narrates that once he and his friends were going towards the house of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, when they met Abu Basir in the way. When Abu Basir came to know that they were going to visit the Imam, he joined them. As Bakr and his friends came to know later on, Abu Basir was in the state of janabat at that time. When they entered the house of the Imam and greeted him, the Imam looked towards Abu Basir and said, "O Abu Basir! Do not you know that a junub person should not enter the houses of the prophets?" 2 Abu Basir himself has also narrated this incident and quotes the Imam as follows: "Do not you know that a junub should not enter the houses of the prophets and of their children..." 352

**4.** Leaving something in or taking it out from a mosque.

The following things are *makruh* (disliked) for the *junub*:
1. Eating and drinking is makruh for a *junub* except after doing *wudu*' or gargling or rinsing the nose.

2. Reciting more than seven verses from the Qur'an. This applies to other than the four chapters with *wajib* sajdah mentioned above.
3. Touching the cover of the Qur'an.
4. Sleeping except after doing *wudu*'.

## D. The acts whose validity depend on Ghusl Janabat

**1.** Salat (prayers) except *salatu '1-mayyit* (the prayer for a dead Muslim) which can be performed even in the state of *janabat*.

**2. *Wajib* tawaf** (the circumambulation of the Ka'bah in hajj). Allah *says,*

***"And We assigned Ibrahim and Isma'il to purify My House for the circumambulators (of the Ka`bah)..." (2:125; 22:26)***

It is not difficult to infer that if the House is to be cleaned and purified for tawaf, then the people who will be doing the *tawaf* must also be clean and pure. See also section H in *wudu*.

**3.** Fasting. If someone knowingly remains *junub* until dawn in Ramadan, his fasting will become invalid (*batil*).

1. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 485
2. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 489.
3. Ibid. p. 489-90.

# V. Tayammum

## A. Introduction

*Tayammum* is also an act of worship consisting of wiping the forehead and the two hands. It is a substitute for *wudu*' and ghusl. The Qur'an says:

***"O you who believe! ... If you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you has come from toilet, or you have `touched' (i.e., had intercourse with) your women and you cannot find water, then you should do Tayammum on the pure earth by wiping a part of your face and your hands." (4:43, also see 5:6)***

## B. Manner of performing Tayammum

After the niyyat for *Tayammum*, do the followings:

**I.** Strike both palms onto the earth.

**2.** Wipe the palms together over the forehead from the hair-line up to the brow and above the nose. "Above the nose" means up to the bridge of the nose. Eyes, nose and cheeks are. not to be included. Should the complete palms of both hands wipe the forehead? No, it is not necessary
that the entire palms of both hands should wipe the forehead; the important thing is to

make sure that the entire forehead has been wiped.

**3.** Then wipe the palm of the left hand over the back of the right from the wrist down to the fingertips. Then do the same with the right palm on the left.

**4.** Then again strike both palms onto the earth.

**5.** Then repeat the acts mentioned in No. 3 above.

This manner of *Tayammum* is based on the ahadith which have elaborated on the words of the Qur'an which say, “do *Tayammum*...by wiping a part of your face and your hands.”

## C. The things on which Tayammum can be done

The verse of *Tayammum* mentioned above, says clearly that “do *Tayammum* on the pure earth.” Based on this verse and the explanatory *ahadith,* our mujtahids say that *Tayammum* should be done on one of the following forms of earth (in order of preference):

**1.** Earth (fine or compacted).

**2.** Sand.

**3.** Pebbles or stone-other than mineral or precious stones.

If no form of earth is available then, and only then, one can perform *Tayammum* on the dust (that had gathered on the floor or the ground, on a carpet or a cloth). If dust is not available, then mud can be used but in such a way that after the hands have been placed on it, they should be cleaned by rubbing them together.

All the items of *Tayammum* must have the following conditions:-

**1.** It must be dry as much as possible.

**2.** It must be tahir (pure).

**3.** It must be mubah (lawful).

**4.** The place where the above mentioned things are also must be mubah.

## D. When to do Tayammum?

*Tayammum* can be done in the following seven circumstances:

**1.** *When enough water cannot be obtained for wudu' or ghusl.*
If there still is ample time for performing salat, then one should wait and pray when he reaches a place where water is available.

When water cannot be obtained, is it obligatory to search for it?

If one knows that water is not available, then it is not obligatory for him to search for it. But if there is a probability of finding water, then it is *wajib* to search for it until one becomes sure of its unavailability. In the latter case, if one is in plain and clear land, then he should search for a distant of 400 steps in two directions; if he is in a hilly area or in a forest, then

he should search for 200 steps in all four directions. However, if one is sure of water's unavailability in a certain direction, then it is not necessary to search in that direction.

**2.** *When water is available but difficult to reach.*
It does not make any difference whether this difficulty is physical or otherwise. Therefore, if reaching for water involves danger of life, reputation or property, then one should do *Tayammum*. For example: owing to old-age or illness it is difficult to reach to the water, or in going for water a person is endangered by animals or thieves; or the owner demands outrageous price for water, etc.

**3.** *When use of water for wudu' or ghusl is dangerous to one's health or life.*
For example: one who fears that using water might make him sick or prolong his illness, then he should do *Tayammum*. However, if use of warm water in such a case is harmless, then *Tayammum* cannot be substitute of the *wudu*' or ghusl.

**4.** *When water is available but one is afraid that by using that water he will put himself, his companions or his domesticated animals in danger of thirst.* In such a case, one should perform *Tayammum* instead of *wudu*' or ghusl.

**5.** *When the time of salat is so short that if one starts to do wudu or ghusl his prayers will be qada* whereas by performing *Tayammum* he will be able to say his prayers in time. In such a case one should do *Tayammum*.

**6.** *When the body or the only available cloth of a person is najis; and he finds that if he uses the water for wudu' or ghusl, his body or cloth will remain najis.* In such a case he should first purify his body or his cloth with the available water and then do *Tayammum*.

**7.** *When the use of water depends on those things which have been forbidden by the shari`ah.* For example the water has been obtained without the permission of the owner, or it is in an unlawful *(ghasbi)* utensil or the utensil is made of gold or silver in which one cannot do *wudu*' or ghusl. In all such cases, one should do *Tayammum*.

## E. The conditions for the validity of Tayammum

Similar to what you read in *wudu* and ghusl, the validity of *Tayammum* depends on certain conditions. These conditions are five in number:

**1.** *Niyyat.* If the *Tayammum* is only one, then it is not necessary to specify it whether it is a substitute of *wudu* or ghusl.

**2.** Continuity (*muwalat*). The acts of *Tayammum* must follow each other.

**3.** Order *(tartibi).* All the acts must be done in the order described above.

**4.** The parts of the body relevant to *Tayammum* (i.e., fore-head and the two hands) must be tahir and there shouldn't be any type of cover on them, e.g., ring, nail polish, etc.

**5.** Under normal circumstance, a person must do *Tayammum* by himself. But in case of disability, someone else may help him. In the latter case, the helper should take the hands of the helped and strike them on the earth and do the *Tayammum*; if this is not possible, then the helper should strike his own hands on the earth and then wipe the fore-head and the hands of the helped.

## F. Some general rules

If there still is ample time for prayers, then one is not allowed to perform his salat with *Tayammum* unless he becomes sure of water's unavailability.

What *happens if water becomes available while one is performing his salat* with *Tayammum?*

If water becomes available while one is performing his salat with *Tayammum*, then there can be two different circumstances: (1) The water was found after he had already gone to the first *ruku*`-his salat is valid and there is no need to repeat it. (2) The water was found before he had gone to the first *ruku* `-he will have to repeat his salat with *wudu*. This rule is based on a question which Zurarah had asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as): “What should a person do if water comes while he has already started his salat (with *Tayammum*)?” The Imam said, “As long as the person has not yet gone to *ruku*`, he should leave his prayer and do *wudu* ; but if he has gone to *ruku* `, then he should continue his prayer. Indeed, the *Tayammum* is one of the two purifications.” 153

What *happens if* water *becomes available after one* has *performed the* salt with *Tayammum*?

If water becomes available after the salat has been performed, then it is not *wajib* to repeat that salat with *wudu*'.

*Tayammum* is a sufficient purification; a person who has done *Tayammum* is permitted to do all those things whose validity depend on *wudu*' or ghusl, e.g., entering a mosque, touching the writings of the Qur'an, etc. This is valid for as long as water is unavailable; once the water become available, *Tayammum* automatically becomes invalid.

If more than one ghusls are *wajib* on a person, then a single *Tayammum* with the niyyat of all those ghusls will suffice.

A person on whom *ghusl janabat* is *wajib* has to do one *Tayammum* instead of the ghusl; there is no need for him or her to do another *Tayammum* for *wudu*'. But if a ghusl other than *ghusl janabat* is *wajib* on that person, then he or she has to do two *Tayammum*s: one instead of the ghusl and the other instead of *wudu*'.'.

1. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 991-2.

# VI. From Ritual To Spiritual

## A. Introduction

One of the main distinctions of the present civilization is that knowledge has become accessible to the ordinary people on an unprecedented level. The trend of presenting things in a simplified and lay-man's language, and the mass media had an important role to play in this. The accessibility to knowledge has made the modern man more inquisitive than ever about everything, including his religious rites and rituals. In the great family of

mankind, Muslim of the present day has also acquired his share of this extra-inquisitiveness.

The inquisitive nature lures the present day Muslim to rationalize the rites and rituals of Islam. This, indeed, is a good phenomenon because it will increase his awareness about Islamic values, and make him more firm in his religious life. But in his inquisitive journey in Islam, the present day Muslim must broaden his horizon and should not look only for material explanation of the Islamic rites and rituals because many such acts are a gateway to the spiritual world of Islam, a world still foreign to majority of the Muslims. Moreover, he must use the appropriate vehicles to embark on such a journey-the Qur'an and the *sunnah.*

In this part of the book, I intend to study the ritual purity in order to discover its relation to the spiritual purity.

## B. The big question

Do the rituals have anything to do with spiritual purification? The answers to such question will reflect the mentality of majority of the Muslims. When asked, “Why was *wudu* and *ghusl* made obligatory?” or “Why are certain things consider `*ayn najis* in Islam?” many people will say that such laws were made so that we may remain clean, and that Islam is a religion of cleanliness. This is the answer you get from both, the simple-minded religious Muslims and also the Muslims with a liberal outlook. Unfortunately, the insistence on this aspect of *taharat* and *najasat* by the former provides ammunition to the liberal view which says that such laws were made to keep the Arabs of the desert clean and are therefore irrelevant to us.

I do not deny that Islam expects its followers to be physically clean, that it is a religion of cleanliness, and that the rules of *taharat* help in keeping oneself clean. Islam was, indeed, very successful in promoting personal cleanliness not only when compared to the seventh-century Arabia but even when compared to the personal hygiene of the Europeans as late as the nineteenth century.

Will Durant writes, “Cleanliness, in the Middle Ages, was not next to godliness. Early Christianity had denounced the Roman baths as wells of perversion and promiscuity, and its general disapproval of the body had put no premium on hygiene.” 1 St. Benedict had said “to those that are well, and especially to the young, bathing shall seldom be permitted.” 2 Another writer says, “Mediaeval books of etiquette insist upon the washing of hands, face and teeth every morning, but not upon bathing ...King John took a bath once every three weeks, and his subjects presumably less often.” 3 Describing the age of Reformation, Durant says, “Social and individual hygiene hardly kept pace with the advance of medicine.

Personal cleanliness was not a fetish; even the King of England bathed only once a week and sometimes skipped.” 4 The same historian, after describing the dressing manners, writes, “How clean were the bodies behind the frills? A sixteenth-century *Introduction pour lesjeunes dames* spoke of women `who had no care to keep themselves clean except in those parts that may be seen, remaining filthy...under their'; and a cynical proverb held that courtesans were the only women who washed more than their face and hands. Perhaps cleanliness increased with immorality, for as women offered more of themselves to view or to many, cleanliness enlarged its area.” 558

Wright, in his interesting book *Clean and Decent,* says, “We may boast in many ways of the Elizabethans, but we

find few references to bathing or washing in Shakespeare." 6 Going on to the eighteenth-century, we find that a manual of etiquette advises "wiping the face every morning with a white linen, but warns that it is not so good to wash it in water..." 7 In early nineteenth-century, a doctor remarked that "most men resident in London and many ladies though accustomed to wash their hands and faces daily, neglect washing their bodies from year to year.' 861

In 1812 the Common Council turned down a request from the Lord Mayor of London for a mere shower-bath in the Mansion House "inasmuch as the want thereof has never been complained of", and if he wanted one, he might provide a temporary one at his own expense. 9 At Queen Victoria's accession in 1837 there was no bathroom in Buckingham Palace. 10 And no wonder that during those days "saner opinion recognized that frequent bathing must increase rheumatic fever and lung complaints ...one of the Georgian Royal Dukes remarked that it was sweat, damn it, that kept a man clean." 11 By the end of nineteenth and early twentieth century, the fear of water began to give way, "though it was still thought eccentric to bathe for any but medical reasons." 1265

This brief survey of cleanliness and bathing in Europe shows that Islam was successful in promoting personal hygiene when compared not just to the Middle Ages but even to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Will Durant writes, "One of the results of the Crusades was the introduction into Europe of public steam bath in the Moslem style." 13 Describing the Ottoman civilization, the same historian writes, "Personal cleanliness was common. In Constantinople and other large cities of the Ottoman Empire the public baths were built of marble and attractively decorated. Some Christian saints had prided themselves on avoiding water; the Moslem was required to make his ablutions before entering the mosque or saying his prayers; in Islam cleanliness was really next to godliness." 1467

But to emphasize exclusively the physical aspect of the rules of *taharat* is tantamount to ignore the multi-facet nature of the Islamic rituals. The physical cleanliness is not the main reason underlying the ritual ablutions. If Islam had prescribed *wudu* and *ghusl* for physical cleanliness only, then why is it still necessary for a person who has just got out of the shower to do *wudu* before saying the Islamic prayer? If the ritual ablutions are just for physical cleanliness, then why the *Tayammum*? *Tayammum* is a substitute for *wudu* and *ghusl* when water is unavailable; but it is performed on "dirt" or earth-and this in no way leads to physical cleanliness! These questions are enough to disqualify the exclusive nature of this point of view.

## C. The correct perspective

So what is the comprehensive rationale of the ritual ablutions like wudu and ghusl? By studying the two verses of the Qur'an related to the ritual ablutions, I have come to the conclusion that there are two planes of purification: physical and spiritual. Although wudu and ghusl are related to physical purification but there is a more sublime reason underlying these two ritual ablutions-they serve as a reminder to and gateway of spiritual purification.

In suratu 'l-Baqarah, after talking about *ghusl hayz*, the Qur'an says,

***"Surety Allah loves those who often turn to Him, and He also loves those who cleanse themselves." (2:222)***

In another verse, after explaining the rules of *wudu* and *ghusl*, the Qur' an says,

***“Allah does not desire to make any impediment for you; but He desires to cleanse you, and that He may complete His blessings upon you; haply you may be grateful.” (5:6)***

We find two different themes in both these verses: First: Allah loves those who cleanse themselves, and that He desires to cleanse us. Second: He wants to complete His blessings upon us, and that He loves those who often turn towards Him. The first theme is related to the physical cleanliness, while the second theme is related to the spiritual purity.

The verses of the first theme are very clear, they refer to cleanliness. But what do the verses of the second theme mean? What is the meaning of “often turning to Allah”? Turning to Allah implies that the person had turned away from Allah. What does this mean? These are the questions which I will discuss below.

In Islamic value system, the human soul is like a light bulb. If the bulb is protected from dust and dirt, it will enlighten the area; but if dust and dirt is allowed to accumulate on the bulb, then it will not be able to illuminate the area as much as before. Similarly, the human soul has to be protected from spiritual `dirt' and uncleanliness; otherwise it will not be able to guide the person as rightly as before.

Allah, the Creator of mankind, describes the masterpiece of His creation in the following way:

***“By the sun and its morning brightness! By the moon when it follows the sun! By the day when it illuminates (everything)! By the night when it enshrouds the day! By the heaven and He who built it! By the earth and He who extended it! And by the soul and He who perfected it! Then He inspired it to understand what is good and what is evil. Prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed is he who seduces it.” (91:1-10)***

After swearing by the most majestic signs of His creation, Allah says that the pure human soul has the ability to understand what is right and what is wrong provided it is purified and uncorrupted. This verse makes it clear that the human soul, just like his body, is capable of becoming spiritually impure and unclean. Imam 'Ali (as) has said, `The human soul is a precious jewel; whoever protects its, enhances its (effectiveness), and whoever degrades its, decreases its (effectiveness).” 1568

The impurities that can corrupt a human soul are collectively known as “sins”. Accumulation of sins can indeed render the human soul ineffective and, in Qur'anic expression, `seize the heart'. Allah says,

***“Whatever (sins) they have committed has seized their heart.” (83:14)***

By committing sins, not only is the soul of a Muslim seized but he also spiritually turns away from Allah. Sins create a distance between God and man.

Can a person rescue his soul from the seizing of the sins? Can a sinner spiritually get closer to God? Yes, indeed, a sinful person can spiritually return to Allah. Returning to Allah means repenting and asking forgiveness for your sins. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) has explained this phenomenon as follows: “Each believer has a bright soul. When he commits a sin, a dark dot appears on his bright soul. If he repents, the dark dot will disappear. But if he persists in his sins, the darkness will increase until it covers the entire soul-then the

person would never return towards goodness." 1669

You can now easily understand that just as our bodies can become impure by the physical *najasat*, our souls become impure by sins. To rid our bodies of the physical *najasat*, we use water; similarly, to rid our souls of the spiritual impurities, we use *tawbah. Tawbah literally* means "to turn," but it is used in Islamic terminology for "repentance". In other words, by doing *tawbah* a sinner "turns towards Allah in repentance"..

And now it should be clear to you why I take the verse

***2:222 ( "Surely Allah loves those who often turn to Him")***

as a reminder for the spiritual purification. Sins make the human soul impure and takes him away from *God.*
*Tawbah* purifies the human soul and brings him closer to God.

In short, the human soul is corruptible; it is corrupted by sins; the corrupted soul can be purified by *tawbah. By* reminding us that He loves those who do *tawbah* in the verse of ritual ablution, Allah is trying to draw our attention to the spiritual purification. In the following section of this chapter, I will attempt to explain some of the main elements of spiritual impurity, the way they corrupt the soul and the method of purifying the soul from such spiritual impurities. All this will be done by connecting the ritual purification to the spiritual plane. I humbly pray to Allah, *subhanahu wa ta `ala,* to help me in this very pleasant but at the same time difficult task.

# D. Connecting the ritual to the spiritual

## 1. Disbelief - Kufr

One of the *najasat* is a *kafir,* an unbeliever. It is needless to say that a ka.fir is considered *najis* not because of his physical state, rather because of his spiritual state *kufr,* disbelief. By declaring the *kafir* as *najis*, Islam wants to draw our attention to a terminal spiritual disease known as *kufr*.

What is *kufr? Kufr* literally means a cover. In Islamic terminology, it is mostly used for a person who disbelieves in God; and so *"kafir"* means an unbeliever. By using the word *"kafir"* for an unbeliever, Islam is implying that the unbeliever is a person who covers or hides the truth. What can be more true than God, the Creator?! It also means that a *kafir* is a person whose soul has been completely covered by darkness.

*Kufr* -the rejection of God- is such a strong spiritual disease that it affects the entire body of the *kafir* and renders it *najis*. Even if a *kafir* washes himself thoroughly hundred times and dresses up in very clean clothes, still he will be considered ritually *najis*. Nothing can cure this spiritual disease, nothing can purify the soul of a *kafir* except Islam. And therefore, you see that the shari`ah counts "Islam" as one of the mutahhirat.

Can a spiritual phenomenon really have any effect on our physical body? In the spiritual realm of the Islamic world-view it does. To make my point more clear, I will give another example of a similar spiritual phenomenon but of a positive kind. You have read in the first chapter of this book that blood and corpse of a human being are considered *najis* by the *skari`ah. This is* a universal rule. But there is one exception to this rule: The *shari`ah* says that the blood and body of a martyr is not *najis*. Martyrdom is a convincing proof of the

person's readiness to sacrifice everything for Allah.

Martyrdom is a good deed of the highest quality, and it affects the entire body of the martyr. And therefore, Islam says that the dead body and even the blood of a martyr is tahir and pure. Not only the body and blood, but even the earth of a martyr's grave and the grave itself are affected and acquire sacredness! It for this reason that we have been taught to pay tribute to the martyrs of Karbala by saying: “May my parents be your ransom! You became pure and the earth in which you were buried has also become pure.” [17] And that is the reason why the Shi'ah fiqh recommends that we do sajdah on the *turbah,* the tablet made from the earth of Karbala.

In short, just as a good deed of highest quality like martyrdom affects the body, the blood and even the grave of the martyr and makes them pure and sacred, similarly the worst type of deed like *kufr* affects the entire body of the *kafir* and makes it *najis*.

Why is *kufr* such an evil phenomenon? By rejecting the faith in God, a *kafir* loses his own true identity. After rejecting God, this world becomes the beginning and the end of a *kafir*'s life; with no faith in the hereafter, he just works for this world. At this stage, if religious values loose their influence, the *kafir* thinks of maximizing the benefits of this world even at the expense of other human beings. And he starts to believe only in his animal instincts and ignores his human aspect. When a person reaches this stage, he starts judging his own actions by those of the animals. For example, the law of the animal world known as “the struggle for existence” and “the survival of the fittest” becomes the foundation of the human world. Many anthropologists and scientists study animal behavior and then not just explain but justify the pervert human behavior. It is for such people that Allah says,

***“They have minds but they do not understand with them,' they have eyes but they do not see with them; they have ears but they do not hear with them--they are like cattle, nay, rather they are more astray; they are the heedless ones.” (7:179)***

Similarly, *shirk is* also considered a terminal spiritual disease. *Shirk* (polytheism) means that a person ascribes partners to God. This partners) could be a human being, an animal or a thing. In a way, a *mushrik* (polytheist) is worst than a *kafir* because the latter just rejects the concept of God while the former elevates the created beings to the level of God. A man cannot further degrade himself than by bowing to a fellow human being or an animal or a statue made by his own hands. Allah says,

***“Verily Allah does not forgive the sin of shirk but He forgives anything other than that.”* (4:48)**

By declaring the *kafir*s and the mushrikin as *najis*, Islam wants to draw our attention to the importance and value of faith (*iman*). It is an indirect way of saying that in Allah's view, bodily appearance and cleanliness is not more valuable than the faith which is in the heart of a believer. And it also tells us that if Islam is so strict about ritual cleanliness, then how strict it would be about spiritual purification.

## 2. Arrogance - Takabbur

Another most destructive spiritual disease or `*najasat*' is arrogance, known in Arabic as *takabbur.* It is a mental state of a person who thinks very highly himself and looks down upon others. An arrogant person shows his pride by humiliating others. In Islamic value

system, arrogance has been condemned very strongly. But what has this to do with *najasat* and *taharat*?

When I looked at the list of the *najasat*, two seemingly unrelated things caught my attention. `Semen and human corpse.' And I started to think why has the Islamic *shari'ah* considered semen and human corpse among the ritually *najis* things. Semen after all holds the seed of a human being-the master-piece of Allah's creation. So why should it be declared as *najis*? Why must a person purify himself after discharge of semen? Why should a Muslim be considered *najis* after his death? Why must we purify ourselves if we touched the dead Muslim before he is given the ritual bath?

Some people might be tempted to look for scientific reasons for the *najasat* of semen and corpse. I do not deny such possibilities, but my thoughts led me to the conclusion that in declaring semen and corpse as *najis*, Islam is not passing a judgment on their physical aspect, instead it is trying to drive home a very important moral message about arrogance.

Let me explain myself by asking the following question: Is there any relationship between `semen' and `corpse'? Yes, semen is the beginning of human life and corpse is the end of it. In other words, a man starts his life as a sperm and ends his life as a corpse.

When a person looks at this relationship and realizes that Islam has considered his beginning and his end as *najis*, he must think twice before being arrogant! If he remembers the ritual worth of his beginning and end, he will never be infected by the spiritual disease of arrogance, no matter how rich or how powerful he becomes. To me, semen and a Muslim's corpse has been considered *najis* just to remind us of our reality and to remind us that arrogance is not our right. And in arriving at this conclusion, I was inspired by the saying of Imam `Ali bin Abi Talib (as) which says, “I am surprised at man: his beginning is a sperm and his end is a corpse, and between his beginning and his end he is just a earner of waste-and still he is arrogant!” 18[71]

Arrogance is the prerogative of God. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that Allah has said, “Arrogance is My robe and glory is My dress; therefore, whoever tries to take any of these two from me, I will put him in hell.” Allah says in the Qur'an,

***“Do not walk on the earth arrogantly, certainly you will never be able to tear the earth open, nor compete with the mountains in height.” (17:39)***

He also says,

**“Do *not turn your cheek away from the people in arrogance, and do not walk on the earth arrogantly; God does not love any arrogant and boastful person. Be modest in your walk, and lower your voice; surely the most hideous of voices is that of the ass.”* (31:18-19)**

Arrogance can move its victim to many sins and crimes. Here I will just mention two events from the Qur'an about arrogance and its result.

Those who are familiar with the story of Adam in the Qur'an know that the first creature to disobey Allah's command was Shaytan. And the motive of Shaytan's disobedience was arrogance. The Qur'an describes it as follows:

***We created you, then We shaped you and then We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam!” so they bowed themselves except Iblis (the Shaytan), he was not***

***among those who had bowed themselves. Allah said (to the Shaytan), "What prevented you from bowing yourself when I commanded you?" Iblis said, "I am better than him; You have created me of fire, while You have created him of clay." So Allah said, "Then you get down from this (heavenly station), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out! You are among the humiliated ones."* (7:11-3)**

In another chapter, the Qur'an says,

***"All the angels bowed themselves to Adam except Iblis (the Shaytan) who refused and was arrogant, and thus he became one of the unbelievers. "(2:34)***

So according to the Qur'an, arrogance had so much blinded the Shaytan that he forgot that his own so-called greatness of being created from fire was given to him by the same God who was now commanding him to bow to Adam.

Another example from the Qur'an is of an arrogant human being, Fir'awn. The Qur'an describes his arrogance as follows:

***Have you received the story of Musa? When his Lord called to him in the holy valley, Tuwa: "Go to Fir'awn; he has exceeded the limits. And say to him, `Have you the intention to purify yourself so that I should guide you to your Lord, then you shall fear Him?"' (So Musa went to Fir'awn and) showed him the great sign, but Fir'awn disbelieved and rebelled, then he turned away hastily. Then Fir'awn gathered an assembly of men and proclaimed that "I am your Most High Lord." Therefore, God seized him with punishment. (79:16)***

In these verses, one can see that Allah considers Fir'awn to be spiritually impure and that is why Prophet Musa is told to ask him whether he is prepared to purify himself or not. And then Allah describes how Fir'awn arrogantly claimed that `I am your Most High Lord.' These verses are quite clear in stating that Fir'awn was suffering from a spiritual impurity known as arrogance. Fir'awn was some much overcome with arrogance that when his own magicians declared their faith in the God of Musa and Harun, he said,

***"You have believed in Him before I gave you the permission?!" (79:24)***

Look, what arrogance can do to a man!

But if a person always remembers that his beginning is a sperm and his end is a corpse, and that both these have been considered as *najis* by the *shari'ah*, then he will never be infected by the spiritual impurity of arrogance. Such a person will not only remember his humility in front of his Lord but will also refrain from humiliating other human beings, no matter how `low' they may be from material point of view.

Besides remembering the *najasat* of semen and corpse, other ways which can help a person in fighting arrogance are the following: always being first in greeting others, attending the congregational prayers and going for the pilgrimage. Congregational prayers and the pilgrimage are intensive training programs to make one realize that he or she is nothing but a servant of Allah like thousands and millions of His other servants who belong to different races, speak diverse languages and are not necessarily in the same income bracket!

## 3. Respecting others' rights

Human beings have been created with various instincts. Most can be broadly classified under `desire' and `anger,' also known as lower or animal instincts. These feelings have not been created for nothing, they are not to be suppressed. It is the `anger' that prompts us to evade danger and defend ourselves, and it is `desire' that prompts us to look for food. However, these instincts must be brought under control of our reason or spirit which is also known as higher or human instinct. For example, if one's desire is not restrained by reason, it will change into greed and then that person would have no regard whatsoever for the feelings or rights of other human beings.

Imam 'Ali (as) said, “Allah has given to angels the power of reason but not the (instincts of) desire and anger; and He has given to animals the two instincts without the power of reasoning; but He has honored the human being by giving the power of reason as well as the instincts of desire and anger. If his anger and desire become subservient to the command of his reason, then he will become better than the angels because he reached that stage [of spiritual perfection] in spite of odds which the angels never face.” (By “odds” means the desire and anger.)

But in order to control his `animal' desire and keep it within the restrain of reason, man needs to build his spiritual power. Education by itself is not enough. Man needs to be constantly reminded about respecting the rights of fellow human beings. And it is in this constant reminding that Islam has been most successful than any other system of life. Islam has used the daily rituals to reinforce some of the mast important social and ethical principals in the minds of its followers.

This constant reminder has been done by the following rules of ritual purity: (1) Washroom: It must be *mubah*-that is, you must be the owner of the washroom or you must have the permission of the owner, otherwise it is forbidden for you to fulfill your natural needs in that place. (2) Water and place for *wudu*: it must be mubah. (3) Water and place for *ghusl*: it must be mubah. (4) Earth for *Tayammum*: it must be mubah and even the place where the earth is must also be mubah. Similar laws can be found in the rules for the ritual daily prayers about the dress in which you pray, the place where you pray, etc.

If a Muslim abides by these simple rules of daily routine, he will be forced to make sure that his house, water, land, clothes, etc. is mubah (lawful). This will not only reinforce the importance of respecting the rights of other people, but will also affect the way a person makes his living and the way he deals with others in business. He will have to make sure that his income is not from unlawful sources, otherwise the use of the washroom, his *wudu*, *ghusl* and daily prayers in his own house will not be correct.

The Imams have always tried to teach us about the importance of respecting the rights of others. Imam Zaynu 'l-`Abidin (as) said, “By He who has sent Muhammad as a prophet of truth! Even if the killer of my father, Husayn bin 'Ali, entrusts me with the sword with which he killed my father, I will surely return it back to him.” In another hadith, he says, “Allah will forgive for the believers every sin and cleanse them of it in the hereafter except two sins: not observing taqiyyah where it should be observed and violating the rights of your brethren in faith.”

It is indeed unfortunate that in spite of such training programs in Islam, Muslims in many countries show no sensitivity or respect for the rights of their brethren in faith. The reason why some Muslims do not gain the spiritual and moral benefit from the rituals is because

they do not connect such rituals to the spiritual and moral values. For them, these are just rituals and nothing else. It is necessary for the Muslims to connect the rituals of Islam to its spiritual, moral and social principals, and only then will they be able to present themselves as the ideal community in the present world. The system is already there, the Muslims just need to understand it properly and utilize it more effectively.

## 4. Thinking positively about others

Islam is not a religion in which only the relationship between God and man is important, rather it is a religion which also gives great importance to relationships between human beings themselves. In Islam, you cannot please God by fulfilling His rights and ignoring those of other human beings.

The importance of respecting the rights of other human beings has been very clearly presented in the Qur'an by combining salat with *zakat*. In almost 80 verses, Allah has talked about “establishing the prayers and paying the *zakat*.” Salat is the symbol of Allah's rights upon man and *zakat* is the symbol of man's rights upon each other. One without the other is an incomplete implementation of Islam, it will not guarantee the salvation of man in the hereafter.

When we talk about the rights of other people, we mostly emphasize over their material and physical rights. Respecting others' rights is mostly taken by us to mean that we should refrain from physically harming others or from violating their property rights. It is rarely understood that not only should we restrain ourselves from physically harming other or violating their material rights, rather we should also restrain our minds from distrusting others without any reasonable cause. Islam teaches us to always think positively about others.

When a person starts thinking positively about others, he will automatically be saved from the immoral consequences of distrusting other. By these consequences, I mean `spying into characters of other people' and `back- biting'. Positive thinking should be our attitude towards all human beings, but more so towards Muslims. After all, Muslims are considered by Allah as brothers and sisters of each other. And as brothers, they should trust and be positive about one another. The Qur'an says:

***“Verily the believers are nothing but brothers (to each other) ...0 you who believe! Avoid most of the suspicious (thoughts about other Muslims); for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin. And do not spy (on each other). Nor should some of you backbite others. Does any one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you abhor it. So fear (the punishment of) Allah. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving and Merciful.” (49:10-12)***

Suspicion leads to spying and spying in turn leads to backbiting. Avoidance of suspicion helps in refraining from spying on others and thus backbiting. Not only will such a person be saved from immoral consequences of distrusting others, rather he will have more time for self-criticism which is the first step of spiritual purification.

There is an interesting conversation recorded by `Allamah at-Tabrasi between Imam Zaynu '1-`Abidin (as) and Muhammad bin Muslim az-Zuhri. It seems that az-Zuhri was not getting along well with people. He came to the Imam and complained about his circumstances. In the latter part of their conversation, the Imam gave a very useful advice which deserves to be remembered by each and every Muslim. The Imam said, “And if the Satan, may the

curse of Allah be upon him, makes you think that you have a superiority over any one of the followers of the *qiblah,* then think about that person: If he is elder than you, then say `He has been ahead of me in faith and good deeds, therefore he is better than me.' If he is younger than you, then say, `I have been ahead of him in disobedience and sins, therefore he is better than me.' And if he is of your age, then say, `I am certain about my own sins but in doubt about his sins, so why should I prefer doubt over certainty.' 19 Read this hadith again and think about it. See if you can follow this advice which, indeed, deserves to be written in golden letters!

To show the importance of this moral principal, the *shari'ah* has counted *ghaybatu 'l-Muslim* (the disappearance of a Muslim) as one of the mutahhirat. You should consider as tahir the body or clothe of a person who became *najis* in your presence just because he disappeared from your sight long enough for him to purify himself or his dress. Just imagine how positive the *shari'ah* wants you to be! This is not a cage of thinking positive because you know nothing negative about the person, rather it is a case where you know for sure that the person or his dress had become *najis*; still you are expected to think positively about that person.

## 5. Sincerity in intention

In our own evaluation, we judge a person by his deeds. This is so because we, as human beings, cannot know the motives of the doer. But does Allah judge the people in the same way? No, on the day of judgment, Allah will not judge by looking at the deed; He will judge by looking at the motives. In Islamic value system, motive is as important as the deed itself. Rather according to the Prophet, “Verily, the deeds are (evaluated according to) the motives.” 2073

Islam teaches its followers to do good deeds for the sake of pleasing Allah. Describing our purpose of life, Allah says,

***“I have not created ...the human being except so that they may worship (Me).” (51:56)***

Obviously this verse does not mean that our purpose of creation is to do nothing but perform ritual prayers. No, not at all. It actually means that a Muslim's whole life should be an act of worship, that is, it should be lived by obeying Allah. The best expression of this concept can be found in the words. of a Prophet quoted in the Qur'an:

**“Verily my *prayers, my ritual actions, (in short) my life and* my *death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe*.” (6:162)**

“A Muslim will never fall into the pitfall of polytheism (shirk), he will never do anything with the motive of pleasing another god; but there are some impurities of thoughts which are called `hidden polytheism' against which he must vigilantly guard himself. For example, when a person worships Allah, but at the same time likes the people to know that he is worshipping God, then he is committing the sin of `hidden polytheism.' Such a deed is not done with pure intention, it is polluted by the hidden polytheism, because the worshipper's intention is riot pure, he wants to please two master with one act of worship: God and `the people'.

“Not only the ritual prayers, but all our actions should be based upon the love of God. For example, while helping our less fortunate brethren, we must remember that we are passing

on the property of God to the dependents of God. It should be done without any shade of worldly motives. A help given with a worldly motive is a body without a soul. A charity done with a desire to enhance one's social standing destroys the fiber of that charity." 21 Allah says,

***"O you who believe! Do not nullify your charity by reproach and injury (to the recipient), like the person who spends his wealth to show it to the people..." (2:264)***

There is a famous anecdote of Bahlul. Once he saw that a big mosque was being built. He went to the mosque site and asked the main contributor, "Why are you building this mosque?" The donor, "Bahlul! Isn't it obvious that a mosque is built for sake of pleasing Allah? Why else would one built a mosque?" Bahlul went away. He found a big concrete block and wrote `Masjid Bahlul' over it. At night time, he fixed this concrete block over the main gate of the mosque. Next morning, he found the donor very upset. The donor got hold of Bahlul and said, "How dare you put your name over the mosque which is being built with my money and contribution?! "Bahlul, "If you really are building this mosque for pleasing Allah, then you should not be upset at all because even if the people are misled by what has been written on the concrete block, surely Allah is not going to be misled. He will know that you built the mosque. So why are you angry?"

Doing a good deed with a pure intention is just the first step, to keep that deed as a credit in your account with God is more difficult. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) says, "To preserve the good deed (in your scroll of deeds) is more difficult than doing it." When asked to explain what he meant, the Imam gave an example: "When a person helps his relative and gives money for the sake of Allah who has no partner, it is recorded that he did so secretly (for the sake of Allah); but if he mentions his good deed (to someone), then it will be re-classified in the deeds which he did openly. And if he mentions it again, then it will be classified as a deed done for showing off to the people."

One way which the shari`ah has adopted to draw our attention to this most important teaching of Islam is by making it part of the rituals which we have to do on a daily basis. I am referring to the rules about niyyat in *wudu*, *ghusl*, *Tayammum*, prayers, etc. These rules, as far as I can understand, are not just for their own sake rather they serve as a constant reminder that our motives should be pure in doing good deeds. Remember, Allah does not look at the deed, He looks at the motive and intention of the doer.

***"Verily Allah accepts (the good deeds) only from the pious people." (5:27)***

## 6. The Du'as during Wudu

I would like to end this chapter with a brief explanation on the *du'as* mentioned in section `D' of Chapter Two. If a person memorizes these *du'as* and their meanings and recites them every time he or she does *wudu*, I am sure it will have a profound effect on his or her spirituality. These *du'as* in ritual ablution open one more window towards the spiritual world of Islam.

The *du'a* at the beginning of *wudu* is a statement about the purity of intention. The second *du'a* is a reminder that the ritual ablution is a means to the purification of the soul.

The third *du'a* is telling us to be careful in how we use our tongue and also reminds us of the questioning of the day of judgment. The fourth *du'a* is a constant reminder of the

destination for which we have been created. The fifth *du'a* informs us that man can be honored or disgraced on the day of judgment and so we should work hard to be honored and not disgraced. The sixth and seventh du`as are reminding us that if we want the scroll of our deeds in our right hands, then we must be careful in our actions in this world. The eighth *du'a* teaches us not to rely on ourselves only rather to ask Allah's help also. And, finally, the ninth *du'a* is a reminder of the conditions of the day of judgment.

## Glossary

**Wajib:** obligatory, necessary, incumbent. An act which must be performed. A person will be rewarded for performing it and punished for neglecting it, e.g., the daily prayers.

**Ihtiyat Wajib:** precautionary obligatory. Its significance is the same as that of wajib with the difference that wherever a mujtahid says that “it is precautionarily obligatory,” his followers have the option of leaving his taqlid (following) in this particular problem and following the fatwa of the second best mujtahid provided the second mujtahid has a different opinion.

**Haram:** forbidden, prohibited. It is necessary to abstain from the acts which are harm. If someone performs a harm act, he will be punished either by the Islamic court or in the hereafter or both. For example, stealing, eating pork.

**Sunnat** or **Mustahab**: recommended, desire-able, better. It refers to the acts which are recommended but not wajib. If one neglects them, he will not be punished; however, if one performs them, he will be rewarded. For example, washing the hands before *wudu*.

**Makruh:** reprehensible, disliked, and discouraged. It is used for the acts which are disliked but not harm. If someone does a makruh act, he will not be punished for it; however, if he refrains from it, then he will be rewarded. For example, eating before *ghusl janabat*.

**Ja'iz, Halal, Mubah:** permitted, allowed, lawful, legal. The acts or things which are permitted and lawful. There is no reward for performing it nor any punishment for neglecting it. Mubah is exclusively used for lawful things, not for permitted actions. An example, drinking tea.

**Mujtahid:** a religious scholar who is an expert of Islamic laws, the *shari'ah*. Usually, it is used for the high ranking mujtahids whose decrees are followed by the people.

**Marja**: The high ranking mujtahid is who is followed by the people. Literally, it means the point of reference. The high ranking mujtahids are called marja` because they are the point of reference for the people in the shari`ah matters.

**Shari`ah** or **Shari`at**: Literally means, the way. In Islamic terminology, it means the laws of Islam.

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15. al-Amudi, Ghuraru 'l-hikam, p. 226
16. al-Majlisi, Biharu 'l-Anwar, vol. 73, p. 361.
17. See “Ziyarat warithah” by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) in Mafatihu 'l-Jinan of Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi.
18. as-Saduq, `Ilalu 'sh-Shariya`, p. 101.
19. at-Tabarsi, al-Ihtijaj, vol. 2, p. 52
20. Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 33-5.
21. With minor changes from S.S.A. Rizvi's Inner Voice, p. 69.

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