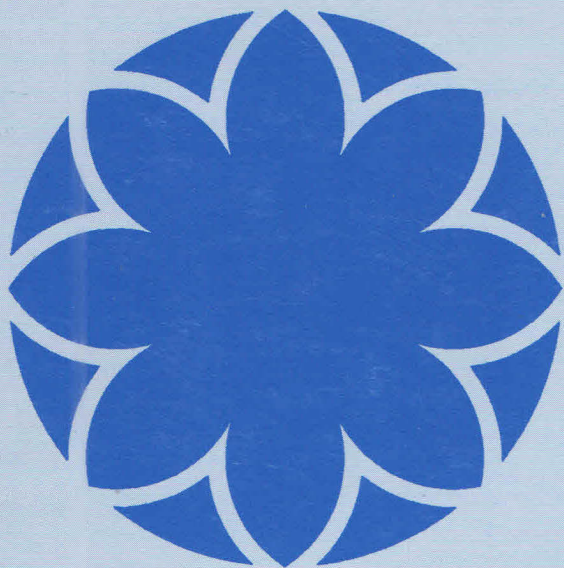


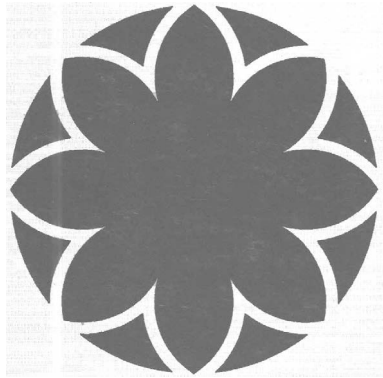
**THE
RITUAL & SPIRITUAL
PURITY**



SAYYID MUHAMMAD RIZVI

**Vancouver Islamic Educational Foundation
British Columbia, Canada**

THE
RITUAL & SPIRUAL
PURITY



Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Vancouver Islamic Education Foundation
British Columbia, Canada

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INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK: In 1984 I published a series known as ‘The Laws of the Sharī‘ah’ which included booklets on *The Tendency of Rationalizing the Sharī‘ah Laws, Ijtihād, Taqlīd, Tahārat & Najāsāt, Wudū & Ghusl*, and *Khums*. The books were very well received by the readers in various parts of the world, *al-hamdu li ‘l-lāh*. 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 *Tahārat & Najāsāt* and *Wudū & 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 Allāh blessed me with an opportunity to rewrite and finalize this book, and the result is what you see in your hands.

The booklets *Tahārat & Najāsāt* and *Wudū & Ghusl* were just simple explanations of the rules of ritual purity in Islam. In this book, I have extensively quoted the relevant Qur’ānic verses and the ahādīth. Moreover, I have added two new discussions: a section on “Our Outlook Towards the Najāsāt” 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 tahārat, wudû, ghusl and salât 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 Allāh*.

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 SHARĪ‘AH: This is a book of Islamic laws, known as the *sharī‘ah*. The sources of the Islamic laws are the Qur’ān and the *sunnah*. By the *sunnah*, we mean the sayings, actions and silent approval of the Prophet and the Ahlu ’l-bayt.

The Qur’ān describes the basic rules only and the *sunnah* elaborates upon them. The Qur’ān introduces the Prophet of Islam as follows: “*He (Allāh) 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’ān) 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’ān. Even his actions are a source of guidance for us: “*You have a good example in*

Allāh'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 Allāh: "Say (O Muhammad): *If you love Allāh, then follow me; (if you do so,) Allāh will love you and forgive for you your sins.*" (3:31) The Qur'ān further says, "Whoever obeys the Messenger has surely obeyed Allāh." (4:80)

The Muslims who lived during the Prophet's time had easy access 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 hadīth. 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'ān which testifies to their spiritual purity of highest category by saying, "Verily Allāh intends to purify you, O the Ahlu 'l-bayt, a thorough purification." (33:33) Combine this verse about Ahlu 'l-bayt's purity with the following: "It the holy Qur'ān in a preserved tablet, none shall touch it but the purified ones." (56:79) This shows that the Ahlu 'l-bayt could understand the Qur'ān better than any other follower of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allāh says, "Say (O 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 Allāh who is commanding His messenger to ask the people to love his family. If they were not truthful, reliable, and worthy of following, would Allāh command us to love them?

These few verses are enough to show that the best commentators of the Qurʾān 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 Allāh (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 hadīth, but I will just quote Ibn Hajar al-Makki, a famous anti-Shīʿah polemicist. After recording this above-mentioned hadīth 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."¹

We can conclude from these verses and the hadith mentioned above that the Ahlu 'l-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 hadīth 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 Allāh. Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) says, "My hadīth is the hadīth of my father, the hadīth of my father is that of my grandfather, the hadīth of my grandfather is that of al-Husayn [bin 'Ali], the hadīth of al-Husayn is that of al-Hasan [bin 'Ali], the hadīth of al-Hasan is that of Amīru 'l-mu'minīn

1 Ibn Hajar al-Makki, *as-Sawā'iqu 'l-Muhriqah*, chapter 11, section 1. For further reading on this issue, see Rizvi, S.S.A., *Imāmat*; Sharafu 'd-Dīn, S.A.H., *The Right Path*; and Jafri, S.M.H., *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*.

[‘Ali bin Abi Tālib] (a.s.), the hadīth of Amīru ’l-mu’minīn is that of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w), and the hadīth of the Messenger is a statement of Allāh, the Almighty, the Great.”²

IJTIHĀD & TAQLĪD: After the twelfth Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) went into occultation, the responsibility of guiding the Shī’ahs in the sharī’ah matter came upon the *mujtahids*, the religious scholars specializing in Islamic laws. The mujtahids 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’ān and the books of hadīth, and start giving *fatwas*. They must first of all come up with a methodology (discussed in a subject known as *usūlu ’l fiqh*). In their methodology, they decide how to study the Qur’ānic verses and the ahādīth. 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 hadīth to be considered authentic? If not, what are the means of verifying the authenticity of a given hadīth? If they come up on two authentic ahādīth on a single issue which contradict each other, then what should they do? If the Qur’ān 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 ijtihād, and only then can a mujtahid correctly and responsibly derive a law from the Qur’ān and the sunnah.

It is obvious that not all have the ability or the time to specialize in the sharī’ah laws; and therefore, for such people it is necessary to follow a mujtahid in the matters of the sharī’ah. The laws on ritual purity presented in this book can be followed by the followers of most high-ranking mujtahids of our time, in particular Ayatullāh al-‘uzma Sayyid Abu ’l-Qāsim al-Mūsawī

2 al-Kulayni, *Usūlu ’l-Kāfi*, book 2, chapter 17, hadīth No. 14; ash-Sha’rānī, *at-Tabaqātu ’l-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 28; Abu Nu’aym, *Hilyatu ’l-Awliyā*, vol. 3, p. 193, 197

al-Khû'i and the late Ayatullâh al-'uzma Sayyid Rûhullâh al-Mûsawî al-Khûmaynî. The differences, if any, among the present mujtahids on the matters of ritual purity are on the level of *makrûh* and *mustahab*, but not on the level of *wâjib* and *harâm*. Wherever the differences among the mujtahids are of extreme nature, I have given their opinions separately.

The ahādīth 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 ahādīth in the book was to make the readers familiar with some of the sources which the mujtahids use in reaching to their conclusions. This, I believe, will also help in dispelling the idea voiced by some misinformed people that the sharī'ah laws are nothing but an invention of the 'ulamā'.

I hope this book proves useful to those who want to learn about Islam; and I pray to Allâh, *subhānahu wa ta'āla*, to accept it as a small contribution towards serving Islam from this most humble servant of His. *Inna rabbi la Samī'u 'd-du'ā*.

Richmond, B.C.
Rabī'u '1-Awwal 1410
October 1989

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Chapter One

NAJĀSAT & TAHĀRAT (Ritual Impurity & Ritual Purity)

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(Disappearance of a Muslim). . . 26
- E. Our outlook towards the Najāsāt. . . 27

إن الله يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين

﴿البقرة ٢٢٢﴾

بني الدين على النظافة

النظافة من الإيمان

﴿رسول الله (ص)﴾

I. NAJĀSAT & TAHĀRAT

A. SOME IMPORTANT TERMS

“*Najāsat*” (pl. *najāsāt*) means uncleanness, impurity.

In Islamic laws, the *najāsat* 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 uncleanness 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’yān najisah*.”

“*Tahārat*” is opposite of “*najāsat*,” it means cleanliness and purity.

“*Tāhir*” is opposite of “*najis*,” it means a thing which is clean and pure.

B. THE A’YĀN NAJISAH (THE INHERENTLY UNCLEAN THINGS)

According to the Islamic laws, the *a’yān najisah* are nine in number. The nine *a’yān 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. kāfir;

iv. Drinks:

9. intoxicating liquids.

The implication of this law for a Muslim is that he or she must refrain from the *a'yān 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 wudû, 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 *tāhir* 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 *najāsāt* 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 Qubā, Allāh says, “*Therein are men who love to cleanse themselves; and Allāh loves those who cleanse themselves.*” (9:108) When this verse was revealed, the Prophet asked the people of Qubā, “What do you do when cleaning yourselves that Allāh has praised you for it?” They said, “We cleanse ourselves after emptying the bowels with water.”¹

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 *istibrā’* after urinating. *Istibrā’* 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 *istibrā’*: 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

¹ at-Tabātabā’ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 9, p. 416; al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il*, vol. 1, pp. 249-51; al-Kādhimī, *Masālik*, p. 85.

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 *istibrā'*: 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 *tāhir* if he has done *istibrā'*. But if he has not done *istibrā'*, 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 *istibrā'* 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 *istibrā'* 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-Qāsim asked Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) 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."²

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

2 al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, pp. 247, 1034.

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 *harām* for you to fulfill your natural needs in that place.

8. It is *harām* 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 *tāhir*.

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 *tāhir*.

Abu Agharr an-Nahhās, a veterinarian, said to Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.): "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 ahādīth on this issue, but here I will just describe a historical event and its relevant Qur'ānic 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 Allāh's help which the Qur'ān 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 Shaytān, 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.

3 al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 1009.

‘Abdullāh ibn Abi Ya‘fūr asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) 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.”⁴

* * *

Sometimes a liquid, other than 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 tāhir.

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 tāhir, e.g., the blood of fish or the body-fluid of a mosquito. Ibn Abi Ya‘fūr asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.), “What do you say about the blood of fleas?” The Imam said, “There is no objection in it.” Ibn Abi Ya‘fūr, “Even if it is more and excessive?” The Imam, “Yes, even if it is more.”⁵

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

The blood found in an egg is also najis.

4 *Masālik*, p. 86; al-Ardabīlī, *Zubdah*, p. 31.

5 *Wasā’il*, vol. 1, p. 1030.

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 *tāhir*.

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

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 *najasa*t.

5. CORPSES

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

al-Halabî asked Imam Ja'far as-Sâdiq (a.s.) 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."⁶

A *kāfir* 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*.

* * *

6 *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 1050.

“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 *tāhir*; for example, a dead fish. ‘Ammār as-Sābātī says that Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq (a.s.) 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.”⁷

* * *

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 *sharī‘ah*.
2. Or he has bought it from a *kāfir*. 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 *sharī‘ah*, then he can consider it *tāhir* and use it. However, he still cannot use such a thing in *salāt* (prayers). And if there is no such probability, then he cannot consider it *tāhir*, it should be regarded as najis.

⁷ *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 1051.

6. & 7. PIGS AND DOGS

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

Allāh says in the Qurʾān: “(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 Allāh” (6:145)

Although this verse is related to the forbidden food, but it clearly defines the pig as an unclean animal. Khayrān al-Khādīm wrote to Imam ʿAli an-Naqī (a.s.) 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 Allāh 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.”⁸

Abu Sahl al-Qarshī asked Imam Jaʿfar as-Sādiq (a.s.) about the dog: “Is the dog *harām*?” The Imam said, “It is najis.” Abu Sahl repeated this question three times and the Imam always replied, “It is najis.”⁹

Based on such teachings, our mujtahids 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 KĀFIRS

What is the meaning of “*kāfir*?” Kāfir (pl. *kuffār*) means an

8 *Wasāʿil*, vol. 1, p. 1055.

9 *Ibid*, p. 1016.

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 *kāfir*.

From Muslims' perspective, the *kuffār* are divided into two main groups: *kāfir dhimmi* and *kāfir harbî*. "*Kāfir dhimmi*" is a *kāfir* who lives under the protection of an Islamic government. "*Kāfir harbî*" is a *kāfir* who does not have such a protection. I must also mention a third, but rare, category of *kāfir*: *murtad*. "*Murtad*" means an apostate; there are two types of *murtad*: "*Murtad fitrî*" a person who was born of a Muslim parent, but then declared his disbelief in Islam. "*Murtad millî*" 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 mujtahids divide all the *kuffār - dhimmi, harbî, murtad fitrî* and *millî* - into two distinct groups: *mushrik* and *ahlu 'l-kitāb*.

Mushrik (pl. *mushrikîn*) 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 *mushrikîn*. *Ahlu 'l-kitāb* means the people of the Book; it is a name given to those who believe in any of the Books revealed by Allāh before the Qur'ān. Under Islamic system, the *Ahlu 'l-kitāb* have a preferred status in comparison to other non-Muslims. The people who are unanimously counted as *Ahlu 'l-kitāb* are: the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians.

* * *

As for the *mushrikîn*, the mujtahids are unanimous that they are najis. This is so because Allāh has clearly declared in the Qur'ān

that: “O you who believe! The polytheists (*mushrikûn*) 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 *mushrikîn* along side the physical, ritual impurity.

* * *

When we move on to the *Ahlu 'l-kitâb*, we find that the mujtahids disagree about their ritual purity or impurity. There are three different views on the *Ahlu 'l-kitâb*.

1. A minority group says that the *Ahlu 'l-kitâb* are pure and *tâhir*, just like Muslims. To this group belong the late Ayatullâh al-‘uzma Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakîm at-Tabâtabâ’î (d. 1970) and the late Ayatullâh ash-Shahîd Sayyid Muhammad Bâqir as-Sadr (d. 1980).¹⁰
2. The majority view says that the *Ahlu 'l-kitâb* have become corrupt in their beliefs and are not different from *mushrikîn*; therefore, they are *najis*. Those who belong to this group from the present mujtahids are: Ayatullâh al-‘uzma Sayyid Rûhullâh al-Mûsawî al-Khûmaynî and Ayatullâh al-‘uzma Sayyid Muhammad Rizâ al-Gulpâygânî.¹¹
3. The third group is of those mujtahids 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

10 al-Jannâti, *Tahâratu 'l-kitâbî*, p. 22-3; as-Sadr, *al-Fatâwa al-Wâdihah*, p. 221

11 al-Yazdî, *al-'Urwah*, p. 24; al-Khûmaynî, *Tahrîru 'l-Wasîlah*, vol. 1, p. 118.

and side with the majority. The most prominent among this group is the Ayatullāh al-‘uzma Sayyid Abu ‘1-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khū‘ī.

Ayatullāh al-Khū‘ī, in his lectures on *fiqh*, says: “It is apparent from what we have discussed above that the purity (*tahārat*) of the Ahlu ‘1-kitāb was taken for granted by the narrators of hadīth 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 ‘1-kitāb was just because of the doubts they had about external najāsāt which might have affected them.

“Therefore, it is *difficult* to give a *fatwa* on basis of the ahādīth which apparently say that the Ahlu ‘1-kitāb are najis; however, on the other hand, to give a ruling on basis of the ahādīth which say that they are tāhir is *even more difficult* because the majority of our jurist companions, both from the early days and the later days, believe in the najāsāt of Ahlu ‘1-kitāb. 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, Ayatullāh al-Khū‘ī writes, “As for the *kitābi* (*kāfir*), the famous view says that he is najis; and it is precautionarily necessary (to consider him as such).”¹³

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-Shahīd ath-Thānī Shaykh Zaynu ‘d-Dīn al-Āmilī, 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*.”¹⁴

12 al-Gharawi, *at-Tanqīh fi Sharhi ‘l-‘Urwati ‘l-Wuthqa* (Lectures of Ayatullāh al-Khū‘ī), vol. 2, p. 64; also see al-Jannāti, *Tahāratu ‘l-kitābi*, p. 27.

13 al-Khū‘ī, *Minhāju ‘s-Sālihiyn*, vol. 1 (Beirut, Dāru ‘z Zahra, 22nd ed.) p. 111.

14 As quoted by Muhammad Jawād al-Mughniyya in *Fiqhu ‘l-Imām Ja‘far as-Sādiq*, vol. 1, p. 28.

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 - *ghulāt*, *nawāsib*, and *khawārij* - who are also considered *kāfir* and *najis* by the Shī'ah *fiqh*, in spite of the fact that these groups were off shoots of Muslims during the early stage of the Islamic history.

Ghulāt (s. *ghālī*) 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.

Nawāsib (s. *nāsibī*) 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'ānic 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 (*kāfir*). 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 Shī'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.

Khawārij (s. *khārijī*) are those who rebelled against Imam 'Ali bin Abī Tālib in the battle of Siffin. Finally, Imam 'Ali had to fight against them in the battle known as Naharwān. They believed that Imam 'Ali had become a *kāfir* by accepting the intermediaries during the battle against Mu'āwiyah. The verse

¹⁵ ar-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 27, p. 166.

and the hadīth mentioned above is equally applicable to the *khawārij*, and therefore, they are also kāfir and najis.

* * *

There is one more category of a kāfir. The person who rejects the unanimously accepted tenets of Islam (for example, the obligation of salāt or hajj), is also regarded as a kāfir and najis. Such a person will become kāfir provided he realizes that rejecting such Islamic tenets amounts to believing that the Qur’ānic verses on salāt and hajj are not part of Allāh’s Book, and this in turn means that Prophet Muhammad had not been faithful in fulfilling the mission of Allāh. In short, such a person becomes a kāfir 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 kāfir, he is only a sinner.

9. INTOXICATING LIQUIDS

Every intoxicating liquid is najis.

Allāh says in the Qur’ān: “*O you who believe! Surely intoxicants, games of chance, idols and divining arrows are unclean (and) work of Shaytān, 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 Khayrān’s letter quoted earlier clearly says that intoxicants are not just harām but also najis.

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

The non-liquid intoxicants are harām (forbidden) but not najis. Methyl alcohol (also known as wood alcohol or wood spirit) is tāhir; 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 *najāsāt* is harām: 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 *najāsāt* 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 harām to sell grapes or dates to a person who purchases it for producing wine.

If a clean (tāhir) thing comes into contact with any of the *najāsāt*, 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 tāhir unless one becomes sure that they are najis.

D. THE MUTAHHIRĀT (THE PURIFYING AGENTS)

What you have read above was about *a'yān najisah*, the nine inherently unclean things. You also came to know that other things can become ritually impure (najis) by coming into contact with one of the nine *a'yān 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'yān najisah*. *Is it possible to purify the a'yān najisah?* Some *a'yān najisah* can be purified easily, while other *a'yān najisah* can be purified only through a long process of change and transformation. The function of purifying such things is done by the *mutahhirāt*.

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

i. The Nature:

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

ii. Physical Change:

4. *istihālah* (chemical change);
5. *inqilāb* (change in properties);
6. *intiqāl* (change in place);
7. *zawālu 'l-'ayni 'n-najāsah* (disappearance of the najasat);
8. *istibrā'* (quarantining);

iii. Spiritual Change:

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

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

1. WATER

First among the mutahhirāt is water. The Qurʾān says: “He (Allāh) 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 *shariʿah*, water can be of two types: *mutlaq* and *muzāf*.

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., H_2O , 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.

Muzāf 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, *muzāf* water is not one of the mutahhirāt.

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 *kathîr* water, and the last one is known as *qalîl* water. *Kathîr* means abundant or plentiful; *qalîl* means less.

* * *

Water can make a najis thing tâhir on the following conditions:

1. it must be mutlaq;
2. it must be tâhir;
3. it must not become muzâf by coming in contact with the najâsat;
4. the najâsat must be washed away from the najis thing.

* * *

Because of its quantity, the *Kathîr* water is immune from becoming najis by contact with a najâsat except when the najâsat 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 *kathîr* water, it is enough to wash it just once after removing the najâsat.

Unlike the *kathîr* water, *qalîl* water becomes najis as soon as it comes into contact with a najâsat. When cleaning a najis thing with *qalîl* 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 *kathîr* water or twice with *qalîl* 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 kathîr water or twice with qalîl water.
3. A pot that has become najis by intoxicating liquid must be washed three times with kathîr or qalîl water; however, it is better to wash it seven times.
4. A pot licked by a pig must be washed seven times with kathîr or qalîl 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 mutahhirât is the earth.

However, the earth is not a universal purifying agent like water. Its 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 najâsat on the earth;
2. the najis element is removed from the soles by walking on the earth;
3. the earth is dry and tâhir.

3. THE SUN

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

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 najāsāt 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. ISTIHĀLAH (Chemical Change)

Istihālah is the fourth mutahhirāt. *Istihālah* means change or more precisely, a chemical change. It is the most universal mutahhirāt in the category of ‘physical change’.

An ‘ayn najis or a najis thing can become tāhir 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 tāhir 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. INQILĀB (Change in Properties)

Inqilāb like *istihālah* means change. The difference is in the degree of change. In *istihālah*, the shape and form, all are changed; whereas in *inqilāb*, 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 *tāhir*.

6. INTIQĀL (Change in Place)

Intiqāl 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 *tāhir*. Similarly, if an organ of a *kāfir* is transplanted to a Muslim (and after some time the organ becomes a part of the Muslim’s body), then it will become *tāhir*.

7. ZAWĀLU ’L-‘AYNI ’N-NAJĀSAH (Disappearance of the Najāsah)

Zawālu ’l-‘ayni ’n-najāsah means disappearance of the najis element. This *mutahhir* is mostly useful in case of animals.

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

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

8. ISTIBRĀ’ (Quarantining)

Istibrā’ 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 halāl animal are not najis. However, such animals lose their status of purity if they start eating human refuse. And when this happens, then the only way to make them tāhir is *istibrā’*.

Istibrā’, 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 mutahhirāt.”

One of the *a’yān najisah* was a kāfir. The only way a kāfir can become tāhir is for him/her to accept Islam. With the acceptance of Islam, he or she will immediately become tāhir. 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 tāhir 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 tāhir, the things which are related to them also become tāhir automatically.

When a kāfir becomes Muslim, his minor children become tāhir

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 tāhir.

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

What should be our general outlook towards the najāsāt? This is a question of utmost importance to the Muslims, especially for those who live in a society which is predominantly kāfir. 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 *sharī'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 *sharī'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 najāsāt in all spheres of our lives. This view is based on some misconceived ideas about the *sharī'ah* and the Islamic world-view in general. It ignores or is ignorant of the fact that Islam itself has described its *sharī'ah* as "*sharī'atu 'n-sahla*" or "*sharī'atu 'n-samha*," a simple *sharī'ah*, a lenient *sharī'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 Allāh 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 Allāh *subhānahu wa ta'āla*, to explain here.

Let me begin by raising the following question: Should we start with the assumption that everything is najis and harām unless

we come to know otherwise? OR Should we start with the assumption that everything is *tāhir* and *halāl* unless we come to know otherwise?

My answer to this question is that we should start with the assumption that everything is *tāhir* and *halāl* unless we come to know otherwise. Anyone familiar with the principles of the *sharī'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 *tāhir* and *halāl*. It is only in case of the animal products obtained from the *kuffār* that we must start with the assumption that everything is *najis* and *harām* unless we come to know otherwise. This view is supported fully by all the *mujtahids* of our time, including *Ayatullāh al-Khū'ī* and *Ayatullāh al-Khūmaynī*.

Here I wish to just quote *Ayatullāh Sayyid Muhammad Kāzim al-Tabātabā'ī al-Yazdī* a prominent *Shī'a* *mujtahid* of the early present century whose book *al-'Urwatu 'l-wuthqa* is used by later *mujtahids* as a text for their *ijtihād* lectures. *Ayatullāh al-Yazdī* writes:

“(1) The utensils of the *mushrikīn* and other *kuffār* are to be considered *tāhir* 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 *kāfir's* possession].

“(2) Similarly other things that need to be slaughtered Islamically (e.g., meat and fat), if found in the possession of the *kuffār* 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 kâfir's possession].

“(3) However, a thing that does not need slaughtering is to be considered tâhir unless you have knowledge that it is najis. And the conjecture that the kuffâr 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 tâhir, even if it is obtained from a kâfir.”¹⁶

All the mujtahids of our time have annotated the *al-'Urwatu 'l-wuthqa* and all of them have agreed with the above views of Ayatullâh al-Yazdî. Although the above quotation is sufficient, but for the sake of clarity I would like to quote Ayatullâh al-Khû'î. In the first volume of *Minhâju 's-Sâlihiyn*, under the section of najasat, he writes:

“What is obtained from the hands of the kâfirs - like bread, oil, honey and other similar things, whether they are liquid or solid - is tâhir unless you come to know that they have touched it with flowing wetness. The same applies to their clothes and utensils. And conjecture about najâsat [in such cases] should not be taken into account.”¹⁷

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

“The skin, flesh and fat that is obtained from the hands of a kâfir is to be considered najis even if he informs you that it has been slaughtered Islamically.”¹⁸

What our mujtahids have said that you can assume everything -

16 al-Yazdî, *al-'Urwah*, p. 52.

17 al-Khû'î, *Minhâj*, vol. 1, p. 114.

18 Ibid, vol. 2, p. 332.

except the animal products obtained from a kāfir - as tāhir and halāl unless you come to know otherwise is based on the clear guide-lines provided by our Imams (a.s.).

Fuzayl bin Yasār, Zurārah bin A‘yan and Muhammad bin Muslim, the three highly respected companions of the fifth and sixth Imams, asked Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) 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.”¹⁹

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abi ‘n-Nasr asked Imam ‘Ali ar-Rizā (a.s.) 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].”²⁰

al-Hasan ibn al-Jahm asked Imam ‘Ali ar-Rizā (a.s.) a similar question about leather shoes and upon hearing the same answer, he said, “I am more restrained than this (in dealing with najāsāt).” Imam ‘Ali ar-Rizā (a.s.) said, “Do you dislike what Abu ‘l-Hasan [i.e. Imam Musā al-Kāzim] used to do?!”²¹

‘Ali bin Abî Hamzah heard a person asking Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) 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

19 *Wasā’il*, vol. 16, p. 294.

20 *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 1072.

21 *Ibid*, p. 1073.

been slaughtered Islamically? The Imam said, “If you know that it is from an un-Islamically slaughtered animal, then do not pray in it.”²²

An interesting incident is narrated by Mu‘āwiyah bin ‘Ammār, one of the famous companions of the sixth Imam. Mu‘āwiyah asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) 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‘āwiyah 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‘āwiyah'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 (a.s.) about praying in a dress made by a Maji without washing. Imam Mahdi (a.s.) replied, “There is no problem in praying in it.”²⁴

‘Abdullāh bin Sanān narrates that my father asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.), “I loaned my dress to a dhimmi kāfir 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 tāhir and now you are not sure about its becoming najis.”²⁵

The first four ahādīth make it clear that whatever you get from a Muslim or a Muslim market - whether a non-animal product

22 *Wasā'il*, p. 1072.

23 *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 1093.

24 *Ibid*.

25 *Ibid*, p. 1095.

or an animal product - you can assume that it is *tāhir* and *halāl*, you do not even have to inquire about it. The last three *ahādīth* make it quite clear that whatever non-animal products you get from a *kāfir* is to be considered *tāhir* and *halāl* unless you come to know for sure that it is *najis* and *harām*.

The restrictions of a Muslim or Muslim market found in the first three *ahādīth* clearly indicates that animal products can be assumed as *tāhir* and *halāl* provided they are from the Muslim market. It automatically follows that animal products from non-Muslim sources cannot be considered *tāhir* and *halāl* unless we come to know otherwise. Here I will just quote two more *hadīth* 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 Allāh's name only and no one can be trusted with that except the people of *tawhid* (i.e., Muslims)."²⁶

Once Ibn Abī Ya'fūr 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 Abī Ya'fūr refrained. Finally, they came to Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) and informed him about their disagreement. The Imam approved the decision of Ibn Abī Ya'fūr and disapproved Mu'alla's decision to eat that meat.²⁷

I would like to end this section with an interesting comment

²⁶ *Wasā'il*, vol. 16, p. 279-80.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 285.

by Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abî 'n-Nasr al-Bizantî on the holier-than-thou attitude. Ahmad al-Bizantî was a very trustworthy and educated companion of Imam Rizâ (a.s.) and Imam Muhammad at-Taqî (a.s.). Ahmad bin Muhammad bin 'Isa asked Ahmad al-Bizantî 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-Bizantî answered, "Yes, and you do not have to question about it. Imam Muhammad at-Taqî (a.s.) used to say, 'The Khawârij had put much restrictions upon themselves out of ignorance, whereas the religion is broader [in its outlook] than that.'" The statement about the Khawârij has also been narrated from Imam Musâ al-Kâzim by Shaykh as-Sadûq.²⁸

It is on these sharî'ah principles that our mujtahids have based their opinions about assuming everything - except the animal products obtained from a kâfir - to be tâhir and halâl unless we come to know otherwise. Islam does not expect us to totally abstain from najâsât, it only wants us to be free from najâsât in our food and drink, and during the salât.

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28 *Wasâ'il*, vol. 1, p. 1071

Chapter Two

WUDÛ (The Minor Ablution)

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يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة
فاغسلوا وجوهكم وأيديكم إلى المرافق
وامسحوا برءوسكم وأرجلكم إلى
الكعبين

﴿المائدة ٦﴾

II. WUDÛ

A. INTRODUCTION

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

The act of wudû 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 wudû”.

Wudû 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 wudû and its rules.

The Qur’ân says:

“O you who believe! When you stand up for ritual prayer (salât), 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 WUDÛ

The manner of performing wudû as explained below is based on the Qur’ân 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’ân and the ahâdîth will be discussed in section J.

Wudû 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 wudû 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 wudû.

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 wudû. 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 wudû.

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 wudû, make sure that the front part of your head and the top side of your feet are dry; otherwise your wudû 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 wudû 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 WUDÛ

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

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 wudû. One should realize that washing these organs of wudû once is obligatory, while washing them twice is recommendable; but to wash them for the third time is forbidden (*harām*). 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 *duʿās* as taught by Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) at various stages of the wudû:

- at the beginning of the wudû:

Bis mil-lāhi wa bil-laḥi; wal hamdu lil-lāhil lazi jaʿalal māʾa tahûran wa lam yajʿalhu najisa.

[I am doing this wudû] in the name of Allāh and for the sake of Allāh; all praise be to Allāh 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:

Allāhummaj ʿalni minat tawwābiyna, waj ʿalni minal mutatah-hiriyn.

O Allāh place me among those who ask for forgiveness and among those who are pure.

- at the time of gargling:

Allāhumma laqqini hujjatiy yawma alqaka, wat liq lisāni bi zikrik.

O Allāh 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.

Allāhumma la tuharrim ‘alayya riyhal jannah, waj ‘alni mim man yashummu riyhaha wa rawhaha wa tiybaha.

O Allāh! 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:

Allāhumma bayyiz wajhiy yawma taswaddu fihil wujûh; wa la tusawwid wajhiy yawma tabyazzul fihil wujûh.

O Allāh! 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:

Allāhumma ‘atiniy kitābi bi yamîniy, wal khulda fil jināni bi yasāriy, wa hāsibniy hisāban yasīra.

O Allāh! 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:

Allāhumma la tu‘tiniy kitābiy bi shimāliy, wa la min warā’i zahriy, wa la taj’alha maghlûqatan ila ‘unuqiy; wa a’uzû bika min muqatta’ātin niyrān.

O Allāh! 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

Allāhumma ghash-shiniy bi rahmatika wa barakātika wa ‘afwika.

O Allāh! Cover me with Your mercy, Your blessings and Your pardon.

- at the time of the wiping the feet:

Allāhumma thab-bitniy ‘alas sirāti yawma tazillu fiyhil

aqdām; waj'al sa'iy fi ma urziyka 'anniy; ya zal jalāli wal ikrām.

O Allāh! 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.¹

E. A SUMMARY OF WUDŪ

The following is a summary of the wudū. The recommendable acts of wudū 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 WUDŪ

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

i. THE WATER:

1. The water must be *mutlaq*. “*Mutlaq*” means pure or
- ¹ *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 282-3.

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 “*muzāf*” which refers to the water which is not considered pure by the people, e. g., orange juice.

2. The water must be *tāhir* (ritually clean, not najis).
3. The water must be *mubāh* (lawful), that is, you must be its owner or you must have the permission to use it.

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

ii. THE PERSON:

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

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

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

Besides the ritual cleanliness (*tahārat*) of the organs of wudû,

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 wudû.

6. Use of the water should not be harmful to the person who wants to do wudû. 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 wudû, then he should do tayammum.

iii. THE ACTS OF WUDÛ:

7. The place where wudû is being performed must be *mubāh* (lawful).
8. In normal situation, it is *wājib* for one to perform wudû 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 (*tartīb*): Every act in performing the wudû 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 (*muwālat*): The acts of wudû must follow each other so that, in normal weather, when each part is commenced the previous parts are still wet.

G. THE NAWĀQIZ OF WUDŪ

After having done the wudû 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 wudû for each of his prayers, or is one wudû sufficient for the whole day? Once a person has done wudû, he can consider himself in the state of ritual purity until one of the *nawāqiz* takes place. *Nawāqiz* (pl. of *nāqiz*) means those things which end the effectiveness of wudû and make it null and void (*bātil*).

The *nawāqiz* of wudû 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 *nawāqiz* have been deduced from the following ahādīth of the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (may peace be upon them):-

Zurārah bin A'yun quotes from the fifth or sixth Imam as follows: "Nothing invalidates the wudû except what comes out of both sides [of the sexual organs] or sleep."²

In another hadith, Zurārah asked both the fifth and the sixth Imams, "What invalidates the wudû?" 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..."³

The first six *nawāqiz* (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 *nawāqiz* 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 wudû. Some Muslims think that if a person touches his wife or his own private parts, his wudû becomes invalid. This is not correct. The Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt, who are the most reliable source for the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the best guides of the Qur'ān, have clearly explained that nothing else affects the wudû in any way.

H. WHEN DOES THE WUDÛ BECOME WĀJIB?

As mentioned earlier, performing the wudû is always a recommendable deed, but it becomes obligatory (*wājib*) in

2 *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 177

3 *Ibid*.

certain circumstances. There are five circumstances under which wudû becomes obligatory; and whenever a Muslim finds himself in any one of these circumstances, he must do wudû.

The five circumstances are as follows:-

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

Wudû is not *wājib* for *sunnat* (recommended) prayers; but as the prayers whether obligatory or recommended are invalid without wudû, so we have to pray the *sunnat* prayers also with wudû. In other words, if you do not do wudû for the *sunnat* prayer you will not have sinned - although your prayer will be incorrect. Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) said, "There can be no prayer except with ritual ablution (i. e. wudû)."⁴

Salātu '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 wājib circumambulation (tawāf) of the Ka'bah in hajj.*

‘Ali bin Ja‘far asked his father (the sixth Imam) about a person who was doing the *tawāf* and then remembered that he had not done wudû. Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) said, "He should stop the *tawāf* and not count (whatever he had done as valid)."⁵

3. *For touching the writings of the Qur‘ān.*

The Qur‘ān 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‘ān, you must ritually purify yourself. Allāh says, "None shall touch it except the purified ones." (56:79) On basis of the extrinsic

4 *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, pp. 256, 483.

5 *Ibid*, vol. 5, p. 444

meaning of this verse and the *ahādīth*, the *mujtahids* have reached the opinion that it is forbidden to touch the writings of the Qurʾān without being in the state of wudū.

However, this law of the *sharīʿah* should not become an excuse for not reading the Qurʾān. There is no harm in reading the Qurʾān without doing wudū 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 Jaʿfar as-Sādiq (a.s.) told his son Ismāʿil to read the Qurʾān. Ismāʿil said, “I am not in the state of wudū.” The Imam said, “Do not touch the writing, just hold the paper and then read the book.”⁶

Likewise, there is no harm in touching the translations of the Qurʾān, because the translations do not qualify as the word of God. Neither is it *wājib* to prevent the children from touching the writings of the Qurʾān 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 Allāh.*

It is forbidden to touch the names and the attributes of Allāh, in any script, without being in the state of ritual purity (wudū).

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

5. For making promise, oath and vow to stay in the state of ritual purity (i.e., in wudū) 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,

⁶ *Wasāʿil*, vol. 1, p. 269.

someone says, “If I pass my exams, I will stay with wudû for a whole day.” So if this person passes his exams, then he must stay with wudû for one full day.

I. WUDÛ’U ’L-JABÎRAH (WUDÛ ON A BANDAGE)

Jabîrah literally means a splint, but in the present context, it means the material or the medicine used for bandaging a wound, etc. *wudû’u ’l-jabîrah* means the wudû which is done on the bandage that has been fixed on the organs of wudû.

Before writing about *wudû’u ’l-jabîrah*, 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 wudû 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 wudû 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 *wudû’u ’l-jabîrah* 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.

Wudû’u ’l-jabîrah 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 *wudû'u 'l-jabîrah* cannot be done on a bandage that has been fixed only for pain or swelling - in such a case, one has either to do wudû 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 wudû.

So if the bandage or the splint is completely concealing any one of the organs of wudû, 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 *wudû'u 'l-jabîrah* and tayammum.

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

J. WUDÛ IN THE QUR'ĀN & THE SUNNAH

As mentioned earlier, wudû 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 sûratu 'l-Mā'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) “*faghsilû*” فَاغْسِلُوا which means “wash!”; and (ii) “*wamsahû*” وَاْمْسَحُوا which means “wipe!”. It is obvious that the first imperative form (“wash!”) refers to the two objects which are “your face” (*wujûhukum* = وُجُوْهَكُمْ) and “your hands” (*aydiyakum* = أَيِّدِيكُمْ); while the second imperative form (“wipe!”) refers to the two objects which are “a part of your head” (*bi ru’ûsikum* = بِرُءُوسِكُمْ) and “your feet” (*arjulakum* = أَرْجُلَكُمْ).

The word “face = وجه (pl. وُجُوْه)” 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 ahādīth of the Imams of Ahlu ’l-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.⁷

The word “hand = يد (pl. أَيِّد)” 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* = يد” 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 ’l-marāfiq* إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ = up to the elbow” in the verse; these words were necessary to specify the part of the “hands = أَيِّد” which is to be included in wudû.

* * *

Now we come to one of the main differences among the Shī’ahs and the Sunnis in the manner of performing wudû. The Sunnis wash their fore-arm from the fingertips up to the elbows, and the Shī’ahs wash their fore-arm from the elbows to the finger-tips. As mentioned above the words “up to the elbows =

⁷ *Wasā’il*, vol. 1, p. 283-6 sections 17-19 of the chapter on wudû.

إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ” do not tell us to wash from the finger-tips to the elbow or vice versa; these words are there just to specify the part of the “أَيْدٍ = hands” which is to be included in wudû.

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’ân. And, indeed, the most authentic way of learning the Prophet’s method of performing wudû is through the ahādith of the Imams of Ahlu ’l-bayt (the family of the Prophet). Zurârah bin A’yun narrates the following hadith: “Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (a.s.) said, ‘Shouldn’t I describe to you the wudû of the Messenger of Allâh?’ 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 vesselthen 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.”⁸

In another hadith Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (a.s.) narrates the same manner of performing wudû which Amîru ’l-mu’minîn ‘Ali had demonstrated when a person inquired about the Prophet’s manner of performing wudû.⁹

* * *

8 *Wasâ’il*, vol. 1, p. 272

9 *Ibid*.

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

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

Which part of the head is to be wiped in wudû? The Qur’ān is silent on this; the *sunnah* has explained it. Many ahādīth from the Imams of Ahlu ‘l-bayt have explained that “a part of the head” is “the front part”.¹⁰

* * *

The word “*arjulakum* = أَرْجُلَكُمْ” means “feet, leg”. To specify its meaning, it was necessary to add the words “*ila ‘l-ka‘bayn* إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ = up to the ankles”. The word “*arjulakum*” is connected to “*bi ru‘ûsikum* بِرُءُوسِكُمْ = 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 Shī‘ahs. The Sunnis *wash* their *whole* feet in wudû whereas the Shī‘ahs *wipe* only the *apparent side* of their feet up to the ankles. As far as the Qur’ān and the ahādīth of the Ahlu ‘l-bayt are concerned, “wiping a part of your feet” is the only correct interpretation of the verse of wudû. And this interpretation has also been accepted by the famous Sunni

¹⁰ *Wasā’il*, vol. 1, p. 289.

scholar Imam Fakhru 'd Dīn ar-Rāzi in his *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*.¹¹

The only basis for the Sunnis' point of view about "washing the feet" are some 'ahādīth' recorded in their books of tradition. These ahādīth cannot be accepted because:-

Firstly, they are contrary to the injunction of the Qur'ān. And the Prophet has said, "If a hadīth is narrated to you from me, then put it before the Book of Allāh. If it is according to the Book of Allāh, then accept it; otherwise reject it."¹²

Secondly, they are against the *sunnah* of the Prophet as explained by the Imams 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 Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās said, "Allāh has enjoined two washings and two wipings (in wudū). Don't you see that when Allāh 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)."¹³

Thirdly, the ahādīth of the Sunnis in this matter are contradictory. Some ahādīth mention "the washing of the feet" like those of Humrān quoted by Imam al-Bukhārī¹⁴ and of Ibn 'Āsim quoted by Imam Muslim. While some other ahādīth say that the Prophet "wiped his feet" like that of 'Ibād bin Tamīm which says that "I saw the Prophet performing the wudū, and he wiped his feet." This last hadīth has been recorded by *Tarīkh* of al-Bukhārī, *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Sunan* of Ibn Abi Shaybah, and *Mu'jamu 'l-Kabīr* of at-Tabarānī; and all of its

11 ar-Rāzi, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 3, p. 370.

12 Ibid, p. 371.

13 Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanzu 'l-'Ummāl*, vol. 5, p. 103 (hadith no. 2213). Also see *Musnad Ibn Hanbal*, vol. 1, p. 108.

14 al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, vol. 1 (Beirut, Daru 'l-'Arabiyya, n.d.) p. 113.

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

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

* * *

15 al-'Asqalâni, *al-'Isābah*, vol. 1, p. 193; see also his *Tahdhîb at-Tahdhîb*.

Chapter Three

GHUSL (The Major Ablution)

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يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تقربوا الصلاة

...

ولا جنبا إلا عابري سبيل حتى تغتسلوا

﴿النساء ٤٣﴾

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة

...

وإن كنتم جنبا فاطهروا

﴿المائدة ٦﴾

III. GHUSL

A. INTRODUCTION

Ghusl is a major ablution as opposed to wudû 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 (*najāsah*) 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 janābat*. Purification from the impurity caused by menstruation is known as *ghusl haydh*. Purification from the impurity caused by irregular bleeding is known as *ghusl istihādah*. Purification from the impurity caused by post-natal bleeding is known as *ghusl nifās*.

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 janābat. The ghusls related to women have been discussed extensively in my *The Ritual Ablutions for Women (Tahāratu 'n-Nisā')*.

B. MANNER OF PERFORMING GHUSL

Before explaining the rules of performing the ghusl it is necessary to mention that all the ghusls 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 janābat'.

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 irtimāsi*.

1. GHUSL TARTĪBI:

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

After washing away the najāsāt (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 İRTİMĀSI:

“*Ghusl irtimāsi*” 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 tartîbi* is preferred to *ghusl irtimâsi*.

C. RECOMMENDABLE ACTS OF GHUSL

What has been mentioned above are the wājib 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.

(For men only) Doing *istibrā'* before ghusl janābat. *Istibrā'*, in the present context, means "urinating." The benefit of *istibrā'*: 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 *istibrā'* 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 wudû for his salât. But, on the other hand, if he had not done *istibrā'* before the ghusl, then he has to assume that it is the remnant of semen - he will have to do the ghusl again.

‘Ubaydullāh al-Halabî narrates that someone asked Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) 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 wudû (for his salât). But if he had not passed urine before the ghusl, then he must repeat the ghusl.”¹

This rule of *istibrâ’* applies only to men. Sulaymân bin Khâlid asked Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (a.s.) 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.” Sulaymân: “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.” Sulaymân: “What is the difference between the two?” The Imam said, “(A woman does not have to repeat ghusl janâbat) because what comes out of her is certainly from the (remnants of the) discharge of man.”²

D. A SUMMARY OF GHUSL

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

1. Remove the najâsat (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.*

1 *Wasâ’il*, vol. 1, p. 517.

2 *Ibid*, p. 482.

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 *tāhir* (ritually clean).
3. The water must be *mubāh* (lawful).

The details of these conditions are same as the conditions of the water of wudû.

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 *wudû*)

iii. THE GHUSL:

8. The place where ghusl is being performed must be *mubāh* (lawful).
9. The ghusl should be performed either in *tartîbi* manner or in *irtimâsi* 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 wājib on a person, e.g., janābat, mass mayyit, etc., then one ghusl with the niyyat

of all of them will suffice. Zurārah bin Aʿyun quotes Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) as follows: “When you perform ghusl (for example, after dawn), that one ghusl suffices for the (ghusls of) janābat, jumʿah, ʿArafah, nahr, halq, sacrifice and ziyārat. When various ghusls become wājib upon you then one ghusl will suffice... And the same (rule) is for the woman; one ghusl will suffice for her ghusl of janābat, ihrām, jumʿah, and her ghusl for haydh and ʿidd.”³

2. All the ghusls, except the ghusl for “medium *istihādah*,” suffices the performer from wudū - provided none of the nawāqiz of wudū have taken place after the ghusl. So a person who has done ghusl janābat, for example, can pray without doing wudū. Zurārah quotes Imam Jaʿfar as-Sādiq (a.s.) about the method of performing ghusl janābat as follows: “...there is no wudū, neither before it nor after it.”⁴
3. If one of the nawāqiz of wudū (e.g., passing of urine) takes place during ghusl janābat, then one must perform the ghusl again, and in such a case he is also recommended to do wudū after the ghusl. If one of the nawāqiz of wudū takes place during the second ghusl, then the ghusl will not be affected; but one has to do wudū after it for salāt.
4. If one of the causes which makes ghusl wājib 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

3 *Wasāʿil*, vol. 1, p. 526.

4 *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 515; also see p. 503.

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-Jabîrah:*

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

* * *

Chapter Four

GHUSL JANĀBAT **(The Major Ablution of Janābat)**

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- D. The Acts whose Validity depend on Ghusl Janābat. 70

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تقربوا الصلاة

...

ولا جنبا إلا عابري سبيل حتى تغتسلوا

﴿النساء ٤٣﴾

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة

...

وإن كنتم جنبا فاطهروا

﴿المائدة ٦﴾

IV. GHUSL JANĀBAT

A. INTRODUCTION

“*Janābat*” is a ritual impurity caused by the discharge of semen or by sexual intercourse; and the person on whom ghusl janābat becomes wājib is known as “*junub*”. The Qurʾān 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 JANĀBAT

There are two causes of *janābat*:

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 janābat* becomes obligatory (*wājib*).

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 wājib for her to do ghusl janābat 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 wājib 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 janābat to become wājib it is not necessary that full penetration or discharge of semen should take place.

In case of sexual intercourse, ghusl janābat becomes wājib 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 Qurʾān and the mosque.

The following four acts are harām for the junub before performing the ghusl. Two are related to the Qurʾān and the other two are related to mosques.

1. *Touching the writing of the Qurʾān*, the names and attributes of Allāh, the names of the Prophet, the Imams and Fātimah (the daughter of the Prophet). This has already been explained on page 48 of this book.

2. *Reciting the verses of the Qurʾān in which sajdah (prostration) is wājib.* 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 Qurʾān 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 ahādīth, 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-Harām (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. Jamīl asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) 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-Sādiq, when they met Abu Basīr in the way. When Abu Basīr 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 Basīr was in the state of janābat at that time. When they entered the house of the Imam and greeted him, the Imam looked towards Abu Basīr and said, “O Abu Basīr! Do not you know that a junub person should not enter the houses of the prophets?”² Abu Basīr himself has also narrated this incident and quotes the Imam as follows: “Do

1 *Wasā’il*, vol. 1, p. 485

2 *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 489.

not you know that a junub should not enter the houses of the prophets and of their children...”³

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 wudû or gargling or rinsing the nose.
2. Reciting more than seven verses from the Qurʾān. This applies to other than the four chapters with wājib sajdah mentioned above.
3. Touching the cover of the Qurʾān.
4. Sleeping except after doing wudû.

D. THE ACTS WHOSE VALIDITY DEPEND ON GHUSL JANĀBAT

1. Salāt (prayers) except *salātu ʾl-mayyit* (the prayer for a dead Muslim) which can be performed even in the state of janābat.
2. *Wājib tawāf* (the circumambulation of the Kaʾbah in hajj). Allāh says, “*And We assigned Ibrāhīm and Ismāʾil to purify My House for the circumambulators (of the Kaʾbah)...*” (2:125; Also see 22:26)

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

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

* * *

³ *Wasāʾil*, p. 489-90.

Chapter Five

TAYAMMUM (The Substitute Ablution)

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- C. The Things on which Tayammum can be done. . . 74
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- E. The Conditions for the Validity of Tayammum. . . 76
- F. Some General Rules. . . 77

يا أيها الذين آمنو

...

وإن كنتم مرضى أو على سفر أو جاء أحد
منكم من الغائط أو لامستم النساء فلم
تجدوا ماء فتميموا صعيدا طيبا فامسحوا
بوجوهكم وأيديكم ^{قل} إن الله كان عفوا
غافورا

﴿النساء ٤٣﴾

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 wudû and ghusl. The Qurʾān 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:

1. 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 ahādīth which have elaborated on the words of the Qur’ān 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 ahādīth, 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 *tāhir* (pure).
3. It must be *mubāh* (lawful).
4. The place where the above mentioned things are also must be *mubāh*.

D. WHEN TO DO TAYAMMUM?

Tayammum can be done in the following seven circumstances:

1. *When enough water cannot be obtained for wudû or ghusl.*

If there still is ample time for performing salât, 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 wājib 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 wudû 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 wudû 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 wudû or ghusl.
5. *When the time of salât is so short that if one starts to do wudû or ghusl his prayers will be qadâ* 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 wudû 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 wudû or ghusl. In all such cases, one should do Tayammum.

E. THE CONDITIONS FOR THE VALIDITY OF TAYAMMUM

Similar to what you read in wudû 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 wudû or ghusl.
2. *Continuity (muwâlat).* 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 *tāhir* 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 salāt with Tayammum unless he becomes sure of water's unavailability.

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

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

1 *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 991-2.

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

If water becomes available after the salât has been performed, then it is not wājib to repeat that salât with wudû.

* * *

Tayammum is a sufficient purification; a person who has done Tayammum is permitted to do all those things whose validity depend on wudû or ghusl, e.g., entering a mosque, touching the writings of the Qur'ân, 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 wājib on a person, then a single Tayammum with the *niyyat* of all those ghusls will suffice.

A person on whom ghusl janābat is wājib has to do one Tayammum instead of the ghusl; there is no need for him or her to do another Tayammum for wudû. But if a ghusl other than ghusl janābat is wājib on that person, then he or she has to do two Tayammums: one instead of the ghusl and the other instead of wudû.

* * *

Chapter Six

FROM RITUAL TO SPIRITUAL (*Mina 'z-Zāhir ila 'l-Bātin*)

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والشمس وضحاها
والقمر إذا تلاها
والنهار إذا جلاها
والليل إذا يغشاها
والسماء وما بناها
والأرض وما طحاها
ونفس وما سواها
فألهمها فجورها وتقواها
قد أفلح من زكاها
وقد خاب من دساها
﴿الشمس ١-١٠﴾

إن الله يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين

﴿البقرة ٢٢٢﴾

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'ān 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 wudû and ghusl made obligatory?” or “Why are certain things considered *‘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 tahârat and najâsat 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 tahârat 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

1 Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 4, p. 835.

2 Wright, *Clean and Decent*, p. 24.

3 Ibid, p. 39.

4 Durant, Ibid, vol. 6, p. 244.

dressing manners, writes, “How clean were the bodies behind the frills? A sixteenth-century *Introduction pour les jeunes 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.”⁵ 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.”⁸

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

5 Ibid, p. 768.

6 Wright, Ibid, p. 75.

7 Wright, Ibid, p. 138.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid, p. 139.

11 Ibid, p. 138-9.

century, the fear of water began to give way, “though it was still thought eccentric to bathe for any but medical reasons.”¹²

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.”¹⁴

BUT to emphasize exclusively the physical aspect of the rules of tahārat 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 wudû 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 wudû before saying the Islamic prayer? If the ritual ablutions are just for physical cleanliness, then why the Tayammum? Tayammum is a substitute for wudû 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

12 Ibid, p. 158.

13 Durant, Ibid, vol. 4, p. 835.

14 Durant, Ibid, vol. 4, p. 712-3.

like wudû and ghusl? By studying the two verses of the Qurʾān related to the ritual ablutions, I have come to the conclusion that there are two planes of purification: physical and spiritual. Although wudû 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 sûratu 'l-Baqarah, after talking about ghusl *haydh*, the Qurʾān says, “Surety Allāh 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 wudû and ghusl, the Qurʾān says, “Allāh 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: Allāh 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 Allāh”? Turning to Allāh implies that the person had turned away from Allāh. 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 uncleanness; otherwise it will not be able to guide the person as rightly as before.

Allāh, 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, Allāh 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 (a.s.) has said, “The human soul is a precious jewel; whoever protects its, enhances its (effectiveness), and whoever degrades its, decreases its (effectiveness).”¹⁵

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’ānic expression, ‘seize the heart’. Allāh 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 Allāh. 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 Allāh. Returning to Allāh means repenting and asking forgiveness for your sins. Imam

15 al-Āmudi, *Ghuraru 'l-hikam*, p. 226

Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) 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.”¹⁶

You can now easily understand that just as our bodies can become impure by the physical najāsāt, our souls become impure by sins. To rid our bodies of the physical najāsāt, 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 Allāh in repentance”.

And now it should be clear to you why I take the verse 2:222 (“Surely Allāh 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, Allāh 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 Allāh, *subhānahu wa ta’āla*, to help me in this very pleasant but at the same time difficult task.

* * *

16 al-Majlisî, *Bihāru ’l-Anwār*, vol. 73, p. 361.

D. CONNECTING THE RITUAL TO THE SPIRITUAL

1. DISBELIEF - *KUFR*

One of the najāsāt is a kāfir, an unbeliever. It is needless to say that a kāfir is considered najis not because of his physical state, rather because of his spiritual state - *kufr*, disbelief. By declaring the kāfir 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 “*kāfir*” means an unbeliever. By using the word “*kāfir*” 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 kāfir 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 kāfir and renders it najis. Even if a kāfir 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 kāfir except Islam. And therefore, you see that the sharī‘ah counts “Islam” as one of the mutahhirāt.

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 sharī‘ah. This is a universal rule. But there is one exception to this rule: The sharī‘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 Allāh. 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 *tāhir* 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 Shī'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 *kufir* affects the entire body of the *kāfir* and makes it *najis*.

Why is *kufir* such an evil phenomenon? By rejecting the faith in God, a *kāfir* loses his own true identity. After rejecting God, this world becomes the beginning and the end of a *kāfir*'s life; with no faith in the hereafter, he just works for this world. At this stage, if religious values lose their influence, the *kāfir* 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 Allāh 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)

17 See "*Ziyārat wārithah*" by Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) in *Mafātīhu 'l-Jinān* of Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi.

Similarly, *shirk* is also considered a terminal spiritual disease. *Shirk* (polytheism) means that a person ascribes partners to God. This partner(s) could be a human being, an animal or a thing. In a way, a *mushrik* (polytheist) is worse than a *kāfir* 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. Allāh says, “*Verily Allāh does not forgive the sin of shirk but He forgives anything other than that.*” (4:48)

By declaring the *kāfirs* and the *mushrikîn* as *najis*, Islam wants to draw our attention to the importance and value of faith (*îmān*). It is an indirect way of saying that in Allāh’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 ‘*najāsāt*’ 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 *najāsāt* and *tahārat*?

When I looked at the list of the *najāsāt*, two seemingly unrelated things caught my attention. ‘Semen and human corpse.’ And I started to think why has the Islamic *sharī‘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 Allāh’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 najāsat 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 Abî Tâlib (a.s.) 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

Arrogance is the prerogative of God. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that Allāh 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.” Allāh says in the Qur’ān, “*Do not walk on the earth arrogantly, certainly you will never be able to tear the earth open, nor compete with the*

18 as-Sadûq, ‘*Ilalu ’sh-Sharāya*’, p. 101.

mountains in height.” (17:37) 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 Qurʾān about arrogance and its result.

Those who are familiar with the story of Adam in the Qurʾān know that the first creature to disobey Allāh’s command was Shaytān. And the motive of Shaytān’s disobedience was arrogance. The Qurʾān 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. Allāh said (to the Shaytān), “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 Allāh 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.” (7:11-13)

In another chapter, the Qurʾān 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 Qurʾān, arrogance had so much blinded the Shaytān 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 Qurʾān is of an arrogant human being, Firʿawn. The Qurʾān describes his arrogance as follows:

Have you received the story of Músa? When his Lord called to him in the holy valley, Tuwa: “Go to Firʿawn; 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 Mûsa 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. (79:15-25)

In these verses, one can see that Allāh considers Fir'awn to be spiritually impure and that is why Prophet Mûsa is told to ask him whether he is prepared to purify himself or not. And then Allāh 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 Mûsa and Harun, he said, "*You have believed in Him before I gave you the permission?!*" (7:123) 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 sharī'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 najāsāt 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 Allāh 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 (a.s.) said, "Allāh 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 most 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 *mubāh* - 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 wudû: it must be *mubāh*. (3) Water and place for ghusl: it must be *mubāh*. (4) Earth for Tayammum: it must be *mubāh* and even the place where the earth is must also be *mubāh*. 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 *mubāh* (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 wudû, 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-Ābidīn (a.s.) 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 hadīth, he says, "Allāh 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 Qurʾān by combining *salāt* with *zakāt*. In almost 80 verses, Allāh has talked about “establishing the prayers and paying the *zakāt*.” *Salāt* is the symbol of Allāh’s rights upon man and *zakāt* 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 ‘backbiting’. Positive thinking should be our attitude towards all human beings, but more so

towards Muslims. After all, Muslims are considered by Allāh as brothers and sisters of each other. And as brothers, they should trust and be positive about one another. The Qurʾān says:

Verily the believers are nothing but brothers (to each other) ...O 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) Allāh. Surely Allāh 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 ‘Allāmah at-Tabrasi between Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidīn (a.s.) 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 Allāh 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 hadīth

19 at-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 52

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 sharī'ah has counted *ghaybatu 'l-Muslim* (the disappearance of a Muslim) as one of the mutahhirāt. You should consider as tāhir 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 sharī'ah wants you to be! This is not a case 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 Allāh judge the people in the same way? No, on the day of judgment, Allāh 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."²⁰

Islam teaches its followers to do good deeds for the sake of pleasing Allāh. Describing our purpose of life, Allāh 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 Allāh. The best expression of this concept can be found in the words of a Prophet quoted in the Qur'ān: "*Verily my*

²⁰ *Wasā'il*, vol. 1, p. 33-5.

prayers, my ritual actions, (in short) my life and my death are all for Allāh, 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 Allāh, 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 not 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 Allāh 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 Allāh? 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

21 With minor changes from S.S.A. Rizvi’s *Inner Voice*, p. 69.

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 Allāh, 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 Allāh 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-Bāqir (a.s.) 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 Allāh who has no partner, it is recorded that he did so secretly (for the sake of Allāh); 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 sharī‘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 wudû, 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, Allāh does not look at the deed, He looks at the motive and intention of the doer. “*Verily Allāh accepts (the good deeds) only from the pious people.*” (5:27)

6. THE DU‘ĀS DURING WUDŪ

I would like to end this chapter with a brief explanation on the du‘ās mentioned in section ‘D’ of Chapter Two. If a person memorizes these du‘ās and their meanings and recites them

every time he or she does wudû, I am sure it will have a profound effect on his or her spirituality. These du'ās in ritual ablution open one more window towards the spiritual world of Islam.

The du'ā at the beginning of wudû is a statement about the purity of intention. The second du'ā is a reminder that the ritual ablution is a means to the purification of the soul. The third du'ā 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'ā is a constant reminder of the destination for which we have been created. The fifth du'ā 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'ās 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'ā teaches us not to rely on ourselves only rather to ask Allāh's help also. And, finally, the ninth du'ā is a reminder of the conditions of the day of judgment.

* * *

O Allāh!

Bless us with

success in obeying (You);

distance from sins;

sincerity in intention;

cognition of (our) limits;

And bless us with guidance and steadfastness;

guide our tongues to rightness and wisdom;

fill up our hearts with knowledge and cognition;

purify our bellies from harām and doubtful (things);

restrain our hands from injustice and theft;

lower our eyes from immorality and breach of faith;

close our ears to nonsense talks and back-bitings.

(O Allāh!) Bless

our religious scholars with piety and preaching;

the students with the spirit of hard-working and interest;

the audience (of the preacher) with the power to follow;

the sick Muslims with cure and repose;

the dead Muslims with mercy and forgiveness;

the old with prestige and patience;

the young with obedience and repentance;

the women with modesty and chastity;

the rich with humbleness and generosity;

the poor with patience and satisfaction;

the Muslims fights with help and victory;

the prisoners with freedom and comfort;

the rulers with justice and compassion;

the citizens with equity and good way of life;

and bless the pilgrims with means of travel and expenses;

and accept their hajj and umrah which You have made obligatory on them;

(accept our prayers) with Your grace and mercy,

O the most Merciful of the mercifuls.

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

WĀJIB: 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.

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

HARĀM: forbidden, prohibited. It is necessary to abstain from the acts which are harām. If someone performs a harām 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, desirable, better. It refers to the acts which are recommended but not wājib. If one neglects them, he will not be punished; however, if one performs them, he will be rewarded. For example, washing the hands before wudū.

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

JĀ’IZ, HALĀL, MUBĀH: 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. Mubāh 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 sharī'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 sharī'ah matters.

SHARĪ'AH OR SHARĪ'AT: Literally means, the way. In Islamic terminology, it means the laws of Islam.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In the first five chapters of *The Ritual & Spiritual Purity* Sayyid M. Rizvi not only explains the rules and regulations of the ritual purity in simple language, he also familiarizes the reader with the sources used by the mujtahids in reaching to their decisions on various aspects of ritual purification. He does so by extensively quoting the relevant Qur'ānic verses and the ahādīth, the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt.

The last chapter of the book takes the reader on an introductory tour of the spiritual world of Islam. The writer guides the reader in this tour by relating various aspects of ritual purity to spiritual purification. It will surely change the way you thought of the Islamic rituals.

A glance at the Contents:

1. Najāsāt & Tahārat (Purity & Impurity).
2. Wudû — the Minor Ablution.
3. Ghusl — the Major Ablution.
4. Ghusl Janābat.
5. Tayammum — the Substitute Ablution.
6. From Ritual to Spiritual.

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