

UNCLEAN THINGS (NAJĀSĀT)

النجاسات

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

LESSON 1: ISLAMIC UNCLEANLINESS¹

In the previous classes we learnt about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in Islam. We also learnt about najāsah and the things which are considered unclean (Najis) in Islam. Furthermore, we learnt that najāsah can be transferred and this happens when one najis thing comes into contact with another thing, making it najis also.

In this lesson, we will learn most of the things that are Najis (unclean) according to the laws of Islam, and some of the rules in relation to them.

UNCLEAN THINGS

In Islam, there are certain things that are considered to be Najis (unclean). Besides the physical benefits of keeping ourselves away from these things, there are also spiritual benefits. Uncleanliness (Najāsah) acts as a barrier between us and Allah (SWT).

It is good to remain free of any najāsah at all times. However, it is obligatory in the following situations:

- 1) Acts of worship – This includes keeping our body, clothes and surroundings clean (*tāhir*) at all times, during prayer especially. It is also obligatory to make a mosque *Tāhir* if it becomes Najis
- 2) Food
- 3) Drink

HOW IS NAJĀSAH TRANSFERRED?

When something that is najis comes into contact with something that is *tāhir*, the *tāhir* thing also becomes najis and must be cleaned.

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded about cleanliness and hygiene and its importance in Islam
- Review the concepts of najāsah and ṭahārah
- Learn most of the categories of Najāsah with common examples
- Understand that Najāsah can be transferred through moisture and by actual contact
- Learn the principle that 'everything is ṭāhir until you know it is najis'

However it has to be noted that najāsah will only be transferred if either of the two things is wet or moist. If both things are dry, the najāsah will not spread. For example, if a person touches a dog that is dry and his hand was also dry, his hand remains *tāhir*.

However, if either object is wet and the two come into contact, the najāsah spreads from one to the other. For example, if a person touches a dog while their hands are sweaty or wet, their hands become najis. However, the transfer of najāsah goes on for only two or maximum three steps. The transfer of najāsah does not continue forever, from one thing to another, even if all the things are wet.

THE UNCLEAN THINGS

URINE AND STOOL

The urine and faeces of humans is Najis.

The urine and faeces of animals whose meat is *ḥarām* to eat and whose blood gushes forth when slaughtered is also Najis. Example of these animals include kangaroos and cats.

The excrement of birds is *tāhir*.

SEMEN

This is the fluid that comes out from the male private part when sexually excited. It could be discharged in one's sleep (a wet dream) or while awake. It is usually a white or yellowish, sticky substance.

Semen is najis, and if a person touches semen or their clothes come into contact with semen, the body parts and the clothes that have been touched by semen must be washed.

BLOOD

The blood of humans and animals is Najis.

The only exception is the blood of animals whose blood does not gush forth when slaughtered.

Note: if an animal is slaughtered according to Islamic rules and its blood gushes out naturally, but some blood is left in the body despite this, this remaining blood is considered *tāhir*.

DEAD BODY

The dead body of a human or animal is najis.

The only exception is the corpse of an animal whose blood does not gush forth when slaughtered.

Note: the dead body of a Muslim becomes *tāhir* after being given the ritual bathing for the dead body. If we touch a dead person's body after it has gone cold and before it has been bathed we must perform Ghusl. We will discuss Ghusl in future lessons.

Review Questions:

Q1. Najāsah is transferred from one object to another if:

- The two objects come into contact with each other
- The two objects come into contact with each other and one of them is wet
- The two things thoroughly mix with each other

Q2. The droppings of birds are:

- tāhir*
- najis
- neither of the above

Q3. The dead body of a Muslim person:

- Is *tāhir* after it has been given the ritual washing
- Is always najis
- Is never najis

LESSON 2: UNCLEAN THINGS

In this lesson, we will continue to learn some rules related to things which are unclean according to the laws of Islam.

DOGS AND PIGS

All dogs and pigs are najis, to the extent that their hair, nails, teeth, bones and sweat are also najis.

Therefore any products including food items produced from these animals are najis. We need to be careful about this when eating or buying food.

As we discussed earlier, if a person touches a dog or a pig and they or the animal are wet, the body part which touched the animal becomes najis and needs to be made *tāhir*.

KĀFIR – A DISBELIEVER

A *kāfir* is a person who is not a Muslim. A *kāfir* is najis.

However, even though Christians and Jews are *kāfir*, they are considered to be *ṭāhir* by a number of contemporary scholars.

Practically speaking, if, for example, one shakes hands with an atheist and his hand was wet, he must wash his hand to make it *ṭāhir*.

WINE

Wine, and other alcoholic drinks which intoxicate a person, are najis. If they come into contact with food or even a drop of it falls into food, the food becomes Najis.

Islamic law about alcohol is so strict that if wine is served on a table, it is *ḥarām* to eat at that table, even if one does not touch the wine.

Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as) informs that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“Accursed, accursed is the one who sits at a table where wine is being served.” (Wasail ul-Shi'a)

All kinds of industrial alcohol used in perfume, medicines and paints is not najis.

WAYS OF PROVING NAJĀSAH

Sometimes, people can become obsessive about najāsah and make their own life difficult. To avoid this, Islam has set clear rules for proving whether something is najis or not.

There are some important ways of proving whether a thing is najis or not. These are very basic and simple ways which are very practical and flexible in any environment that we may find ourselves in. Here is where you can see the true ease which Allah (SWT) intends for us.

Before we proceed, it is very important to always remember the following principle that we learn from the teachings of our Prophet (saw) and Imams (as):

“Everything is *ṭāhir* until you know that it has become najis”

ⁱ References:

- Ayatollah Sistani- Islamic Laws
- Sayyed Rizvi, Taharah and Najasah

There are three ways of proving that a thing has become najis:

- 1) One should be sure, or satisfied that something is najis. If one merely suspects/doubts that something may be najis, it is not necessary to avoid it. For example, if you visit the mall and sit on a bench which is wet or step on something wet, if you do not see another person making it najis somehow and are not sure whether it is najis, then it is not necessary to purify your clothes or your shoes.
- 2) If a reliable person says that it is najis. For example, if the cook says that a particular utensil or any other object which s/he handles is najis, it will be accepted as najis.
- 3) If you were sure that something was najis, you should consider it najis until you are sure it has become *ṭāhir*. Consider this example: you are sure your shirt had some blood on it yesterday, but now you are not sure whether you made it clean or not. In this case, you should make it clean again.

The opposite also applies. If you were sure something was *ṭāhir*, you should consider it so until you are sure it has become najis. You do not need to investigate further.

Review Questions:

Q1. I enter the toilet at school and the floor is wet. In relation to this situation, which of the following is true?

- a. Everything is najis until we know that it is *ṭāhir*
- b. Everything is *ṭāhir* until we know that it has become najis
- c. If we are not sure, we have to investigate about whether something is unclean or clean

Q2. Dogs and pigs:

- a. Are *ṭāhir*
- b. Are najis
- c. Only small poodle dogs are *ṭāhir*

Q3. A disbeliever is a person who:

- a. Is not a Muslim, Christian or Jew
- b. Is not Muslim
- c. Neither of the above

- Wasailul Shi'a