

UNCLEAN THINGS

النجاسات

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'

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1: Islamic Uncleanlinessⁱ

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. We also 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 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 unclean. Besides, the physical benefits of keeping ourselves away from these things, there are also spiritual benefits. Uncleanliness 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 (ṭāhir) at all times during prayer especially.
- 2) Food
- 3) Drink

HOW IS UNCLEANLINESS TRANSFERRED?

When something that is Najis in itself thing comes into contact with something that is ṭāhir, the ṭāhir thing also becomes najis and must be cleaned. 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 clean.

However if either object is wet and the two come into contact, then 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 becomes 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 stool of humans is Najis.

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

The excrement of birds is ṭāhir.

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 ṭāhir.

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 ṭāhir 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:

- ṭāhir
- najis
- neither of the above

Q3. The dead of a body of a Muslim person:

- Is ṭāhir 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 living on land 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 ṭāhir.

KĀFIR – A DISBELIEVER

A kāfir is a person who is not a Muslim Christian or Jew.

Such people are najis. If, for example, one shakes hands with an atheist and his hand was wet, he must wash his hand to make it clean.

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 even sit 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.” (Wasa'il 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”

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 no 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

ⁱReferences:

- Ayatollah Sistani- Islamic Laws
- Sayyed Rizvi, Taharah and Najasah
- Wasailul Shi'a