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Bodily Purification

Purification means the act of making something pure by removing dirty or harmful substances. Islam being a complete code of life, guides us in all the aspects of life. The basic sources of Islamic guidance are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Here we are quoting two Quranic verses in which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is required to keep himself and his dress clean and tidy.

وَتِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (المدثر: 4,5)

Translation

“And keep thy garments free from stain. And remove all pollution.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ

Translation

“Purification is the part of the faith.”

In the modern age we usually take care of our cleanliness, but the meaning of purification in religious terminology is somewhat different. If cleanliness is not performed according to the rules of Shariah, there will be no purification for the purpose of worship. Purification includes partial ablution and complete ablution.

Wuzu (Partial Ablution)

Wuzu is obligatory before offering prayers provided that the body and dress are clean. If the body and dress are not clean, complete ablution (Ghusl) and cleanliness of dress are obligatory. Wuzu means the washing of certain parts of the body before saying prayers. There are four obligations regarding Wuzu (Fraizi-Wazu):

- 1 To wash the face from the top of the forehead to the chin and from one ear to the other.

2. To wash the hands and arms up to the elbows.
3. To rub (masah) with the wet hand a fourth part of the head.
4. To wash the feet to the ankles.

Performance of Wuzu

The performance of Wuzu according to the Sunnah regulations (Masnun Wuzu) involves the following steps:

1. To wash hands up to the wrists three times. The space between the fingers of one hand must be rubbed with the fingers of the other.
2. To take water into the mouth with the right hand and rinse the mouth three times.
3. To take water into the nostrils with the right hand, sniff it up and blow it out compressing the nostrils with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand three times.
4. To wash the face from the forehead to the chin and from one ear to the other by throwing water with both hands three times.
5. To wash right hand and arm up to the elbow causing the water to run along the arm from the palm of the hand to the elbow, and then to wash the left hand and arm in the same manner.
6. To rub the whole head by drawing the wet hands over the upper part of the head once.
7. To comb the beard with wet fingers of the right hand holding the hand with the palm of the left hand and passing the fingers through the beard from throat upward.
8. To put the wet tips of the forefingers into the ears and twist around, passing the thumbs at the same time round the backs of the ears from the bottom upward.
9. To wipe the neck with the back of the wet fingers of both hands making the ends of the fingers meet behind the neck and drawing them forward.
10. To wash the right foot and then the left foot as high as the ankles and to pass the fingers of the left hand between the toes.

Ghusl (Complete Ablution)

Ghusl means or to take bath. If the body is not clean it is necessary to wash the whole body. There is an injunction (order) in the Holy Book Al-Quran: "If you are polluted then purify yourself." In Ghusl it is absolutely necessary that every part of the body is washed. It is the tradition of the Holy Prophet to have a Ghusl before the Friday prayers and on great festivals, e.g. Edi-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha. According to the tradition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Ghusl is also performed before wearing pilgrim robe (Ahram) for the performance of Hajj or Umrah. On such occasions Ghusl is desirable and it should be performed according to the Sunnah regulations. There are also some other impurities which make Ghusl necessary. You can ask your teacher or read some Islamic books in order to know about these impurities.

Obligatory Steps of Ghusl

There are three obligatory steps of Ghusl. These are as follows:

1. To gargle or rinse the mouth.
2. To inhale water into the nostrils.
3. To pour water on the whole body and wash it.

Sunnah Steps of Ghusl

There are five Sunnah steps of Ghusl. These are as follows:

1. To wash both hands up to wrists.
2. To purify oneself and wash the parts of the body where impurity is found.
3. To make intention to remove the impurity.
4. To perform ablution (Wazu) before washing the whole body.
5. To wash the whole body by pouring water on it and rubbing it. To pour water three times on the whole body.

It is absolutely necessary for men and women to perform Ghusl in such a way that no part or hair of the body remains dry. Water should not be wasted and it should be used in moderate amount. It is preferable to perform Ghusl in bathroom. However, if there is no bathroom available, man is allowed to take bath after covering the lower part of the body with a sheet of cloth. It is however, necessary for a woman to take bath in privacy or behind a curtain. Talking, singing or humming is not allowed while taking a bath.

The regulations of Shariah are not meant to cause any unnecessary trouble to mankind. On the other hand these regulations benefit people in many ways. By performing partial ablution (Wuzu) one gets mental satisfaction and bodily refreshment. Complete ablution (Ghusl) removes all impurities of the body and protects a person from many diseases. Besides outward cleanliness, the performance of Wuzu and Ghusl also causes spiritual purification. The purification of mind and body makes one feel pleasure and satisfaction in the performance of worship as well as worldly activities. As a result the capacity to work is increased.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. What is purification? Write a brief note on purification in the light of Quran and Hadith.
2. What is the partial ablution (Wazu)? Write down the four obligatory steps in the performance of Wazu.
3. How is the Wazu under Sunnah regulations (Masnun Wazu) is performed?
4. What is a complete ablution (Ghusl), and on what occasions is it performed?
5. Write down the three obligatory steps of Ghusl.
6. What is the Masnun Ghusl? Write down the Sunnah steps of Ghusl.
7. What are the benefits of Ghusl?
8. Quote a Quranic verse and a saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) about purification.
9. Fill in the blanks.
 - i) _____ is the part of faith.
 - ii) Purification includes _____ and _____.
 - iii) If the body is not clean, _____ is obligatory.
 - iv) Ghusl should be performed on _____ and on _____.
 - v) Besides outward cleanliness the performance of Wazu and Ghusl also causes _____.