

Religious Dialogues

Religious laws in a style of dialogues to disentangle the complexity of the juridical verdicts

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Religious Dialogues with as-Sayyed Muhammad Saeed al-Hakeem [ha]

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Introductory

Today, I am fifteen years old. When I woke up this morning, I had no idea that my day will be full of surprises, anticipation, and pride that was associated with joy, love, and enjoyment of discovery, a day marking the end of one chapter of my life and the beginning of another.

I woke up early as I do everyday. As I finished my regular tasks and joined the breakfast table I saw a peculiar expression on my father's face. Something told me that I was the matter concerned him.

His eyes were wide open more than usual as if they were gazing in a vacuum. His tight lips were ready to say something of great excitement. His fingers were tapping constantly on a rhythm on the breakfast table which predicted that his heart was filled with the essence of an important matter in such a way that it could overflow.

As I sat on the opposite side of the table, with a glow of hiding joy in his eyes he took the initiative by saying:

Oh my son! Today, you have left a phase of your life and are expecting a new one. In the eye of Islamic lawmaker, you have become a fully capable man to be obligated to observe the teachings of religion. Today, Allah, almighty, has favored you with his obligations as he blesses you with his orders and prohibits.

Until yesterday you were considered in the eye of Islamic law a child. The Islamic lawmaker did not find you suitable to his charges and forbids so He left you alone. But as of today, everything has changed. You are a man like any other man. Your manhood along with the capability to be addressed are well recognized. As you reached this stage of maturity, Allah almighty has favored you with his address to obey and to forbid..

- Sorry, I do not seem to understand how Allah favors me by ordering me? Is command a sort of favor? How can this be?

Let me explain to you with an example to demonstrate that. You are now a student. You stand among your classmates; among them bright, persistent, committed, hard working, aware students and others. You stand preparing yourselves to a new surprising matter when the principle surveys you when he passes you and as he makes an eye contact he slows down and look at you with a satisfying look first and he tells you with smile on his face that you have passed to a new stage that you dreamed of

reaching at the same time He recognize your ability to this new stage when he chose you among your mates to a certain task.

Do you not feel a special kind of pride for this order along with self confidence for the address of your school principle to you and not to other associates? Would not this be filled with great effort to carry out the task? What would your feeling be if the one who addressed you with the order was the general manger in the borough of education or even the chief inspector or even the..

As my father was giving me examples of people in higher positions of responsibility, what was unclear started to be more and more obvious as if I just woke up from a long lethargy. The moment he mentioned Allah's address and obligation to me to observe His commands and avoid what He forbade, this is when I was shucked.

- God addresses me! And commands me!

Yes, my son. Allah addresses you, the fifteen years old chap. He charges you with obligations and forbids you from committing certain acts.

- Do I deserve this entire honor? The Creator of all creations, the Omnipotent of heavens and the earth bless me and address me with His obligations. What a sweet day! What a pleasant year! What a charming manhood!.

Oh my son! You have to obey what your Creator has honored you in commanding you.

- I will try with eagerness to carry out His obligations and loving commands, but...

But, what?

- But what are these obligations that He charged me with? And what are His commands that He addressed me with?

Religious orders are of five kinds. *Wajibat* (compulsory acts), *Muharramat* (forbidden acts), *Mustahabbat* (recommended acts of worship), *Makrouhat* (odious acts), and *Mubahat* (permissible acts).

- What are these *Wajibat*, *Muharramat*, *mustahabat*, *Makrouhat*, and *Mubahat*?

Everything that you are obliged to do is part of the *Wajibat*, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, *Zakat*, *khums*, enjoining good and forbidding evil, etc.

Whatever acts you are forbidden from doing are of the *Muharramat*, such as drinking wine, adultery, theft, profligacy, lying, etc.

Any act that is good to do without obligation is among the *mustahabat*, such as alms giving, cleanliness, good manners, fulfilling the need of a devotee, attending congregational prayer, wearing perfume, etc.

Any act that is good to avoid and stay away from but without obligation is part of the *Makrouhat*, such as greed, delaying the time of getting married - for both man and woman, asking for costly dowries, and refusing to lend money to a needy devotee person when you can afford, etc.

The acts that you have the choice of doing or leaving them are among the *Mubahat*, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, traveling, and tourism, etc.

- How can I differentiate between *Wajibat* and *mustahabat*, and between *Muharramat* and *Makrouhat*? How would I know what *wajib* (compulsory) is so that I can do it and obligate myself in performing it and what is *haraam* (forbidden act) so that I avoid doing it and stay away from? How would I know...

My father interrupted me with a smile; He then looked at me with a glance of mercy and pity. He was about to say something, but tarried for a short while and then went for a deep thinking. During this silence I could not guess what was going in my father's mind. I could, however, see a dark cloud pass over his forehead that divided to cover the rest of his face till it reached the lips that were opened with a tiny voice with lots of graciousness and sympathy.

You should be able to differentiate between the *Wajibat* and *Muharramat* and between the *mustahabat* and *Makrouhat* when you read the books of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). You shall find out that some have core acts, parts, and conditions; some have certain moves that have to be performed with, and some have certain specification that you can not deviate from, and so on.

You will find what you are looking for when you refer to those books. You shall see that this discipline is an ample huge one. Hundreds of books and volumes have been written. Scholars had elaborated in their searches in such a way that they did not leave any matter without discussion or close examination which you rarely find in any other human science.

- But, do I have to learn about such books to know what I should or should not do?

No, it is sufficient to read the most brief easy to understand. You shall notice that they are divided into two main sections: *Ibadaat* (acts of worship) and *Mu'aamalat* (transactions).

- What are *Ibadaat* and *Mu'aamalat*?

Wait for a while refer to the books of Islamic jurisprudence. You will find gradually what you are looking for.

I ran a way to the library so I may find the books of Islamic Jurisprudence that my father told me about as I run my need and interest runs with me. As soon as I saw them, a kind of joy overwhelmed me and shocked me completely or I thought it did..

So, these are the books. I finally, found what I am looking for. I will read them and find the sufficient answers and then have peace of mind.

I came back to my room in a hurry and grief with a pride of achievement; I opened the door in a hurry into the room. As I started reading, lines of oddness started to appear in my face at the beginning, soon this was translated into astonishment turning into painful burning exercitation. I found myself reading a lot but not understanding anything. How can I treat my confusion especially when it's unfamiliar like that?

I stickled by saying to myself: "let's continue reading and try to understand and try again maybe I can benefit from this..". Time passed slowly my chest was under heavy pushing burden that chased me. Yet I am reading and rereading but to no avail. Clouds of disappointments started to gather around me gradually turning into a cloud of sadness that appeared between my eyes.

I read a lot and I had to confess that I did not understand anything worth mentioning. I came across many terms that were not familiar to me. I could still see floating before my eyes phrases and sentences that belong to a certain discipline that I did not come across. Also, I read sentences expressed in special way that I am not used to before, sentences that deal with matters that do not exist in my everyday life, I have no idea why they were mentioned at all, structures that has lots of depth, complexity and subdivisions of strange possibilities that I was unsure about their true meaning.

Say, how would I ever be able to know what Allah had set as *halal* (permissible), so that I could do it or what He had determined as *haraam* (prohibited), so that I could stay away from?

I raised my head toward heavens with burned tears in my eyes, and mumbled: O Lord! I know you charged me with obligations. But, I am not sure what are they?

O Lord! How am I going to know what you wanted me to do so I could do it?

O Lord! Help me to understand what I read. O Lord! Make the books of jurisprudence easy to understand so I can act upon what you're telling me.

I waited for my father at the dining table in the evening. First, my eyes looked tired, worried and bewildered. Later, it turned to blink with silvery shine that combined grief with the determination of challenge. As soon as we sat down and my father came, my heart began to beat quickly, my cheeks turned pink, and the temperature of my ear start claiming as if it had a sudden fever. I was overtaken by a feeling of embarrassment, shyness, perplexity, confusion and hesitation as I started saying to myself words and sentences that shows inability to understand written material. I gathered my courage and determined to admit my weakness and told my father:

- I read some of the books of jurisprudence, but found them intractable. When I finished my the last letter from my last word, my father's eyes went into deep thinking, as if he was trying to retrieve something from the past. Then his eyes turned towards me and in a whisper, he said:

I went through a similar experience just like yours when I was in about your age. I read the books of jurisprudence but did not understand anything important just like you. However, I did not have the courage you have to admit my incapacity to understand them.

My conservative teachings and strong shyness prevented me from asking my father about specific issues that related to the adolescence period. I did not realize that puberty could be identified by other than age, until ...

I intervened:

- And can puberty be known by other phenomena?

Yes, my son. Puberty in males could be confirmed if one of three signs was present.

1. First: Completion of fifteen lunar calendar years of age.

2. Second: seminal discharge through sexual intercourse or wet dreams or any other form.

3. Third: The presence of rough hair on the face or the Pubic area. When I say the rough hair I mean the one that just like the head hair. By saying that, I am excluding the fine hair that covers usually - most of the body.

- What is the Pubic area?

The spot below the belly and immediately above the connection point of the penis with the outer wall of the belly.

- These are the signs of male puberty. What about the female's puberty?

Puberty in a female is when she completes nine lunar calendar years.

- Since I expressed to you my failure in understanding the jurisprudence books, allow me to suggest to you – under the pressure of need – to conduct sessions so that you can clarify to me all what is I need to understand in order to be able to implement the religious teachings that Allah almighty has legislated.

As you wish.

- Can this take the form of dialogue?

As you like again.

- But with what shall we start our first dialogue?

We will start it with Taqleed (imitation), as it is the foundation that will determine the milestones of what we will apply among our jurisprudence.

- It's a deal.

Taqleed

Beginning of the Dialogue of *Taqleed*, my father said:

Let me first explain to you what is *Taqleed*. *Taqleed* means to refer to a Jurist in matters of religious practice to follow his verdicts and apply his verdicts that he has concluded in his findings that one should do or not to do, without the need to research or check. It is as if you have placed the responsibility entirely on his shoulders, in that he will stand accountable before Allah for the verdicts that you have complied with.

- Why do we do *Taqleed*?

You know from what you have learned from the past that the Creator has ordered you with obligations that you must undertake and has forbidden you from certain acts which must not to do. You are not so certain about all of them. You may know some of them from your environment and upbringing but most of them will stay unclear or unknown.

- My father added:

As you may know, Islamic law has dealt with all different aspects of your life. It has set for each aspect a ruling. How are you going to know the religious opinion in your different day-to-day activities? How would you know which act is allowed or not allowed? Would you have the ability to search the religious evidences to find the verdicts for each and every incident that run into?

- Why not?

There is a huge gap between your time and the era of the emergence of the Islamic legislations. The process of deriving the religious verdict has become more difficult because of this gap, which that added difficulties and obstructions along with the lose of many religious texts, the change in language and expression style, the role of fabricating narrators who have manufactured many *Hadiths* (prophetic traditions) and added them to our authentic ones.

Let us assume that you were able to solve the problem of the truthfulness and reliability of the narrators of the religious text and you were able to shorten the time difference and understand the exact meanings of the used terms, would you be able to understand the deep, wide and complex science of jurisprudence? And would you be able to come to what you need to find out?

- So, what should I do?

You should refer to the experts in this science, i.e. the jurists, and ask them about the religious verdicts that you need to know. That is, "you imitate them". The science of jurisprudence is not exceptional in this, it is rather normal in every science. Modern civilization has introduced the principle of specialized professions in every discipline. For any science, there are professions that you turn to when you need to refer to any of its aspects.

My father added:

Let us take an example from the field of medicine. If you fall ill, God forbids, what would you do?

- I would consult a doctor and tell him the symptoms of my illness. So he could make a diagnosis and prescribe the right medicine for me.

Why don't you diagnose your illness and prescribe the medicine yourself?

- I am not a doctor.

The same can be said about jurisprudence. You need to consult a knowledgeable jurist to be able to learn about the orders of Almighty Allah and His forbids, or to present before him your legal problem when you have one. This need is similar to the referral to a specialized doctor to learn about certain medical issue or to present before him your illness to seek his cure or treatment.

As you need to follow the doctor in his field of specialty, you need to follow the specialized jurists in his field of experience. And as you will look for an experienced doctor who has the knowledge in his specialty, especially if your illness is serious, you must search for a religious jurist who is knowledgeable in his field of expertise to "imitate him" and refer to his religious verdict whenever you need to inquire about a religious ruling about your particular circumstances.

- How would I know a particular scholar is a jurist, and whether he is the most knowledgeable and the best in the field?

Let me ask you: How would you know that a particular doctor has the knowledge or he is the best in his field to refer to him and trust his medical judgment?

- I would be able to know by asking people who are concerned with medical matters, who have knowledge, "experience" and expertise in him or I know him by his popularity, good reputation and his "publicity" in the domain of expertise.

Exactly, using the same method, you would be able to know the jurist to follow or the most knowledgeable one among the jurists.

You ask a committed, trustful, capable person to undertake the task of identifying such a jurist, who has sufficient knowledge in the verdicts of jurists and the experience in knowing the scientific level of people in this discipline or when the *Ijtihad* or the level of knowledge of a jurist becomes well-known and popular, in such a way that makes you confident about his *Ijtihad* and being the most knowledgeable among other Jurists.

- Are there any other conditions that must be present in a jurist that we should follow after we reach puberty other than the condition of *Ijtihad*?

The person you follow must be [a man, of legitimate birth], sane, a believer, with a high level of god-fearing and justice, in such a way that prevents him from committing sins, and if he did rarely, then he would rush to repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness.

- Here I am, I have just become a man, and I learned from you something about *Taqleed*. Now what should I do?

You should follow the most knowledgeable amongst the jurists, Act upon his verdicts in various aspects of your worships such as *Wudhu*, *Ghusl*, prayer, fasting, Pilgrimage, *Khums*, *Zakat* and so on. You should also act upon his rulings in transactions, such as buying and selling, marriage, agriculture, banking, renting, will, *Waqf*, etc.

I added with my father more examples:

- Enjoining good and forbidding evil, belief in Allah, His apostles and messengers, and ...

No, belief in God and His unity, the prophecy of our Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), the imamate of the twelve Imams (peace be upon him) resurrection are issues beyond the scope of *Taqleed* as they are the fundamentals of religion. All Muslims have to firmly believe in them in a clear way using one's own effort and what intellectual ability Allah has blessed you with to reach firm satisfaction and unwavering certainty in these issues.

- Well, can I follow a jurist with the presence of a more knowledgeable one in the specific discipline?

You can not [if you anticipate differences between the verdicts of the jurist that you follow and the verdicts of the most knowledgeable jurist in the common incidences that you come across and need to act upon].

- I can refer to the physician to consult his opinion in my medical condition, How can I find out the verdict of my jurist when it comes to religious issues? How can I get his verdict so I can act upon it? Do I have to consult him in every occasion?

You can learn about his verdicts by asking him personally, asking someone you have faith in his transmit, knowledge and trust when he conveys to you his verdicts, or by referring to his juristic books like the treatise on the religious practices which is certified by him.

- Or I can ask you.

I could see a broad smile on the face of my father; he sat straight while I saw a spark in his eyes referring to a future discussion.

- Shall we start with prayer?

Why not!

He added:

But prayer requires the cleanness of a man from anything that makes him impure.

- What makes human to be impure?

Two kinds of things cause one's impurity:

1. Material things that falls under the function of senses, such as *Najis* things.

2. Immaterial things that are not recognized by the senses, if they occur to someone by one of its causes, like *Janabah*, menstruation, *Istihadha*, *Nifas*, touching of a dead human body, excretion, etc. then it must be removed by *Wudhu*, *Ghusl* or *Tayamum*.

So before we get into the prayers, we should discuss the *Najis* things, then their purifying agents to ensure the purity of the body from whatever defiled it.

We can then go over certain occurrences that require *Wudhu* or *Tayamum* such as going to the toilet, breaking wind, sleep, etc.

We may then continue our conversation to other kind of occurrences that require one to perform *Ghusl* or *Tayamum* such as *Janabah*, menstruation, *Nifas*, touching of a dead human body, excretion, etc.

By that, we shall eliminate from our way all that which may prevent our effort to seek nearness to Allah by prayer. This may give us the joy of standing before God and chanting in His Glory and Praise in His Prayers; that our hearts may be full of His desire and love. After prayer we shall turn to other matters which require ritual purity alike, such as fasting and pilgrimage, and then moving to issues like *Khums*, *Zakah*, business transactions and partnerships, etc.

- We shall start discussing *Najis* things first.

Yes, tomorrow God willing.

- God willing.

Najis Things

My father started the dialogue with a spark of determination in his eyes, saying:

Let me tell you a general principle, that will have a great impact on your life, it is “Everything is *Tahir*”. Everything: Seas, rain water, rivers, trees, deserts, mountains, streets, buildings, houses, appliances, utensils, clothes, your Muslim brothers, etc.

Everything is *Tahir*, until it becomes contaminated and made *Najis*, except...

- Except, what?

Except that which is originally or naturally *Najis*.

- What are the things that are naturally *Najis*?

Ten things:

1. Human feces and that of animals that are prohibited to consume, if they have *Nafs Saaila* (gushing blood).

2. Human urine and urine of animals that are prohibited to consume, if they have *Nafs Saaila*.

- What if the animal does not have a *Nafa Saaila*?

If it has meat [then its urine is *Najis*]. Otherwise, its urine is *Tahir*.

- What is a *Nafs Saaila*?

It is a term that you will come across more than once during this dialogue, so, we better shed some light on it.

We describe an animal as having *Nafs Saaila*, if blood gushes out from it when slaughtered because of the presence of arteries. We consider an animal not to have *Nafs Saaila* if, due to lack of arteries, the blood of the animal seeps out gently, without pressure, when it is slaughtered.

3. *Meeta* (carcass) of the animal that has *Nafs Saaila* even if it was lawful to consume. This includes its live parts after its separation from the animal.

- What is *Meeta*?

Any animal that has died without being slaughtered in accordance to the Islamic laws of slaughtering.

- Like?

They are like any animal that dies because of disease, or by accident, or was slaughtered in away not in accordance to the Islamic law. The carcasses of such animals are called *Meeta*.

4. Semen of the human being and of the animal with *Nafs Saaila* if its meat is prohibited to consume.

5. Blood that comes out from the human body and of the body of the animal with *Nafs Saaila*.

- What about the blood of that animal that does no have *Nafs saaila*?

It is *Tahir*, such as fish blood and the blood of the chigger and the flea.

6. All parts of the dog's body whether alive or dead.

7. All parts of the pig's body whether alive or dead.

- What about seals and otters?

They are *Tahir*.

8. Wine and all intoxicating drinks

9. [People who do not believe in the divine religions]. People of divine religions - the Christians, Jews, and Magians - are considered *Tahir*.

10. The sweat of the camel that feed on human excrement [and all animals that feed on human excrement].

These ten things are all naturally *Najis*. The *Najasah* in them will cause other objects to be *Najis* when contacted with dampness.

- What, if there is no wetness when contacted?

If there is no wetness, the *Najasah* does not spread to things that come in contact with it, as it does not transfer between dry surfaces.

- Are urine and dung of animals and birds that are lawful to consume, like cows, sheep, chicken and various kinds of birds, *Tahir* or *Najis*?

They are *Tahir*.

- What about bats' droppings?

They are *Tahir*.

- What about these parts of the *Meeta*: feather, fur, wool, nails, horns, bones, teeth, beaks, and claws. Are they *Tahir*?

All of them are *Tahir*.

- And the blood we find in the meat we buy from the marketplace?

This blood is *Tahir*, and the blood that remains in the body of the animal after it has been slaughtered, according to Islamic laws of slaughtering, is *Tahir*.

-And the droppings of rats and mice?

They are *Najis*.

If you thought about the points that I mentioned to you earlier, you would have answered this question yourself, since these animals have arteries and blood gush out from them when they are slaughtered.

- The grave spark in my father's eye that I noticed in the beginning of this dialogue has reappeared again. He glanced at me and added:

I started this dialogue with a general rule that has a great impact in your life and I will conclude it with more principles with equal importance.

The First Principle: Everything was *Tahir* and you doubt whether it is still the case or it becomes *Najis*, then it is *Tahir*.

- Can you give me an example?

Your bed-sheet – for instance – was *Tahir*, then you doubt whether it has come into contact with *Najasah* and has become *Najis* or has remained *Tahir*. You consider it *Tahir*.

The Second Principle: Anything that was *Najis*, and you have doubts whether you made it *Tahir* or it is still *Najis*, then it is considered *Najis*.

- For example?

Your hand – for instance – was *Najis* and you were absolutely sure that it was, but afterwards, you became unsure whether you made it *Tahir* from its past *Najasah* or you did not. You say: My hand is *Najis*.

The Third Principle: Anything about which you have no prior knowledge of its previous state, whether it was *Tahir* or *Najis*, it is considered *Tahir* now.

- Like?

This glass of water – for example – whose previous status is not known, whether it is *Najis* or *Tahir*? You would say: it is *Tahir*.

The Fourth Principle: Anything about which you doubt whether it came in contact with a *Najis* thing or not, you are not required to investigate to verify that it is really *Tahir*. Instead, you assume it is so even if the investigation is easy for you.

- For instance?

Your shirt was *Tahir* – for example – and you were sure of this before. Now, you are in doubt whether it came in contact with urine and became *Najis* or it remained *Tahir*? You are not required to conduct any kind of investigation and search for any traces of urine even if this search is simple; instead you assume that your shirt is *Tahir*.

Purifying Agents

Before my father attend this dialogue session, I was thinking deeply and trying to apply the theological information from my previous dialogue on *Najis* things on the reality of my daily living life and while I am doing that, I was correcting my misconceptions of *Najasah*. I was desperately expecting to learn from today's dialogue how the original purity is restored to contaminated things.

As soon as my father arrived, I asked him:

- You told me yesterday that *Tahir* things lose its purity when in contact with *Najasah*. I was wondering how these things restore its lost purity.

The most common agent that restores the lost *Taharah* to the *Najis* things is "water" by washing out the contaminations. So we will start with:

The First purifying agent is: "water".

My father added:

Water is classified into two kinds: pure and diluted.

- What is pure water?

Pure water is that which we drink along with animals and irrigate plants with. It is also the waters of oceans, seas, rivers, wells, Creek rains, tap water that we use at home through reservoirs that spreads in towns, villages and municipalities. Water is still considered pure even if it contains small amounts of mud or sand.

- And the diluted water?

Diluted water is recognized easily by adding a name to the water whenever you name it. For instance you say rose water, pomegranate water, grape water, carrots water and so on. As you notice from the examples that this kind of water does not concern us in this topic of our discussion as we are talking about the water that we purify the *Najis* things with and the one we drink. So we are talking about water and not grape water for instance.

Furthermore, water or pure water is of two kinds abundant and little.

- What is the abundant water?

Abundant water is the one that weigh about 465 kilograms and 27 cubic spans in volume [where the span is about 25 centimeter approximately]. These are the measurements of the *Kurr* whether they were stagnant or running.

It is natural to consider sea water, rivers, creeks, big ponds, streams, wells, tap running water connected to our homes through water grids that comes from big water tanks, the water from our homes' water tanks if the water's weight and volume equals or exceeds the mentioned weight and volume of *Kurr* and the water of our smaller water storage tanks if they were connected to running water, it is natural for all these types to considered as Abundant waters".

- What is "little water"?

"Little water" is when the weight or the volume of the water is less than the mentioned weight and volume of the abundant water i.e. less than the *Kurr* as long as it is not rainfall like the water in the utensils, bottles, cups...Etc.

As we have decided the meanings of the "Diluted water" and the two kinds of "Pure water", the "Little water" and the "Abundant water", let explain to you with the religious verdicts when each one of them become in any kind of contact with the *Najasah*.

- What about diluted water?

It becomes *Najis* when contacted with *Najis* things regardless of its quantity like the amount in the teapot for example. Liquids that fit the same definition are milk, petroleum, medical solutions, etc as all of them become *Najis* when they contact *Najasah*.

- And the "little water"?

It becomes *Najis* when it meets *Najis* things.

- What about the "Abundant water"?

It does not become *Najis* even it contacted *Najasah* like the tap water, the *Kurr* and other kinds except when *Najasah* the effects its color, taste and smell.. also every..

- Every what?

Every little water when connected to “Abundant water” it becomes abundant as well. As an example, the common small storage tanks when it is connected to the tap water, it becomes abundant; likewise, the water in the saucepan that you put under the tap running water that is connected to *Kurr* becomes abundant, and so on.

- What if drops of blood fall in the stagnant water of a tank with the size of a *Kurr*?

It will not become *Najis*, unless the blood drops increases to change the color of the water to yellowish for example due to the effect of the blood color.

- What, if they fall in a small plate?

It will make it *Najis*.

- What, if we place it under running tap water?

The water in the plate will become *Tahir*.

- If we pour water from a jug onto a *Najis* thing, does the water in the jug become *Najis*?

No, since *Najasah* does not climb the column of the pouring water, so the pouring water and the water in the jug do not become *Najis*.

- How the rain water makes the *Najis* things *Tahir*?

When it continue to fall directly on thing that became *Najis*, whether they are floor, water, garments and mattress after rainwater soaks them, or utensils ..etc in such a quantity that custom recognize the falling water as rain and not drops of water.

- How we restore the *Taharah* to the *Najis* things when we use "Little" or "Abundant waters"?

We can restore the *Taharah* of any *Najis* things by washing it once with little or abundant water except the following:

1. Anything that becomes *Najis* through contamination with urine should be washed twice if little water is used.

2. Utensils that dogs drink from: should be washed with a mixture of earth and water then washed twice with little water or once with abundant water.

3. Utensils licked by dogs or dog's saliva fall in them: [should first be washed with a mixture of earth and water and then three times with little water] or once with "Abundant water".

4. Utensils licked by pig: should be washed seven times with little water or once with "Abundant water".

5. Utensils that become *Najis* through contamination with dead rat: [should be washed seven times with little water] or once with "Abundant water".

6. The interior of the utensils that holds water and other liquids when became *Najis* by any source of *Najasah* other than the mentioned: should be washed three times with little water or once with "Abundant water".

- And the outside of the utensils?

It should be washed once with water even if it was little. The same can be said about the utensil that does not hold water like the plate.

- How can I purify my hand once it becomes *Najis* when I have little water?

You can pour water on it. Once the water separates your hand, it becomes *Tahir* again.

The Second purifying agent is: the sun.

- What are the things that the sun restores their *Taharah* after they become *Najis*?

It restores the *Taharah* of the ground and everything that is constant on it like buildings, walls, doors, woods, pickets, trees and their leaves, plantations, fruits before being picked and other things that are not carried.

- How does the sun restore the *Taharah* of the constant things?

It does so when it shines and dries them up by the effect of its beam, provided that the actual *Najasah* is removed.

- If the *Najis* ground was dry, and we want t its original *Taharah* status, what can we do?

We can pour water on it. And when the sun dries it then it becomes *Tahir*.

- If the ground became *Najis* through contamination with urine, when the sun shines on it and becomes dry?

The ground restores its original *Taharah*.

- What about things like shingle, soil, mud and stones that are considered as parts of the earth, if they became contaminated with urine and then dried by the sun?

They should be considered *Tahir*.

- What about nails that are fixed to the ground or used in buildings?

They have the same ruling as of the earth, i.e. they are considered *Tahir* when the sun dries them

The third purifying agent is the removal of the *Najasah* away from the *Najis* parts of the animal's body.

- Can you give me an example?

As soon as the blood is removed from the beak of a chicken, the mouth of a cat .. etc, they become *Tahir*.

- I still want to ask you about the interior of the human body like the inside of the mouth.

The interior of the human body does not become *Najis*, so the insides of the mouth, the nose, the ear and the eye are all *Tahir* even when they contain blood.

- Does the needle that is used in injecting medicine into the body of a human or of an animal, becomes *Najis* as a result of being in contact to blood inside the body?

It does not become *Najis* if it comes out of the body, uncontaminated with blood, because contacting blood inside the body does not materialize *Najasah*.

The Fourth purifying agent is earth: Whatever is defined as earth is a purifying agent, such as stones, sand, soil, gypsum, cement, etc provided that earth is *Tahir* and dry.

- How do I know it is *Tahir*?

As long as you do not know that it became *Najis*, then it is *Tahir*, and therefore can be considered as a purifying agent.

- What are the things that the earth restores their *Taharah* after they become *Najis*?

It restores the *Taharah* of the soles of the feet and the shoes when walking using them provided that the material of the *Najasah* is removed from them by walking on the ground if the removed *Najasah* was originated from walking on earth.

The Fifth purifying agent is: affiliation.

- Give me some examples about affiliation?

When the *Najis* unbeliever becomes Muslim, he becomes *Tahir*. Subsequently, his children are considered *Tahir*. Also when the wine turns into vinegar, the utensils that contains it becomes *Tahir* too..

Also when the dead body becomes *Tahir* after it is washed three types of *Ghusl*. As a result the hands and the clothes of the person performing the *Ghusl* become *Tahir* and also the bench that was used to lay the dead body for washing.

When a *Najis* garment was washed with "Little water", for instance, it becomes *Tahir*, and then the hands that did the washing too.

The Sixth purifying agent is: Islam.

- How does Islam act as a purifying agent? And who becomes *Tahir* with it?

Islam purifies the infidel that is considered *Najis* after he had embraced Islam. Subsequently all parts of his body becomes *Tahir* too.

The Seventh purifying agent is: transfer.

- Like?

When mosquito or lousy suck the human blood, it becomes part of the insect's body so when you hit the insect and its blood contaminates your body or garments, then it is a *Tahir* blood.

The Eighth purifying agent is: transformation.

- What do you mean by transformation?

Transformation is the change of something to something else different.

- Could you give me an example?

Najis wood when burned in fire and become ashes, and then the ash is *Tahir*. The animal dung when is used to set fire, its ashes becomes *Tahir*.

The Ninth purifying agent is the normal release of blood from the carcass of the animal that its meat is consumable or from the *Tahir* animal that its meat is not consumable after they are slaughtered according to Islamic law, the trapped blood in the carcass of the said animals is *Tahir*.

The Tenth purifying agent is the change of wine into vinegar since during the fermentation process, it becomes *Najis* before it turns into vinegar and then it becomes *Tahir*.

The Eleventh purifying agent is when the animal that feeds human excrement is prevented from doing so for a long time till it starts to consume another food, then its dung that became *Najis* because of such feeding becomes *Tahir* again.

- I wanted to ask about an issue that I need to know in my common dealing with my friends?

Go ahead.

- When I see something in my Muslim friend's possession and it became *Najis*, when he is gone away and comes back again and he deals with that thing as if it is *tahir*. Can I consider it *Tahir* too without confirming that with him?

If your friend knew about the *Najasah* of that thing and you expect him to restore its purity again while he was absent, then you can consider it *Tahir*. [But if it was garment or something similar then you should him about its status of purity – *Taharah* before you use it in your prayers].

Janabah

Unusually, My father preceded me to today's session. When I came, in the beginning, he did not notice my presence as he was quietly thinking while he was looking down to the ground, letting his feelings travel outside the room. As soon as he noticed my presence, the calm determination in his eyes came back as he said:

I will start this dialogue with an introduction that leads to the subject of *Janabah*.

He added:

We spoke in the dialogue on *Najis* things about the impurities that take away the state of natural purity from the human body and other things.

And then we discussed in the dialogue on purity the purifying agents that restore the stripped natural purity to our body and to other things.

If you were to recall these impurities, you shall notice that they are material things that intervene to the body whether they originate from the body itself or from an outside source.

There are, however, intangible incorporeal occurrences, when they occur, they take away the purity of the body and it would require what restores its lost purity.

Those occurrences are of two types: Major and minor.

Major occurrences include *Janabah*, Menstruation, *Nifas*, major and medium *Istihadha*, touching a dead human body, and death.

Minor occurrences are like urine, excrement, breaking wind, sleeping, minor *Istihadha*.. etc.

Major occurrences are purified by *Ghusul* or wiped off by *Tayamum*.

Minor occurrences can be purified with *Ghusul* or wiped off by *Tayamum*.

We will cover in our dialogues these concepts one by one, but for now we will start with *Janabah*.

I said to my father:

- What actualizes the *Janabah*?

It actualizes when one of the two following things occurs:

First: Seminal discharge whether it takes place as a result of sexual exercise, a dream or masturbation.

- What are the descriptions of the seminal fluid?

It is a dense sticky liquid, smells like a fermented dough, its color is milky, sometimes leans to either green or yellow. It is ejaculated when orgasm is reached and associated with effusion. The body feels tepidity and relaxed afterwards.

- If I was in doubt that a specific sticky ejaculated liquid is actually semen or other liquids?

I will tell you three characteristics when combined you can tell it is semen. They are: sexual desire, effusion and body relaxation or tepidity. For asleep person, sexual desire and effusion is sufficient and for sick people, sexual desire only is sufficient.

- What if one or two characteristics were actualized for awake person?

You do not consider the liquid as semen except for the sick people as I just mentioned.

Second: sexual intercourse even if it did not lead to the release of semen. It is sufficient to actualize the sexual intercourse when the end part of the penis, the part that contains the foreskin penetrates the female's vagina [or anus].

- What if the semen is released or a sexual intercourse takes place?

Janabah occurs to both parties regardless of age or state of mind.

- When it takes place, then what?

Ghusul becomes mandatory in order to pray – for example – or perform *tawaf* during pilgrimage as both of them can not be considered valid without the *Ghusul*. I will explain to you in the coming dialogue of *Ghusul* how to do it.

You should know that the following acts are prohibited while you are in the state of *Janabah*:

1. Touching the writing in the holy Qur'an [Also the verses in other books].

2. [Touching the Arabic name of the almighty, "Allah" and His other names and descriptions like "Al khaliq" – The Creator]. However, it is allowed to touch the Quranic verses and Allah's names if they were written on currencies.

3. Recitation of the four verses of Sajdah - prostration: in Chapters "Al-Alaq", "An-Najm", "As-Sajdah", and "Fussilat" of the Holy Quran.

4. Entering Mosques to put something in them or to stay.

It is allowed for a person during the state of *Janabah* to pass through the mosque by entering from one door and exiting from another, except for the two holy Mosques, Al-Masjid Al-haram in Mekkah and the Prophet's mosques in Medina. [It is unlawful to stay at the shrine of the infallibles (peace be upon them)]

- Are the corridors covered by the same rule?

No, they are not.

- Before we conclude the dialogue of *Janabah*, I have a question but I am embarrassed to ask.

Ask whatever you like, as the maxim says: "There shall be no embarrassment in religious matters" and I always say that.

- Sometimes, when I am sexually aroused, I notice a drop of a sticky white transparent liquid comes out of my penis.

Yes, this liquid is *Tahir*, does not contaminate the body or the clothes and you do not need to perform *Ghusul* if you notice it. There is another liquid that follows urination sometimes, it is *Tahir* too and you are not required to perform *Ghusul* when you experience it.

- What about masturbation?

It is prohibited and must be avoided. Medical studies warn from its harm to the body and to the soul. Medical doctors guide people and encourage them to avoid it.

Menstruation

My father sat on his usual seat in the dialogue room and a broad smile on his face which led me to assume that unusual matter in his mind. He said:

I will talk to you today about menstruation.

I did not know before today what menstruation means. I remember that I heard this word before but what grabbed my attention is that I heard women whisper the word with embarrassment as if there is something shameful about it. Once I realized that the topic of today's dialogue is menstruation, I felt ashamed and started to hide it but I asked myself: What shameful about the subject? And if it was shameful, why would my father is going to discuss it with me?

Then I remembered, are not our dialogue subjects about Islamic matters? Then menstruation is one of the subjects being covered by Islamic jurisprudence and if it was so, then why we are embarrassed about a subject mentioned in the Holy Quran and the prophet and the imams (peace be upon them) talk about it to their companions. After all, why would we feel embarrassed about a subject we should learn and implement?

I wake up from my self-examination on my father's voice saying:

The reason for menstruation is the discharge of the menstrual blood. It is a known usual blood that women discharge in almost regular monthly intervals. It is red tends to back, warm, discharged with pressure and irritation.

- Is this blood a sort of disease for the women or a natural occurrence?

It is a natural state for women. So every blood that she discharges and is described with the following conditions is menstruation:

- What are these conditions?

The conditions of menstruation are:

1. It does not last for more than ten days.
2. The clean period between the end of one blood discharge period and the commencement of another period is not less than ten days.
3. The blood discharge period is not less than three days.

- Should these three days be continuous?

No, they are not conditioned by that. Yes, the three days of blood discharge period should be within ten days. For example, if she saw the blood for a whole day and then interrupted for two days then it commenced back for another day and then interrupted again for two days and then it commenced back again for a third full day then the blood in these three days is menstruation.

- When you say a full day, do you mean twenty four hours?

Yes, it is not enough to see the blood during the day and not see it during the night and vice versa.

- What if the blood continues for more than ten days?

Some of it is not menstruation and I will explain the ruling of such blood later,

- What if the clean period between the end of the blood discharge period and the commencement of another period is more than ten days.

Then the second blood is not menstruation.

- When does a woman consider herself as having menstrual blood?

1. When she notices the blood for the first time and if it lasts for more than three days and less than ten days, then it is menstruation.

2. When she sees the blood once again after a clean period of more than ten days then she considers herself as menstruated. If the blood continued for more than three days then it is menstruation and if it did not continue for three days – even if they were interrupted – then the blood is *Istihadha* whether it is seen during the time of habit or not.

- How does a woman have a habit?

A woman has a habit if she sees blood at a same time every month. If the second blood matches the first one in time and duration then she is considered as having a habit of time and duration. If the second blood matches the first one in time but not duration, then she has a habit of time only. For example, if she sees the first blood at the first day of the month for seven days and she then sees the second blood at the first

day of the month and for seven days also, then she has a time and duration habit. If the duration differs, then she has a time habit where she should consider the blood as menstruation if she sees it in the first day of the month and it lasts for three days even if they were interrupted as long as they are within ten days.

- If the second blood matches the first one in duration but not in time?

Then the woman has a duration habit.

- Is there a special ruling for her?

Yes, if she discharges blood after a clean period of ten or more days and the blood lasts for more than ten days then she considers her habitual duration as menstruation and the extra days as *Istihadha*. She can add a day, two or three to complete the ten days and considers the rest as *Istihadha*.

- And the woman that has irregular period?

If the blood starts again after ten days or more from the time it stopped and it lasts for three days even if they were interrupted, then she consider herself as having a period.

- I leaned about the rulings of the woman that sees the bleeding and recognize it. What if the woman had her period and the blood apparently stopped but she expects its existence inside?

She should check?

- How?

By inserting a piece of cotton inside her and leave it for sometime if no traces of blood could be seen then she is clean, she should perform her *Ghusul* and resume her acts of worship like prayers and fasting. And if it is contaminated with blood, then she is still during menstruation.

- Is the state of menstruation applies to the woman during all her lifetime?

No menstruation before the age of nine years and if the woman is above the age of fifty and she is not from the clan or *Quraish* then there is no menstruation for her as well and this is her climacteric.

- What if she is of the clan of *Quraish*?

Then she has menstruation when she discharges blood according to the mentioned conditions till she reaches the age of sixty when she reach her climacteric.

- When a woman realizes that she has her period, what does she do?

She must observe the following:

1. Her prayers is not valid be it mandatory or recommended.
2. She is not required to make the prayers that she missed during her period.
3. Her fasting is not valid.
4. She is required to fast the days that she missed during her period.
5. Her *Tawaf* in pilgrimage is not valid while she has her period be it mandatory [or recommended].
6. Divorcing her is void when she is menstruated except in certain situations.
7. It is prohibited to have sexual intercourse with a woman during her period.
8. It is prohibited for her to do [All] the prohibitions of the person in the state of *Janabah* as discussed in the dialogue of *Janabah*.
9. She must perform *Ghusul* when her period ends in order for her to perform prayers. I will explain to you how to perform *Ghusul* in a coming dialogue.

Nifas

My father said:

I'll talk to you today about *Nifas*.

- What is *Nifas*?

It is a type of bleeding which occurs during and after childbirth and the woman knows that it is caused by that.

- How long does *Nifas* last?

A maximum of ten days and I will tell you the ruling of the bleeding that lasts more than ten days.

- What is the minimum period for it?

There is no lower limit for it as it might last for a minute or less than that.

- Does it vary from one woman to another?

Yes it does, I will tell you three categories of woman in the state of *Nifas*:
The first one is when the *Nifas* bleeding does not exceed ten days.

- What is the ruling for her case?

The entire period of bleeding is considered as *Nifas*.

The second category is when the woman has a regular duration monthly periods of say, five days, and her *Nifas* bleeding goes beyond ten days.

- What is the ruling for such a woman?

She must consider the bleeding as *Nifas* for a duration equal to the duration of her period [and consider an additional day or two or more up to the completion of ten days to the state of *Nifas*].

- What about the remaining days?

They should be considered as *Istihadha*.

The third category is when the woman does not have a regular monthly period of duration and her *Nifas* bleeding exceeds ten days.

- What is the ruling for her case?

She must consider ten days only as the duration of *Nifas* [and after that observe both of the prohibitions of *Nifas* and the duties of the *Istihadha* till the eighteenth day]. If the bleeding goes beyond that, then it is considered as *Istihadha*.

- If the woman during the state of *Nifas* had a regular monthly period of duration and the bleeding exceeds the ten days but she does not know whether the bleeding will stop before ten days or continue beyond the duration of the monthly period?

She should abundant all acts of worship for the duration of ten days. If the bleeding stopped during the ten day period, she must consider it as *Nifas*. If it exceeds the duration of ten days, she should perform *Ghusul* and observe the rules of *Istihadha*. She can abundant the acts of warship for a period of time that corresponds to the duration of her monthly period [and consider an additional day or two or more up to the completion of ten days to the state of *Nifas*] and consider the remaining time beyond the ten days as *Istihadha*.

- What if the bleeding stopped during the first day and then came back and then stopped say, on the tenth day or any day that before it...?

Her ruling during the clean intervening period is the same as any clean period.

- If the bleeding was intermittent for a duration of the ten days?

The days of bleeding is considered as *Nifas* and the clean intervening periods are considered as any clean period.

- When a woman complete her *Nifas* time and then she sees blood again?

Any type of blood woman sees after the end of the state of *Nifas* up to ten additional days is considered as *Istihadha* whether it satisfies the descriptions of menstrual blood of not and whether it was during her monthly period or not but if it is seen after ten days of clean period and its descriptions satisfy the descriptions of menstrual blood then it is considered as one.

- What are the rulings that a woman in the state of *Nifas* should observe?

All laws that apply to the woman during the state of menstruation whether they are *Wajibat*, *Muharramat*, *Mustahabbat*, *Makrouhat* (refer to the dialogue of menstruation).

Istihadha

My father took his seat. He gave the title of Istihadha to today's dialogue. As soon as he did, I realized that we have mentioned this term before in past dialogues. I know it is a kind of bleeding that is related to woman.

I asked my father:

- Is Istihadha confined to women?

Yes, but...

- But what?

But provided that the bleeding is not menstrual blood, Nifas, wound, ulceration, or a result of losing the virginity.

- These are quite a number of different bleedings.

Some of them indicates woman's fertility and youth, Don't you notice that when a woman reaches the age of climacteric and the menstrual bleeding stops, she can not bear children.

- The bleeding of wounds, blister and Nifas is known usually. So how the woman knows that a particular bleeding is Istihadha and not menstrual blood?

Do you recall the descriptions of the menstrual blood?

- Yes, it is a red or dark colored blood that discharged with pressure and irritation.

Usually the descriptions of the blood of Istihadha are the opposite of those of the menstrual blood. It is yellowish in color, thin and discharges without burning or a sting.

- How could a woman distinguish between the Istihadha blood and the blood that result from losing virginity if it was seen in her wedding day?

The blood that results from losing the virginity is little in amount and when tested by placing a piece of cotton inside, it takes a circular form like a crescent of blood

where as the Istihadha blood could soak the cotton piece and sometimes exceeds that and appear to the outside.

- So the Istihadha blood soaks the cotton piece?

Yes, but it might not do that as Istihadha is of three types:

Major: This is when the blood soaks the cotton piece and exceeds that by appearing to the outside as I just said.

Medium: This is when the blood soaks the cotton piece but does not exceed it to the outside.

Minor: This is when the blood colors the cotton piece only as it is little.

- What are the rulings for each one of them?

For the major Istihadha, the woman should perform Ghusul three times a day, one for the morning prayers and one for the noon and afternoon prayers if performed consecutively and one for the sunset and evening prayers if performed consecutively as well.

- What if she decided to perform each one of them separately?

She should perform a Ghusul for each one of them. For the medium Istihadha, she should perform Wudu before each prayer plus perform a Ghusul once a day.

- Give me an example?

Before the Morning Prayer, she found out that she is in the state of Istihadha. Upon checking, she found out that she was in a medium one so she performs a Ghusul and pray the Morning Prayer without Wudu. This Ghusul is satisfactory to the rest of the prayers in that day but she must perform Wudu before each prayer. She must do the whole procedure again in the second day if the medium Istihadha continued. For the minor Istihadha, she must perform Wudu before each prayer she offers whether it is mandatory or recommended.

- You mentioned to me that the Istihdha blood tend to be yellowish. What if the discharged liquid was yellow but can not be described as blood?

If it was not blood then she must perform Ghusul before each prayer even if this yellow liquid was a lot.

- Does the Istihadha change from one type to another?

Yes, it may change, like when the minor one changes to a major one and when a major one changes to a medium one and so on Furthermore, there might be a time during Istihadha where no blood is being discharged.

- What if there was a time during the state of Istihadha without any bleeding?

If the said period is long enough for the woman to perform Ghusul or Wudu and the prayer, then she must wait for it and then perform one of them and pray.

- How does the woman know that the bleeding is stopped or the state of Istihadha changed from one type to another?

She knows that by checking by inserting the cotton piece. If it was clean then she has a clean period and if it was contaminated with blood then she must consider the degree of the Istihadha.

- When the cotton is contaminated with blood, must the woman change it before the prayer?

Yes, she should but if she was to join the between the prayers, then she does not need to change it for the second prayer. The woman during the state of Istihadha must protect herself from the discharge of blood whenever possible.

- She should perform the prayer as soon as she Ghusul or Wudu?
Yes.

- What is the ruling of Istihadha?

First: A woman during the state of Istihadha must perform Wudu after the bleeding stops if the Istihadha was minor and perform Ghusul if the Istihadha was medium or major.

Second: It is not permissible for the woman during the state of Istihadha to touch the writing of the Holy Quran.

Third: [It is not permissible for the woman during the state of Istihadha to enter the holy house of God in Mecca – the kaaba].

Fourth: Not all the prohibition that must be observed by the woman during menstruation must be observed by the woman during Istihadha. Sexual intercourse is not prohibited. Divorcing her while she is in the state of Istihadha is valid. She can also enter, stay in, take or put something in mosques. She can recite the verses of prostration – Sajjdah. It is better for her to do her mentioned obligation which is performing Ghusul or Wudu before entering mosques or reciting the verses of Sajjdah.

Fifth: A woman during the state of Istihadha – regardless of the type - can fast. Performing a Ghusul before the dawn of the fasting day is not a condition in the validation of the fasting.

Glossary

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence.

Ghusl: Ritual bathing that is required or recommended at certain circumstance.

Hadiths: Traditions of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) and the Imams of the Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) which consist of their sayings and actions.

Halal: Permissible act.

Haram: Prohibited act.

Ibadaat: Acts of worship.

Ijtihad: The process of deriving the verdict of the religious laws using the principles of jurisprudence.

Istihadha: Woman's bleeding that is not classified as Nifas or Menstruation.

Janabah: The state of being religiously defined as unclean.

Khums: Religious tax, equal to fifth of the taxable income.

Makrouhat: Abominable - not recommended acts of worship.

Meeta: Animal carcass.

Mu'aamalat: Transactions.

Mubahat: Permissible acts.

Muharramat: Forbidden acts of worship.

Mustahabbat: Voluntary acts of worship.

Nifas: Bleeding that occurs after childbirth, miscarriage, or abortion.

Najasah: Religious term for ritual impurity.

Najis: State of ritual impurity.

Taharah: Religious term for ritual purity.

Tahir: State of ritual purity, the opposite of Najis.

Taqleed: Following a religious scholar.

Tayamum: Dry ablution.

Wajibat: Compulsory acts of worship.

Waqf: Religious endowment.

Wudhu: Act of ablution.

Zakat: Religious annual tax, made to purify the wealth.