

The Little Green Book

Volume II Chapter 11

On Pure and Impure Things

There are eleven things which are impure: urine, excrement, sperm, bones, blood, dogs, pigs, non-Muslim men and women, wine, beer, and the sweat of the excrement-eating camel.

The urine and feces of man and any animal whose blood spurts when a vein or artery of its body is opened are impure. But flyspecks or the droppings of mosquitoes or other such small insects whose blood does not gush are pure.

The urine and feces of any excrement-eating animal are impure. This is equally true of the urine and feces of any animal which has been sexually possessed by a human; and of the urine and feces of sheep which have been fed on sow's milk.

The sperm of any animal whose blood spurts when its throat is cut is impure.

The bones of an animal found dead or an animal slaughtered otherwise than according to Muslim rites are impure; fish, on the other hand, is never impure, even if found dead in the water, for its blood does not spurt.

The hairs, bones, and teeth of dead animals are pure, unless they come from animals such as the dog which are impure themselves.

The egg taken from the entrails of a chicken is not impure, provided its shell is sufficiently hard. However, it must be washed before being eaten.

The meat, fat, and skins on sale in a Muslim bazaar on being handled by a Muslim are pure, unless such products come from animals which were not slaughtered according to the Muslim rites.

The blood of man and any animal whose blood spurts when the throat is cut is impure; on the other hand, the blood of the fish, mosquito, or any other animal whose blood does not spurt remains pure.

The blood that may flow out between one's teeth is pure if diluted with saliva; it is permitted to swallow that saliva.

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Blood coagulated and accumulated under the nails or in any other part of the human body is pure if its appearance has been so modified that one can no longer call it blood; if that is not the case, every effort must be made to rid oneself of it before performing one's ablutions.

The pus of a healing wound is pure; provided one can be sure it is not mixed with blood.

Dog and pig, unless they live in water, are impure, as are their hairs, their bones, their claws, and their excrements; on the other hand, sea dogs and pigs are pure.

Every part of the body of a non-Muslim individual is impure, even the hair on his hand and his body hair, his nails, and all the secretions of the body.

Any man or woman who denies the existence of Allah, or believes in His partners [the Christian Trinity], or else does not believe in His Prophet Muhammad, is impure (in the same way as are excrement, urine, dog, and wine). He is so even if he doubts any one of these principles.

A child who has not reached puberty is impure if his parents and grandparents are not Muslims, but if he has one Muslim in his ancestry he is pure.

A Muslim who insults one of the Twelve Imams or declares himself their enemy is impure.

Wine and all other intoxicating beverages are impure, but opium and hashish are not.

Beer is impure, but brewer's yeast is not.

The sweat of an excrement-eating animal is impure; the sweat of other animals, which do not eat the same detritus, is not.

The sweat of a man who has just ejaculated is not impure; yet it is preferable for him not to pray so long as his body or his clothing retain traces of that sweat.

If a man has had sexual relations with his wife during periods of prescribed abstinence, such as the fast of Ramadan, he must avoid saying his prayers so long as he still has upon him the traces of post-coital sweat.

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If a part of the body that is sweating comes into contact with something impure and the sweat runs onto other parts of the body, all such parts become impure, although the rest of the body remains pure.

Bloodstained nasal secretions or expectorations are impure, whereas those which have not been soiled by blood are pure; if the nasal secretions or the expectoration touch the nose or mouth even lightly the part of the skin which has been so touched must be purified; but the untouched part remains pure.

An object which enters a human body and comes into contact with something impure (stool or blood) remains pure when withdrawn from that body if it has no traces of the impure matter left upon it; thus, the instrument introduced into the rectum for an enema or the surgeon's scalpel are not impure if they bear no trace of these impurities. The same applies to saliva or nasal secretions which mix with blood inside the mouth or nose, but show no trace of it when they are expectorated.

It is forbidden to touch a page of the Qur'an with anything impure; if such a thing should happen, the page must immediately be washed.

It is forbidden to place upon the Qur'an such impure matter as blood or human or animal bones if the matter is dried; should the matter already have been placed on it, it must absolutely be removed.

It is forbidden to write out verses of the Qur'an with impure ink, even though one writes but one letter thereof. In case it has already been done, it must be washed away or erased with a knife or some other sharp instrument.

One must avoid giving the Qur'an to an infidel; it is even recommended that it be forcibly taken away from him if he already has it in his hands.

If a page of the Qur'an, or a piece of paper with the name of Allah or the Prophet or one of the Imams on it should fall into a toilet, it is absolutely indispensable to withdraw it from there, even if this should prove costly. In case this is impossible, such a toilet must never be used until it has been ascertained that the paper has rotted away.

It is forbidden to eat or drink anything that is impure; it is also forbidden to give anything impure to children to eat, whether or not it may be harmful to them; but it is not forbidden to feed children food which has been only indirectly touched by something impure.

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It is not required that one point out to a person that he is eating impure food or that he is praying while wearing impure clothing.

If the head of a household notices during the course of a meal that one or more of the dishes being served are impure, he must impart this information to his guests; but if it is one of the guest who notices it, he is not obliged to do the same.