

Cleanliness Laws: To Bathe in Clean Water

Bahá'u'lláh



To Bathe in Clean Water

Immerse yourselves in clean water; it is not permissible to bathe yourselves in water that hath already been used. See that ye approach not the public pools of Persian baths; whoso maketh his way toward such baths will smell their fetid odor ere he entereth therein. Shun them, O people, and be not of those who ignominiously accept such vileness. In truth, they are as sinks of foulness and contamination, if ye be of them that apprehend. Avoid ye likewise the malodorous pools in the courtyards of Persian homes, and be ye of the pure and sanctified. Truly, We desire to behold you as manifestations of paradise on earth, that there may be diffused from you such fragrance as shall rejoice the hearts of the favored of God. If the bather, instead of entering the water, wash himself by pouring it upon his body, it shall be better for him and shall absolve him of the need for bodily immersion. The Lord, verily, hath willed, as a bounty from His presence, to make life easier for you that ye may be of those who are truly thankful.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, para. 106)

Wash ye every soiled thing with water that hath undergone no alteration in any one of the three respects; take heed not to use water that hath been altered through exposure to the air or to some other agent. Be ye the very essence of cleanliness amongst mankind. This, truly, is what your Lord, the Incomparable, the All-Wise, desireth for you.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, para. 74)

Question: *Concerning pure water, and the point at which it is considered used.*

Answer: Small quantities of water, such as one cupful, or even two or three, must be considered used after a single washing of the face and hands. But a kurr or more of water remaineth unchanged after one or two washings of the face, and there is no objection to its use unless it is altered in one of the three ways, for example its color is changed, in which case it should be looked upon as used.



TABLET

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, Questions & Answers, NO. 91)

“Cleave ye unto the cord of refinement”

‘Abdu'l-Bahá refers to the effect of “purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement” on the exaltation of “the human condition” and “the development of man’s inner reality.” He states: “The fact of having a pure and spotless body exercises an influence upon the spirit of man.”

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes NO. 104)

“Wash ye every soiled thing with water that hath undergone no alteration in any one of the three respects”

The “three respects” referred to in this verse are changes in the color, taste or smell of the water. Bahá'u'lláh provides additional guidance concerning pure water and the point at which it is considered unsuitable for use (Q&A).

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes NO. 105)

“Adopt ye such usages as are most in keeping with refinement.”

This is the first of several passages referring to the importance of refinement and cleanliness. The original Arabic word “laáfah” rendered here as “refinement,” has a wide range of meanings with both spiritual and physical implications, such as elegance, gracefulness, cleanliness, civility, politeness, gentleness, delicacy and graciousness, as well as being subtle, refined, sanctified and pure. In accordance with the context of the various passages where it occurs in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, it has been translated either as “refinement” or “cleanliness.”

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Notes NO. 74)