

Cleanliness Laws: To be Stainless in One's Dress

Bahá'u'lláh



To be Stainless in One's Dress

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)

God hath enjoined upon you to observe the utmost cleanliness, to the extent of washing what is soiled with dust, let alone with hardened dirt and similar defilement. Fear Him, and be of those who are pure. Should the garb of anyone be visibly sullied, his prayers shall not ascend to God, and the celestial Concourse will turn away from him.

(The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh, para. 76)

“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)



TABLET

“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)