

A woman of Shiite background

A woman of Shi'ite background wrote about her experience of purity laws

You never know if you are clean and pure in Islam. Your purity is totally dependent on your mind and your actions. For instance, it depends on very small things like touching an animal, especially dogs. A second before you touch a dog, you are clean and pure, but a second after you are *najas* (impure). You could touch something by accident, so you never know if you are still pure and clean to talk to your God and pray.

Muslims need to wash their face, arms and feet to prepare for praying. In this way they become clean and *tahara* (pure). But unfortunately this cleanliness can be broken just by simple burping or passing gas, so you need to hold yourself for some time, or you need to do the preparation washing again.

I used to struggle a lot, I was always in doubt: "Am I still clean to talk to God or not???" As a woman in Islam, I was always *najas* and only with *qosl* (full washing) could I wash away my *najasah* (uncleanness). During women's monthly period, no women are allowed to pray as they are *najas*. And after that they have to do *qosl* or otherwise they will be dirty and *najas* for the rest of the month. After sex you are *najas* again, and again, only *qosl* can clean you.

Qosl is a particular way of bathing to wash away the *najasah*. This is how you do *qosl* :

Qosl

1. The intention of the *Qosl* should be said at the beginning.
2. Rinse the head.
3. Rinse the right part of the body
4. Rinse the left part of the body.

Some people make the rules of *najasah* an excuse to skip their five daily Islamic prayers, or to do whatever they want to do. And that is a pity.