MONTHLY AHKAM | DECEMBER 2018 - 12 /Dec/ 2018

Laying the Qur'an on the ground

Q.1| Is it permissible to lay the Qur'an on the ground?

A. It is impermissible to lay the Qur'an on the ground if it is generally perceived as a sacrilegious act.

Purchasing Musical Instruments

Q.2| I'm thinking about buying a guitar to play for my own personal enjoyment, not for sinful purposes or to play in a band. Am I permitted by Islamic canon to do so?

A. Although playing music is permissible if it is not vain (lahwi),(1) yet our dear youth are strongly advised to use their precious time for learning the useful and necessary sciences and technologies and to fill their leisure time with sports and other healthy activities and pastimes.

Replying to Someone's Greeting when Engaged in a Canonic Prayer

Q.3| If someone says salam(2) to us while we are engaged in a canonic prayer, how do we respond?

A. If someone says salam to you while you are engaged in a canonic prayer, it is obligatory that you immediately respond to him, but with the salam preceding the alaykum. Therefore, you may say salamun alaykum or assalamu alaykum, not alaykum assalam. Saying the latter invalidates the prayer.

Backbiting Someone Who Claims Not to Be Offended Thereby

Q.4| Is it permissible to backbite someone who claims not to mind being backbitten?

A. It is sinful and impermissible to backbite someone, even he says that he does not mind it.

Swallowing Food That Is Mixed with Blood

Q.5| Sometimes while chewing our food we accidentally bite down on the inside of our mouth, which causes a slight bleeding. If we have food in our mouth and blood from the wound inside our mouth reaches it, does it become canonically impure (najis)?

A. As a matter of mandatory caution, you must refrain from swallowing the food that contains blood from a wound inside your mouth.

Backbiting a "Discerning" Child

Q.6| What is the rule as regards backbiting a child that has reached the age of "discernment" (tamyeez)?(3)

A. It is impermissible to backbite a child that has reached the age of discernment.

Burying the Deceased in a Mosque

Q.7| Can we bury a deceased Muslim in a mosque? If the deceased has demanded in his will to be buried in a mosque, is his demand legitimate and binding?

A. If the person who donated the grounds of the mosque (the waqif) did not specifically identify burial as a permissible benefit (that is, as excluded from the endowment's barred uses), it is impermissible to bury people on mosque grounds; otherwise, it is permissible.

Ghusl of Repentance

Q.8| Is there a particular ghusl that one can perform with the intention of repenting of one's sins? If so, how is it performed?

A. Performing a ghusl as an act of repentance is a commendable (mustahabb) deed. This ghusl, however, is similar in method and form to any other ghusl, the only difference being the intention underlying it.

Donating One's Khums for the Renovation of a Mosque

Q.9| Can I personally offer my khums to be used in the renovation of a mosque?

A. For the purpose specified in the above question, general donations (tabarru'at), zakat,(4) and other benevolent contributions must be used to provide the necessary funds. Given the current circumstances, however, the use of khums to fund the purpose in question cannot be sanctioned.

A Woman's Duty to Perform Ghusl Forty Days after Childbirth

Q.10| What is the ghusl that a woman must perform forty days after delivering her baby?

A. Islamic canon does not prescribe any particular ghusl that a woman needs to perform with the passage of forty days from her delivery. The ghusl that pertains to a woman's postpartum period is referred to as ghusl al-nifas, which must be performed after the cessation of postpartum bleeding.

Touching the Holy Soil of Karbala during Menstruation

Q.11| Can a woman in her menstrual period or anyone who lacks spiritual purity use a tasbeeh [i.e., misbahah] made of turbah [the holy soil of Karbala and specifically of the vicinity of the shrine of Imam Hussein] to say prayers and invocations (adhkar)?(5) How about putting one's forehead on turbah during prostration?(6)

A. There is no proscription against touching the turbah in the absence of spiritual purity unless there are holy words (the names and attributes of God and the verses of the Qur'an) inscribed on the beads of the tasbeeh (i.e., misbahah) or the clay prayer-tablet (mohr or turbah).

Saying Salawat and Invocations while in a State of Spiritual Impurity

Q.12| Is it canonically objectionable (makrooh) to recite the Qur'an, say invocations (adhkar), and send blessings (salawat) to the Prophet and his holy family when in a state of spiritual impurity (be it the consequence of menstruation or copulation)?

A. In the spiritually impure states of menstruation (hayz) and post-copulation (janabah), it is impermissible to recite the prostration-requiring verses of the Qur'an.(7) Furthermore, it is objectionable (makrooh) for women during their menstruation to recite the Qur'an if it is not during the specific times of the diurnal canonic prayers; however, in the specific times of the diurnal canonic prayers, it is recommended (mustahabb) that they change their pads and clean their undergarments, make wudu, and recite the Qur'an or say invocations (adhkar) during the time in which they normally perform their diurnal canonic prayers. As regards one who is in the post-copulatory state of spiritual impurity (janabah), it is objectionable for him or her to recite more than seven verses of the Qur'an.

A Traveler's Disconnection from the Congregational Prayer while Standing in the First Line

Q.13| How does a traveler's curtailed prayer (salat al-qasr) affect those in a congregational prayer who stand to his right or left sides or behind him and who are connected through him to the leader of the congregational prayer?(8)

A. Should the lines of the congregation remain connected to the leader of the congregation even in spite of the traveler,(9) or if he reconnects with the congregation by commencing another obligatory canonic prayer immediately following the completion of his curtailed prayer,(10) the prayer of the rest of the congregation will remain unaffected.

Forgetting to Perform the Prayer of the Deceased

Q.14| We forgot to perform the prayer of the deceased prior to burying someone who recently passed away. We only remembered a week after his burial. What are we supposed to do?

A. You must perform the prayer of the deceased, in compliance with the pertinent procedure and conditions (as specified in books of Islamic canon), upon the grave, and this must be done prior to the disintegration of the body.

A Woman's Right to Inheritance If Spouse Dies in Post-Divorce Interval

Q.15| If a man divorces his wife and then dies prior to the end of her post-divorce interval (iddah), does she inherit from him if the divorce is reversible (rij'ee)?

A. Yes, she does inherit from him.

1. Music is characterized as vain if it causes estrangement from God, spiritual values, and moral virtues and inclines one toward licentiousness, purposelessness, and sin.

2. That is, the typical Islamic greeting.

3. The age of discernment—or tamyeez—is the age when a child has reached a level of intellectual development that enables him or

her to discern what is right and what is wrong, to differentiate between good and bad. In other words, when a child reaches the age of discernment (which precedes the age of puberty (buloogh) and religious responsibility (takleef) usually by a few years in boys and by one or two years in girls), he can understand the notions of good and bad. This age varies from child to child and relative to different issues.

4. Zakat is the particular religious tax that applies to certain agricultural and mineral products when they exceed a certain limit. As such, it is not a universally applicable tax. Khums on the other hand is a universally applicable religious tax. It consists of one-fifth of one's surplus annual income. That is, if at the end of one's religious fiscal year, one's income exceeds one's expenses, one-fifth of this surplus is to be offered as the religious tax of khums.

5. Adhkar—or invocations—in the sense intended here consist of non-obligatory prayers and devotional formulas that Muslim believers regularly utter in order to preserve and strengthen spiritual mindfulness and to attain spiritual purity.

6. This question is prompted on account of the fact that in the absence of spiritual purity, touching certain things (such as the verses of the Qur'an) is prohibited? The inquirer wishes to know whether this prohibition extends to include the holy soil of Karbala?

7. There are four verses in the Qur'an (Surah 32, v. 15; Surah 41, v. 37; Surah 53, v. 62; Surah 96, v. 19) that if one recites or hears them being recited, one must fall in prostration, performing a canonically prescribed prostration (sujood), and it is recommended that one also say a prescribed formula as one's forehead is positioned on the ground. These four verses are called the four prostration-requiring verses.

8. It should be noted that this question applies only to four-segment prayers. It is only the four-segment prayers (i.e., the noon, afternoon, and evening prayers) that are curtailed and reduced to two segments while one is traveling.

9. As the gap caused by one person is usually insufficient in breaking the connection of the members of the congregation with the leader.

10. Say, for instance, the traveler completes his evening (isha) prayer at the end of the congregation's second segment. In order to preserve the connection of those members of the congregation that are connected through him to the leader, the traveler must reconnect with the congregation by beginning an obligatory prayer (say, he has missed a morning prayer for which he must compensate) before the congregation rises from the bowing posture (rukoo') of the third segment. If he fails to do so, those members of the congregation that are connected through him will be disconnected from the congregation and thus must continue their prayers as personal (furada) rather than congregational (jama'ah) prayers.