382520 - Transfer of impurity from someone else through touching

the question

In our house there is a family member who interacts with dogs; he touches them and they lick him. When we tell him that he has to purify himself, he makes fun of us and refuses to do that, because he does not pray, so he does not care about that. My question is: could the impurity be transferred from him to us? That is because, as I said, he lives with us in the same house, so he touches us and touches our things in the house, and his hands may even become wet, as you know, when he touches the tap in the bathroom, for example, or wet dishes in the kitchen, and so on. Can impurity be transferred in this way? How can we take precautions so that this impurity will not be transferred? Please note that that is difficult, so how can we purify everything that he touches? Please note that I suffer from intrusive thoughts regarding purification, and I take care of my purification and my prayer, praise be to Allah. This matter makes me feel anxious, and unfortunately I have started to develop resentment towards this person, even though he is part of my family.

Summary of answer

Nothing in your house should be deemed impure unless you know for certain that this man touched it, and that his hands were still wet when he touched it and the dog’s saliva had not yet dried up, or he touched something wet when there was still a trace of saliva on his hands. For more details, please see the long answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The impurity of dogs

We have previously discussed the impurity of dogs' saliva, as in the answer to question no. 69840.

Secondly:

Transmission of impurity from one person to another

Transmission of impurity from one person to another is not deemed to have happened unless it is known or thought most likely to have happened.

Al-Qarafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The basic principle is that according to Islamic teachings, nothing is to be taken into consideration except on the basis of certain knowledge, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge} [al-Isra' 17:36]. That is because there is no room for error in that case. However, because it is difficult to have certain knowledge in most situations, Islamic law allows basing decisions on what is most likely to be the case, because it is rarely wrong and is often right. But if there is doubt, the original ruling remains in effect, so everything concerning which there is doubt is not to be taken into consideration, and we should consider what was originally the case before the doubt developed…

End quote from *adh-Dakhirah*, 1/218-219.

Mere doubts and intrusive thoughts carry no weight, as is indicated by the hadith of `Abdullah ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which a man complained to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) who thought that something had happened whilst he praying. He said: "Do not exit your prayer unless you hear a sound or notice a smell." Narrated by al-Bukhari (137) and Muslim (361).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This hadith points to one of the fundamental guidelines in Islam and one of the major principles of

jurisprudence, which is that it should be assumed that things are as they were originally, until we become certain that they have changed, otherwise mere doubts do not affect that.

End quote from *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 4/49.

Based on that, it should not be deemed that the impurity of these dogs' saliva is transferred from the hand of the man who touches them to every place and thing that he touches, because it is very likely that his hands are dry when he touches things.

As-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy on him) stated in his book *al-Ashbah wan-Naza'ir* (p. 432) that: if an impure substance touches something that is pure, but both are dry, it does not make it impure. End quote.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. 111904 and 196037.

It may be that the trace of impurity was removed from his hands by washing.

In fact, simply touching dogs does not necessarily mean that he touched their saliva or any of it stuck to his hands or his body, then remained there without him removing it.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In the case of uncertainty, the basic principle is that things are still pure, and insisting on being on the safe side is waswas (intrusive thoughts or whispers from the Shaytan). So if something gets onto a person that could be pure or could be impure, it is not recommended for him to avoid it according to the correct scholarly view, or to take precautions to be on the safe side. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and a companion of his passed by a downspout, and some drops of water fell onto his companion from it. So his companion said: O owner of the downspout, is your water pure or impure? But 'Umar said: O owner of the downspout, do not tell him, because he should not ask.

End quote from *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, 21/521.

It says in *Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da'imah lil-Buhuth al-'Ilmiyyah wal-Ifta'* (5/365):

The basic principle is that things are pure, so nothing should be deemed impure unless there is evidence to prove that this thing is impure and that this presumed impurity is present on that thing. If these two things cannot be proven, then the Muslim may pray there and his prayer is valid.

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`Abdullah ibn Ghadyan and `Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz. End quote.

Conclusion: nothing in your house should be deemed impure unless you know for certain that this man touched it, and that his hands were still wet when he touched it and the dog’s saliva had not yet dried up, or he touched something wet when there was still a trace of saliva on his hands.

And Allah knows best.