

SERTU CLEANSING TECHNIQUE FROM FOUR SCHOOLS OF JURISPRUDENCE AND IT'S REQUIREMENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Cleanliness is an important part of life, and Islam has provided a guideline on how to cleanse an extreme najis (najis mughallazah). Sertu is a terminology to indicate the process of purifying najis mughallazah. Different mazhab have a distinctive understanding and procedure on how to cleanse these najis, but the importance of cleaning the najis is agreed upon by all. Soil is an important component in the sertu process and is investigated to prove its effectiveness in cleansing the harmful contaminant and washing the filth. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the reason the soil is used in the cleaning process for the mughallazah najis from a scientific perspective. This matter is very important to understand due to most halal products being produced in non-Muslim countries and making the sertu process a crucial factor in the Halal industry. An R&D initiative is done and closely linked to the sertu procedure of halal logistics in order to fulfil the end users' demand for reliable halal status. Therefore, it is important to understand not only the concept of sertu from shariah but also from the scientific perspective because it will benefit to Halal industry in developing a standard procedure for sertu cleansing technique.

Keywords: Sertu, Standard, Najis Mughallazah, Soil, Disease

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Introduction

With the expansion of halal globally, international industry players have also become interested in serving halal services and food in their countries. The knowledge and requirement of Islamic rules will become important in order to serve global needs. Thus, food premises need to follow certain rules in order to be awarded halal certification. The Islamic religion strongly emphasises cleanliness spiritually, physically, mentally and healthily. The halal food chain covers selecting the halal source/origin of raw material, movements, transportation and distribution processes from the factory to consumers.

Sertu is one of the basic requirements that need to be implemented while serving Muslim customers. According to Malaysian Standard, sertu means the act of cleansing with the intention of purifying the body, clothing, spaces, utensils and equipment that is in contact with mughallazah

najs; by washing seven times using mutlaq water, the first time being with water mixed with soil. mughallazah najs in the Islamic perspective means the highest level of impurity or severe najs that concerns contamination (or physical contact) from dogs, pigs and its descendant. Meanwhile, mutlaq water is natural water that is inherently pure and is used to purify oneself.

Sertu is a description of how the Islamic religion emphasises cleanliness in the context of spiritual, physical, mental and health. Soil is one of the most important components in the sertu ritual. As we know, Sertu is a particular cleaning process for the mughallazah najs. It means that utilising soil in Sertu is one of the used materials for cleaning with water. The justification for using soil, however, is not yet been discussed either from a religious or scientific perspective. Therefore, this paper will discuss soil from both perspectives. This paper will also attempt to find the relation between the utilisation of soil from a scientific perspective and religion.

Najs in Islam

Najs in Islam can be divided into three parts such as Muhaffafah najs , Mutawassitah najs and Mughallazah najs. According to Imam al-Shafi'i, there are some cleansing processes such as washing the najs through the sertu process, washing only and washing with splashes the water to the point of najs after the material najs have to be isolated/ thrown (al-Mawardi, 1994). The mughallazah najs means the highest level of impurity or Najs. The mughallazah najs only refer to the al-Shafi'i school and Hanafi school, but this category is not popular with fuqaha mazhab Hanbali and Mazhab Maliki (al-Zuhayli, 1989). According to the al-Shafi'i school, the najs from dogs, pigs and its descendant need seven times cleansing using mutlaq water, the first time being with water mixed with soil (al-Ramli, 1984). The Imam al-Shafi'i argues that dogs, pigs and its descendant are the najs 'ain which is considered najs when it comes to life after death to the carcass. Therefore, when something is affected by these najs, it is required to wash seven times and one of them being with water mixed with soil. The al-Shafi'i view is based on Sunnah and qiyas. The Hadith has narrated by Muslim which is the Prophet SAW said:

“When the dog licks the utensil, wash it seven times, and rub it with earth the eighth time” (Al-Nawawi, 1991)

From the Hadith above, Imam al-Shafi'i uses the qiyas understanding that the nas order of washing (sertu) means that all body of the dog is najs (al-Shafi'i: 2014). Meanwhile, the argument of the najs of a pig is qiyas on the najs of dogs. (al-Shafi'i: 2014).

These hadiths only mention the need for sertu when there are in contact with dog saliva. Pork is not stated in any hadith, but it has been mentioned in Al-Quran (the holy book for Muslims). Thus, pork is also categorised as extreme najs (najs mughallazah) by Islamic scholars.

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine. (Surah Al-Ma'ida: 3)

“He has forbidden you only dead animals, and blood, and the swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than God”. (Surah Al-Baqarah: 173)

From the divine of najs of pig in Quran that al-Shirazi (1994) said najs of pork is more extreme than the najs of dog because the former is mentioned by Quran and the latter is mentioned by hadith as the second sources of Islam after Quran.

Meanwhile, according to the Maliki school, dogs, pigs, and their descendants are pure/clean when alive (al-Kalbi, 1998). So, when the dog licks something in the container, the container and the water are pure.

Regarding Sertu as the cleansing process of najs that meet the halal standard in Malaysia, which is stated as the procedures in the Malaysian Halal Certification, the najs are divided into three categories as the al-Shafi'i view such as Muhaffafah najs, Mutawassitah najs and mughallazah najs

as mentioned in Malaysian Halal Certification Manual Malaysian Standard MS 1500: 2009 and others several Malaysian standards. The najis mughallazah is defined as the highest level of impurity or Najis - dogs, pigs and their descendants (MPPHM, 2014, MS 2393: 2013).

Sertu Practice

There are some different arguments among fuqaha 'on the cleansing method for dogs and pigs. According to Imam al-Shafi'i's view and the ultimate opinion in the sect, the cleansing requires seven times washing and one of them being with water mixed with soil (al-Shafi'i, 2014, al-Ramli, 1984, al-Zuhayli, 2011). Meanwhile, according to the Maliki school, the cleansing method for dogs and pigs needs to be washed seven times only in solitude. This practice means the ta'abudi, which is mentioned in hadith, that is, to wash seven times (do what is ordered based on the order alone). Therefore, Maliki's school view has stressed that it is necessary to wash, but the status of something that is licked is clean. Based on this view from Maliki school with the ta'abudi fundamental that there is no order to wash to the dog's lick over the other dogs and pigs. In another word, the Maliki school does not use the qiyas for this divine cleansing process 'on the cleansing method for dogs and pigs. But there are other views of Maliki school which only consider the washing command due to the impurities in dogs in order of washing what we called 'illah. Therefore they (Maliki school) do not use qiyas on the pig (al-Habib, 1998).

According to the Hanafi school, the washing of najis from the dogs and the pigs is the same as the other najis if the najis have ain, which is needed to wash it once or several times depending on the loss of 'unclean ain (al-Kasani, 2005).

However, different school of thought has a different opinion on sertu requirement. The table below shows differences in opinion of different schools of thought. Different school of thought shows various opinion on sertu requirements.

Table 1: The opinion of different schools of thought on sertu requirement

School of thought	Sertu requirement
Shafie and Hanbali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pork and dog and its descendant are categorised as najis mughallazah. They need to be washed seven times, and the first wash must be water mixed with soil.
Hanafi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hanafi scholars just categorised saliva/mouth and faeces of dogs are najis mughallazah Hanafi scholars do not oblige the use of soil in the cleaning procedure Hanafi scholars do not oblige seven times of washing procedure Najis need to be washed until it is clean (odour, colour and taste)
Maliki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maliki scholars contend that dog is not categorised as najis mughallazah Maliki scholars do not oblige the use of soil in cleansing najis mughallazah. But the najis need to be clean until it is clear from odour, colour and odour.

From the scientific point of view, dog saliva contains numerous harmful bacteria. There are many case studies reported about the contamination of dog saliva that can cause an infection in humans (Table 2).

Shinha (2018) reported from 50 dog bite wounds that have been analysed, 48% were found to be polymicrobial. *Pastuerella* (50%), *Staphylococcus* (46%), *Streptococcus* (46%) and *Neisseria* (32%) are the most commonly isolated aerobic bacteria. Among *Neisseria* species, the most frequent bacteria isolated related to dog bites was *N. weaveri* (14%), followed by *N. zoodegmatis* (10%), *N. animaloris* (6%), and *N. subflava* (2%).

Table 2: The presence of harmful bacteria in dog bites and pork

	Cases	Microbial isolation
Dog bite	Wound infection	<i>Streptococcus minor</i>
Dog bite	Cellulitis	<i>Neisseria weaveri</i>
Dog bite	Arterial injury	Polymicrobial flora

Other than dog saliva, pork carcasses and meat also have been proven the existence of harmful microorganisms. A report from Guo et al. (2017) explains that a survey done by The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) shows that 10.8% of the US population (age 6 to 49 years) have been infected with *Toxoplasma gondii*, or 1.1 million cases of infection which cause 4428 hospitalisations and 327 deaths annually in the United States. Jones et al. (2009) suggested that pork and lamb is an important source of infection of *T. gondii* based on epidemiological studies. A higher risk of contamination occurs in the consumption of fresh pork, including pork chops, pork steaks, ribs, fresh ham or other pork parts, which undergoes minimal processing that is not sufficient to inactivate *T. gondii*.

Salmonella infection is also one of the major causes of gastrointestinal illness in humans. European Food Safety Authority have reported that 56.8% of cases of Salmonella infection cases related to pork consumption. According to De Busser et al. (2013), pigs are widely known as carriers of Salmonella that can contaminate pig carcasses and meat during slaughtering and handling. The risk of spreading bacteria, especially Salmonella, occurs during slaughtering when highly contaminated pig body parts are opened or removed, such as the oral cavity and intestines, pluck set and tonsils. Several studies show a higher presence of Salmonella in palatine tonsils, oral cavities and intestines of pigs at the time of slaughter. Slaughtering and handling pig carcasses and meat is a critical process and has a high risk for microbial contamination that has potential for human health. Other than these two pieces of evidence, there are also a number of other harmful bacteria that are derived from dog saliva and pork meat.

Regarding the disease cases from dog and pig above, it indicates that material from soil become a solution. Therefore, Islam has regulated a particular cleaning process named the term Sertu as discussed above. However, the justification for why soil is used in the cleaning process could be debatable among scientists. Soil has been categorised as a 'dirty' substance from science perspective. Soil has been related to the host of bacteria/fungi, which can cause diseases including tetanus and botulism and infections such as wound infection, gastroenteritis, and specific respiratory syndromes (Baumgardner, 2012). The justification for using soil, however, is not yet been discussed either from a religious or scientific perspective. Therefore, this paper will discuss soil from both perspectives. This paper also will find the relation between the utilisation of soil in science perspective and religion.

Sertu Requirements in Malaysia

Halal supply chain in the food industry covers from raw materials to customers. This chain includes raw materials, preparation, slaughtering, processing (ingredient), products, storage and transportation of food, drinks and consumers goods as described below;

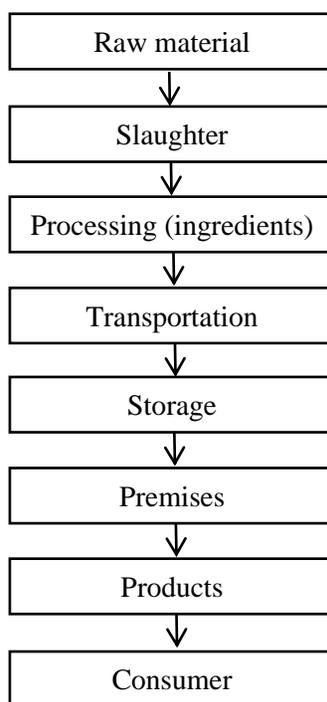


Figure 1: Halal food supply chain from farm to customer

The figure above shows that the relations between one chain to another chain are related to each other. The source of raw material should be free from a non-halal animal such as pork or animal that is not slaughtered according to sharia law. Food ingredients used in food preparation should be obtained from halal sources, including additives and flavour enhancers. Some food practitioners may use wine in baking or cooking, especially in western and Chinese food. Kitchen segregation between halal and non-halal ingredients/meat is also one of the important aspects of halal certification. All of these aspects are an obligation in implementing Halal requirements. Some of the critical disobedience in implementing halal requirements require sertu, e.g. pork meat and other halal meat, to be stored in the same chiller.

Conclusion

The innovation of sertu cleansing material and the development of sertu standard procedures that meet the halal industry requirement will extensively boost the halal business market. This innovation will expedite the cleansing of najis mughalazzah along the supply chain system and is cost-effective. The integrity of the products can be ensured through halal compliance of the supply chain from raw materials to customers, and this will increase customers' confidence in halal products.

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