

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

World's dirtiest man, 94, dies months after first wash

'Amou Haji', who did not bathe for half a century, reportedly ate **roadkill** and smoked a pipe filled with animal excrement



Foto de Vidar Nordli-Mathisen en Unsplash

An Iranian **hermit** nicknamed the "world's dirtiest man" for not taking a shower for more than half a century has died at the healthy old age of 94, state media has reported.

The IRNA news agency reported that "Amou Haji", an endearing nickname for an elderly person, died recently in the village of Dejgah in the southern province of Fars.

Haji, covered in **soot** and pus, living in a **cinder**-block shack, was reported by local media not to have **bathed** with water or soap in more than 60 years. Villagers said he had experienced "emotional **setbacks** in his youth" that led him to refuse to wash.

In 2014, the Tehran Times reported that Haji would eat **roadkill**, smoke a pipe filled with animal excrement, and believed that **cleanliness** would make him ill. Attempts to bathe him or offer him clean water to drink made him sad. Photos showed him smoking multiple cigarettes at once.

But a few months ago, villagers had persuaded him to wash for the first time, the IRNA reported.

The **overwhelming** fear of bathing, cleaning or washing is called ablutophobia, which comes under a specific category of phobias. This fear is an anxiety disorder which hasn't been completely understood but may have been caused by a negative experience or a traumatic incident involving bathing, washing or cleaning in the past.

According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of British Columbia, a study found that this phobia affects children between the ages of 7-11 more than adults.

After Haji's death, the unofficial record could go to an Indian man who also had not bathed for much of his life.

In 2009, the Hindustan Times reported that Kailash "Kalau" Singh, from a village outside the holy city of Varanasi, had not washed for more than 30 years in an attempt to help end "all the problems confronting the nation".

He would reject water in favour of what he called a "fire bath". "Every evening as villagers gather, Kalau ... lights a **bonfire**, smokes **marijuana** and stands on one leg praying to Lord Shiva," the paper said.

Singh was reported to have said: "It's just like using water to take a bath. A fire bath helps kill all the germs and infections in the body."



Adapted from [this article](#)
by ECP coach

Darren 'Kez' Kurien

Word list

roadkill: animals killed on the road by vehicles

hermit: a reclusive person living in solitude

soot: a black, powdery substance consisting mainly of carbon, produced by incomplete burning of organic matter

cinder: synonym for ash(es); partly burnt coal or wood that doesn't produce flames

to bathe: to wash by immersing your body in water; to have a bath

setbacks: reversals in progress; problems

cleanliness: the state of being clean; hygienic

overwhelming: (of an emotion) very strong

bonfire: a large open-air fire

marijuana: synonym for cannabis

Let's chat about that!

1. As a species, are we too clean or too dirty? Discuss.
2. How long could you go without a shower or bath for? Explain.
3. Do you have any phobias? What are they, and how do you manage?
4. In what situation(s) do you think you could eat roadkill?
5. Can you imagine having a fire bath? Would it be as effective as soap and water? Why (not)?
6. How do you feel when you are near dirty/smelly/sweaty people?
7. Have you ever been persuaded to do something you didn't want to? How did you feel?

Pronunciation (2): record yourself

The first piece of pronunciation advice was to listen to examples of authentic speech and to "shadow" - or copy short sentences or phrases, trying to imitate sounds, intonation and word stress.

Pronunciation tip number 2 would be to record yourself doing this.

It might be embarrassing at first, but once you get used to listening to your own voice, it really isn't so bad!

So, listen to the authentic speech, **press record** on your phone and imitate the sounds that you hear. Then listen back to your version and then the original and compare them.

- Make a note of any sounds that you had difficulties with. Ask your ECP coach for help with this.
- Try to repeat these words or sounds slowly and then record yourself again.
- Are you getting better? If not, you can use an app such as ELSA Speak to see what's going wrong, and to recognise where your pronunciation is going right.
- Your computer/tablet/mobile might have voice recognition software (in English) to help you dictate words, phrases or sentences. Here are a couple of my favourite phrases:

"Can I have a glass of orange juice, please?"

"Steven Spears gets stressed studying in school but he stops stressing out when he starts doing sports."

Best of luck with your practice!!

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