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◆ CHAPTER 3: ◆

PURIFICATION



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Chapter 3

Purification

Linguistically speaking, purification means cleanliness and being free of dirt. Technically, purity is divided into two types; removing the filth and uplifting the ritual status of impurity. Filth or better known as Najasah in Arabic is physical substance that must be washed or removed from the body, clothes and the spot a worshipper is using for prayer. Urine, stool, menstrual blood, a dog's saliva among other things are considered najis or impure. The second part of purity is uplifting both minor and major impurity. Minor impurity is caused by answering the call of nature, passing wind, sleeping or eating camel's meat. Such minor ritual impurity is uplifted by performing ablution (wudhu). Major ritual impurity is caused by ejaculation, sexual intercourse or discharge of blood in menses or after giving birth. This major ritual impurity is uplifted by taking ritual bath or Ghusul.

The water used for purification

The water that ensures purification is called *tahir*, and it is defined as pure and purifying. It is every type of water that retains its original state as it is created, whether it falls from the

sky, such as rain water, snow and hail, or comes up from the earth, such as the water of rivers, springs, wells and seas.⁵¹

The evidence supporting this is clear in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Allah says: 'He sent down water from the sky to purify you' (8: 11) and 'We cause pure water to descend from the skies' (25: 48). The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed: 'My Lord, wash off my sins with snow, water and hail.'⁵² In reference to the sea, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Its water is pure, and its dead animals are lawful to eat.'⁵³

Containers, plates and utensils

Under this heading all types of utensils are included, including metal containers. To start with, these are permissible to use,⁵⁴ as Allah says: 'It is He who created for you all that is on earth' (2: 29).

Use of gold and silver articles in purification

All plates, utensils and articles are permissible to use for food, drink and other purposes, provided that they are not impure, including precious ones. The only exception is the use of gold and silver articles for food and drink. This particular use is forbidden, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Do not

⁵¹ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 1, p. 25; Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 1, p. 13.

⁵² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 744; Muslim, *hadith* No. 598.

⁵³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* 8,735; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 83; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 69; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 59; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 3,246.

⁵⁴ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 6.

drink from cups made of gold and silver, nor eat from plates made of them. They belong to unbelievers in this life and to us in the life to come.’⁵⁵ He also said: ‘A person who drinks from silver cups is like one putting the fire of hell in his stomach.’⁵⁶ These statements of prohibition specifically mention eating and drinking, but do not refer to other uses, which indicates that these utensils may be used for other purposes. The prohibition is general; therefore, it applies to utensils made of pure gold or silver, or plated with them, or those that contain some gold or silver.⁵⁷

Utensils welded with gold or silver

If gold is used for welding a broken utensil, it becomes unlawful to use, because the aforementioned *hadith* applies to it. If a small amount of silver is used for welding, it is permissible to use,⁵⁸ as clearly understood from the *hadith* reported by Anas ibn Malik: ‘The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) mug was broken and he used a small chain of silver to mend the break.’⁵⁹

Unbelievers’ utensils

The primary ruling is that these are permissible to use. However, if it is known that they are contaminated with

⁵⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,426; Muslim, *hadith* No. 2,067.

⁵⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,634; Muslim, *hadith* No. 2,065

⁵⁷ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 3,109.

impurity, then they may not be used until they have been washed. Abu Tha[labah al-Khushni reported: ‘I said: “O Messenger of Allah, we live among people who belong to earlier religions: is it permissible for us to eat in their plates?” He said: “Do not eat in their plates. If you find nothing else, wash them and use them.”’⁶⁰

If such plates and utensils are not known to be contaminated with impurity, as in the case when their owners are known to handle no impurity, they are permissible to use.⁶¹ It is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions took water for their ablution from a large waterskin belonging to an idolater woman.⁶² Allah has made it permissible for Muslims to eat the food of the people of earlier revelations, and they are likely to serve it in their own plates and utensils. Anas reports: ‘A Jew invited the Prophet (peace be upon him) to a meal made of barley bread and fat that has changed colour, and he accepted the invitation.’⁶³

Utensils made of the hide of carrion

The hide of dead animals (carrion) that are permissible to eat is purified by tanning, and they then become permissible to use. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Any hide becomes purified when tanned.’⁶⁴ When the Prophet (peace be upon

⁶⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,478; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,930.

⁶¹ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 6.

⁶² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,426; Muslim, *hadith* No. 682.

⁶³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 13,201.

⁶⁴ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 1,895; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 1,728; al-Nassa’i *hadith* No. 4,241; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 3,609. Al-Tirmidhi graded it as ‘good and authentic’.

him) passed by a dead sheep, he said to his Companions: ‘Would you take its hide and use it?’ They said that it was carrion. He said: ‘It is only forbidden to eat.’⁶⁵ This ruling applies to animals that are lawful to eat when slaughtered in the proper way.

The hair of carrion that is normally permissible to slaughter for food is not impure, while its meat is impure. Needless to say, the meat of carrion is unlawful to eat. Allah says in the Qur’an: ‘Say: “In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wishes to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine – for all that is impure”’ (6: 145). The hide is considered to have been tanned when it is cleaned of all impurity and dirt using water mixed with salt or a tanning agent extracted from plants such as the *Acacia nilotica*.

The hide of dead animals that are not permissible to eat is not purified by tanning. Thus, the hide of a dead cat is not purified by tanning even though it is not impure when the cat is alive. This applies to the hide of all animals that are not permissible to eat.

In summary, animals that die naturally are impure, but their hide is purified when tanned if they are normally permissible to eat. The hide of animals that are forbidden to eat is not purified by tanning.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Related by Muslim, *hadīth* No. 363.

⁶⁶ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 7.

Using the toilet and its manners

The use of water or solids, and whether either is sufficient.

Istinja' is the Arabic word used for the removal of traces of what is discharged through the private parts, while *istijmar* signifies the use of a cleansing solid object, such as toilet paper or something similar. Either one is sufficient, as it is authentically reported. Anas said: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to go to the toilet. I and another lad of about my age would carry for him a small waterskin and a staff. He would use water to cleanse himself.'⁶⁷ [A'ishah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'When any of you goes to the toilet he should cleanse himself with three stones, as that is sufficient.'⁶⁸ However, to use both the solid and water is preferable.

Istijmar involves wiping with a solid object that is pure and cleansing, such as toilet paper, stones, wood, etc. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used stones for the purpose, and whatever achieves the same results is also acceptable.⁶⁹ A minimum of three wipes is required, as clearly understood from the *hadith* reported by Salman: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited that one should face or turn one's back to the *qiblah* (i.e. the same direction faced in prayer) when one goes to the

⁶⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 152, Muslim, *hadith* No. 271.

⁶⁸ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 24,771; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 40; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 44; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 147.

⁶⁹ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina'*, vol. 1, p. 62.

toilet for urination or defecation, or to use one's right hand for cleansing oneself after that, or cleansing with less than three stones, or with animal bones or animal faeces.'⁷⁰

Facing the *qiblah* when relieving oneself

If a person is relieving oneself in an open area, as in the desert, one may not face the *qiblah* or turn one's back to it. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'When you go to the toilet, do not face the *qiblah* and do not turn your back to it, but face the east or the west.' Abu Ayyub adds: 'When we travelled to Syria, we found toilets that were built towards the direction of the Ka [bah. Therefore, we used them sideways and prayed for forgiveness.'

If the toilet is within a building, or when there is a screen between the person using it and the *qiblah*, one may use it. [Abdullah ibn [Umar reports: 'I went over Hafsa's roof for something I needed. I overlooked the Prophet (peace be upon him) sitting for his toilet with his back towards the *qiblah* and facing Syria.'⁷¹ Marwan reports: 'I saw [Abdullah ibn [Umar when he sat his camel facing the *qiblah*, and then he sat to urinate. I said to him: "Abu [Abd al-Rahman, is not this way prohibited?" He said: "Yes, when in an open area; but when there is something to screen you from the *qiblah*, then there is no harm."⁷² However, it is more preferable not to face the *qiblah* when in the toilet, even in buildings.

⁷⁰ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 262.

⁷¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 148, Muslim, *hadith* No. 266.

⁷² Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 11; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 161; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 256.

When going to the toilet⁷³

When one goes to the toilet, one is recommended to say before entering: ‘In the name of Allah. My Lord, I seek shelter with You from all that is dirty and foul. In other reports: In the name of Allah. My Lord, I seek shelter with You from male and females devils’ On finishing and leaving, one is recommended to say: ‘I seek Your forgiveness.’ It is recommended to put one’s left foot first on entering and one’s right foot first on leaving, and not to uncover one’s private parts until one is close to the lavatory. If one is doing it in an open area, one is recommended to go far and seek a position where one cannot be seen. Most of these points are mentioned in the following *hadiths*:

- Jabir reports: ‘We were with Allah’s messenger on travel. When he needed to go to the toilet, he would go far away from us so as no one could see him.’⁷⁴
- [Ali quoted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘To say, “in the name of Allah”, when one goes to the toilet is to ensure that the jinn cannot see the private parts of humans.’⁷⁵
- Anas reports: ‘When the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to the toilet, he would say, “My Lord, I seek Your shelter from all that is dirty and foul.”’⁷⁶

⁷³ Al-Dardir, *Hashiyat al-Sawi [ala al-Sharh al-Saghir*, vol. 1, p. 87; al-Khatib al-Shirbini, *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, vol. 1, p. 39.

⁷⁴ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 335. See: *Sahih Ibn Majah*, vol. 1, p. 60.

⁷⁵ Related by al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 606; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 297.

⁷⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 142; Muslim, *hadith* No. 375.

- [A'ishah reports: 'When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came out after being to the toilet, he would say, "I seek Your forgiveness."' ⁷⁷
- [Abdullah ibn [Umar said: 'When the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to the toilet, he would not lift his robes until he was close to the ground.' ⁷⁸

What is forbidden when relieving oneself:

It is forbidden to urinate in stagnant water, as stated in the *hadith* reported by Jabir: 'Allah's messenger prohibited urination in stagnant water.' ⁷⁹ It is also forbidden to hold the Qur'an or to read it when one is in the toilet, as the Qur'an should always be treated with respect. One should not hold one's penis with one's right hand when urinating, and one should not use it to clean oneself after urination or defecation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When any of you urinates, he should not hold his organ in his right hand, nor use his right hand to clean himself.' ⁸⁰

It is also forbidden to urinate or defecate by the roadside, or in the shade, or in parks, or under a fruit tree, or close to water sources. Mu'adh quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'Guard against the three practices which invite people's curses: answering the call of nature near water sources, by the roadside and in the shade.' ⁸¹ Abu Hurayrah quotes the Prophet

⁷⁷ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 30; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 7.

⁷⁸ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 14; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 14.

⁷⁹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 281.

⁸⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 154; Muslim, *hadith* No. 267.

⁸¹ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 26; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 328; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 273.

(peace be upon him) as saying: “Guard against the two practices which invite people’s curses.” People asked what these practices were. He said: “Answering the call of nature by the roadside and in the shade.”⁸² ‘In the shade’ refers to places where people normally take their rest. This may be under a tree or next to a wall.

Furthermore, it is forbidden to wipe one’s private parts after defecation with animal droppings, bones or food. Jabir reports: ‘Allah’s messenger prohibited that one should wipe oneself with a bone or animal droppings.’⁸³ Moreover, it is forbidden to answer the call of nature in a graveyard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘It is the same whether to relieve oneself in between graves or in the middle of the marketplace.’⁸⁴

What is reprehensible when relieving oneself:

When relieving oneself in an open area and it is windy, it is reprehensible to do it facing the direction of the wind, so as to guard against the possibility of the urine being blown back at oneself. It is also reprehensible to converse with anyone. A man passed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as he was urinating and offered a greeting, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not reply.⁸⁵

⁸² Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 269.

⁸³ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 263.

⁸⁴ Related by Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,567.

⁸⁵ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 370.

It is also reprehensible to urinate over a crevice in the ground. Qatadah reports: ‘Allah’s messenger reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made clear that no one should urinate over a crevice or a hole in the ground. People asked Qatadah what was wrong with urinating over a hole. He answered that holes were said to be the homes of the jinn.’⁸⁶ Moreover, it may be the home of an animal and it would be harmed by the urine. It is also reprehensible to take anything in which Allah’s name is written, except when necessary. ‘When the Prophet (peace be upon him) went into the toilet, he would take off his ring.’⁸⁷ However, this is overlooked when it is necessary to take it in, as in the case with banknotes bearing Allah’s name. If one should leave these outside, they may be stolen or he may forget to pick them up when leaving.

Recommended practices of sound nature (i.e. *fi ttrah*):

These practices are also called ‘nature’s fine characteristics’ because whoever does them maintains the natural course Allah wants for people so that they will be in the best and most complete form. Abu Hurayrah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘Five practices are part of sound nature: circumcision, shaving pubic hair, plucking armpit hair, clipping nails and trimming the moustache.’⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 29; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 34. Ibn Hajar mentions in *Al-Talkhis* vol. 1, p. 106 that Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn al-Sakan grade this *hadith* as authentic.

⁸⁷ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 19; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 1,746; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 5,213; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 303.

⁸⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,889; Muslim, *hadith* No. 257.

1. Shaving pubic hair: This is recommended for cleanliness. It may also be removed with hair removing products.
2. Circumcision: This means the removal of the foreskin that covers the head of a boy's penis. It is very useful as it keeps the penis uncontaminated by the impurity of urine. It is recommended to have it done on the seventh day after birth, because it is quicker to heal. Female circumcision is practised in some countries, but unknown in the majority of Muslim countries. No *hadith* of good or authentic grade recommends it.
3. Trimming the moustache: The moustache should be heavily reduced, because this makes one better looking and cleaner. There are several *hadiths* urging the trimming of one's moustache while growing one's beard and taking care of it. A beard adds an element of dignity to man's appearance and manliness. Many people today take the reverse attitude, growing their moustaches and shaving their beards. This is contrary to the Sunnah and to the clear recommendation to grow one's beard. Abu Hurayrah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'Cut your moustaches and grow your beards. Thus you contradict the Majjians.'⁸⁹ Ibn [Umar reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Do the opposite of the idolaters: grow your beards and trim your moustaches.'⁹⁰ Every Muslim should observe the Prophet's (peace be upon him) guidance and choose a way that is contrary to

⁸⁹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 260.

⁹⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,892; Muslim, *hadith* No. 259.

the practices of the disbelievers. Moreover, Muslim men should make sure not to imitate women.

4. Nail clipping: Nails must not be left long. To clip them gives a better appearance and prevents the collection of any dirt that might accumulate under them. Some people, including Muslims, take no heed of this important Sunnah, letting their nails, or a particular nail grow long.
5. Plucking armpit hair: The removal of armpit hair is recommended either by plucking or shaving. It is cleaner and reduces foul smell.

It is clear that Islam urges us to attend to these practices as they combine cleanliness with purification and good appearance. A Muslim who attends to them has the best appearance, and moves away from the practices of unbelievers and ignorant people. Furthermore, he earns reward as he implements the requirements of his faith and follows the Prophet's (peace be upon him) guidance.

Added to these five practices are brushing one's teeth, rinsing one's nose and mouth, washing the back of finger joints and washing private parts. [A'ishah states: 'Allah's messenger said: "Ten practices are part of sound human nature: trimming the moustache, growing one's beard, brushing one's teeth, rinsing one's nose, clipping one's nails, washing the back of finger joints, plucking armpit hair, shaving pubic hair and washing private parts.'"⁹¹

⁹¹ Related by Muslim, hadith No. 261.



Brushing one's teeth: This is done by using a *miswak*, which is a tooth stick, or a toothbrush to clean one's teeth and gums and remove any food trapped in between teeth. It also prevents bad mouth smell and is recommended at all times. The Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged the brushing of teeth generally, without specifying a time for it. He also said: 'Had it not been for fear that I make things too hard for my community, I would have ordered them to brush their teeth before every prayer.'⁹²

Brushing one's teeth is strongly recommended when one performs ablution, on waking up, when the smell of one's mouth changes, before reciting the Qur'an or prayer and when entering the mosque or one's home. [A'ishah was asked, 'what was the first thing the Prophet (peace be upon him) did when he came home?'. She answered: 'He brushed his teeth.' It is also strongly recommended if one has been silent for long, and when one's teeth start to become yellowish.⁹³

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) woke up for night worship, he started with brushing his teeth.⁹⁴ Every Muslim is urged to be in his best shape and cleanliness when about to engage in worship.

Brushing one's teeth ensures several benefits. Most importantly, it keeps the mouth clean in this life and it earns Allah's pleasure in the life to come. The Prophet (peace be

⁹² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 887; Muslim, *hadith* No. 252.

⁹³ Al-Dardir, *Al-Sharh al-Saghir*, vol. 1, p. 125.

⁹⁴ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 245; Muslim, *hadith* No. 255.

upon him) said: ‘Brushing the teeth cleans the mouth and pleases the Lord.’⁹⁵ Therefore, a Muslim should be keen to observe this practice and never to abandon it, as it is highly beneficial. Regrettably, some people may not brush their teeth for a month or two, either out of negligence, or because they are unaware of its benefits. Thus they miss out on Allah’s reward and the benefits it brings. They should remember that the Prophet (peace be upon him) always maintained this practice and ordered his community to follow his example. He would have made it obligatory, but he feared that some people might find it hard to maintain. Other benefits of teeth brushing have been mentioned, such as strengthening one’s teeth and preventing gum disease, as well as improving one’s voice and giving one a sense of refreshment.⁹⁶

Ablution, i.e. *Wudu’*

Definition and status

Linguistically speaking, *wudu’* is derived from a root that connotes ‘good looking, cleanliness and brightness’, while in Islamic contexts it means ‘the use of water in respect of four organs, the face, arms, head and feet, in a particular way defined by Islam with the intention of worship.’⁹⁷ Performing

⁹⁵ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 24,203; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 5.

⁹⁶ Al-Dardir, *Al-Sharh al-Saghir*, vol. 1, p. 125.

⁹⁷ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina’*, vol. 1, p. 91.



ablution is obligatory when one wishes to pray or do a similar act of worship, such as *tawaf* around the Ka'bah.

Basis of obligation

The basis of making the ablution obligatory when wanting to pray is the Qur'an, as Allah says: 'Believers, when you are about to pray, wash your faces, and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and pass your wet hands lightly over your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or if you have been in intimate contact with women and can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands. Allah does not want to impose any hardship on you, but He wants to purify you, and to bestow on you the full measure of His blessings, so that you may be grateful' (5: 6). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Allah does not accept a prayer without ablution or voluntary charity (i.e. *sadaqah*) from stolen booty.'⁹⁸ He also said: 'Allah does not accept the prayer of one who had a discharge from the private parts until he has performed the ablution.'⁹⁹ No Muslim has ever expressed a contrary view. Thus, the ablution is required on the basis of the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the unanimity of scholars.

⁹⁸ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 224.

⁹⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 6,954; Muslim, *hadith* No. 223.

Requirements

For ablution to be valid, it must comply with the following requirements:

1. Belief in Islam, sanity and sense of discrimination: It cannot be done by an unbeliever, a mad person or a child that does not discriminate between actions.
2. Intention: As the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, ‘Actions are but by intentions.’¹⁰⁰ There is no need for a verbal declaration of intention as this was not done by the Prophet (peace be upon him).
3. Clean water: Ablution cannot be done using water that has been contaminated by impurity.
4. Removal of anything that prevents skin contact with water, such as the presence of wax or dough on some spots, or nail varnish.
5. Immediate progress from one action to the next.
6. Following the proper order.
7. Washing all the organs that are required to be washed.

The obligatory part

1. Washing one’s whole face, as Allah says: ‘Believers, when you are about to pray, wash your faces...’ (5: 6).

¹⁰⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,907.

2. Washing one's arms up to the elbows, as the relevant verse makes clear: '...wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows...' (5: 6).
3. Wiping one's head with one's wet hand. There are different views on this, though the one we uphold is to wipe one's whole head. However, some scholars consider wiping a part of one's head sufficient. Allah says: '...and wipe over your heads...' (5: 6). To wipe a part of one's hair that is not close to one's head is invalid.
4. Washing one's feet up to the ankles, as Allah says: '...and wash your feet up to the ankles...' (5: 6).
5. Following the proper order: This is required because Allah mentions it in order and the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed his ablutions in the same order mentioned by Allah: the face, then the arms, then the head then the feet. This is clearly indicated by the *hadith* reported by [Abdullah ibn Zayd and in other *hadiths* describing the Prophet's (peace be upon him) ablution.
6. Continuous progress: This means washing one organ immediately after the one before it, without delay. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform his ablution without leaving gaps between washing the different parts. This is further confirmed by the *hadith* reported by Khalid ibn Ma[dan: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man praying and noticed that there was on the top of his foot a spot the size of a coin which was dry, because water did not touch it when the man performed his ablution. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to

repeat his ablution.’¹⁰¹ Had it not been necessary for ablution to be consecutive without any gap, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have told the man only to wash the unwashed part, not to repeat his ablution.

The recommended part

Certain actions are recommended when performing the ablution. These are Sunnah, which means that a person who does them earns a reward, while the one who omits them misses out on a reward but his ablution is valid. These are:

1. Saying, ‘In the name of Allah’ at the beginning, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘A person who does not say the name of Allah when doing the ablution does not have his ablution complete.’¹⁰²
2. Brushing one’s teeth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Had it not been for fear that I make things too hard for my community, I would have ordered them to brush their teeth every time they performed the ablution.’¹⁰³
3. Washing one’s hands three times at the start, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that as reported by his companions who explained how he performed his ablution.

¹⁰¹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 15,495; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 175; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 396.

¹⁰² Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 9,418; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 101; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 245; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 186.

¹⁰³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 9,928; al-Nassa’i in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 99; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 148.

4. Rubbing one's face to ensure that one's wet fingers go through one's thick beard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did that: 'When the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed his ablution, he rubbed his arms.'¹⁰⁴ 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) took water below his jaws to go through his beard.'¹⁰⁵
5. Starting with the right hand or foot, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked to start with the right when putting on his shoes, dismounting, performing ablution and all matters.'¹⁰⁶
6. Washing one's face, hands and feet three times. What is obligatory is once only, but it is recommended to do it three times, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. It is authentically reported that 'at different times he washed each part once, or twice or three times.'¹⁰⁷
7. Rinsing one's mouth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When you perform the ablution, rinse your mouth.'¹⁰⁸
8. Cleaning one's nose. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When you perform the ablution, take some water in your nose and blow your nose.'¹⁰⁹
9. Wiping one's ears using one's forefinger to wipe the inside of one's ears and one's thumb to wipe the outside.

¹⁰⁴ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 16,441; Ibn Hibban, *hadith* No. 1,082; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 1/196; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 243.

¹⁰⁵ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 145; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 250; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 1/90.

¹⁰⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 168; Muslim, *hadith* No. 268.

¹⁰⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* Nos. 157, 158 and 159.

¹⁰⁸ Related by Abu Dawud and al-Bayhaqi.

¹⁰⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawud.

10. Glorification after the ablution. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘For any of you who performs the ablution and does it well, then says, “I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah; He has no partners; and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger,” will have all eight gates of heaven opened and he may enter through any one he wishes.’¹¹⁰
11. Economy in using water. Anas reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to wash his body for purification, using the equivalent of two litres.¹¹¹ He might use only one quarter of this amount for ablution.

What invalidates the ablution:

Ablution may be invalidated by any of four things, as follows:

1. A discharge through one’s private parts. This applies for any discharge of urine, stools, semen, blood or wind, of any amount. In the Qur’anic verse that mentions the situations when ablution becomes required for prayer, Allah says: ‘if one of you has come from the toilet’ (5: 6). With regard to a situation when one doubts if one has broken wind, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that ablution is not required ‘unless one hears a sound or smells something.’¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 234; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 55, though al-Tirmidhi adds the supplication, ‘My Lord, make me one of those who repent of their sins and one of those who always purify themselves.’

¹¹¹ Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

¹¹² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 137; Muslim, *hadith* No. 361.

2. A discharge of impurity from any part of the body. If the discharge is urine or stools, it certainly invalidates the ablution.
3. Loss of the mental faculty, as in the case of sleep. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The eye is the string that ties the anal sphincter; when the eyes sleep, the string is loosened.’¹¹³ On the other hand, madness, drunkenness and loss of consciousness invalidate the ablution according to all scholars. Sleep that invalidates the ablution is deep sleep when the sleeper loses all awareness, no matter in what position one is asleep. Dosing off slightly does not invalidate the ablution. The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) companions used to be very drowsy as they awaited [Isha’ prayer, and then they would stand up and pray without performing a fresh ablution.¹¹⁴ Many scholars consider that if one sleeps seated in a way that does not allow breaking wind, one’s ablution remains valid.
4. Touching one’s private parts directly, without cover. Busrah bint Safwan reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Whoever touches his private part should not offer prayers until he has performed the ablution.’¹¹⁵
5. Eating camel’s meat. Jabir ibn Abdullah said: the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, “Should I do wudoo’ after eating camel meat?” He said, “Yes.” The person said:

¹¹³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 887; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 203; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 477.

¹¹⁴ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 376.

¹¹⁵ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 887; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 181; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 82; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 82.

“Should I do wudoo’ after eating mutton?” He said, “If you wish.” (Narrated by Muslim, 360).

What does not invalidate ablution:

Certain situations are wrongly thought to invalidate the ablution. These are:

1. Touching a person of the other sex skin to skin.
2. Bleeding from any part of the body other than that which comes from the private parts, whether through injury, medical treatment or nasal bleeding, regardless of the amount.
3. Vomit, regardless of its amount.
4. Doubting whether one’s ablution has been invalidated. The invalidation must be ascertained.
5. Loud laughter during the prayer (this invalidates the prayer but not the wudhu).
6. Washing a dead person to prepare him for burial.

When ablution is required

Performing the ablution is required for the following:

1. Prayer. Ibn [Umar quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘Allah does not accept a prayer without

ablution or voluntary charity (i.e. *sadaqah*) from stolen booty.’

2. Performing the *tawaf* (i.e. going around the Ka[bah]), whether it be an obligatory duty or a voluntary act of worship. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have performed ablution before doing the *tawaf*.¹¹⁶ He also said: ‘*Tawaf* around the Ka[bah] is a [form of] prayer, but Allah has permitted speech during it.’¹¹⁷ Moreover, he made clear that women may not perform the *tawaf* when they are in the period.¹¹⁸
3. Holding the Qur’an without a cover. Allah says about the Qur’an: ‘only the purified can touch it’ (56: 79). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘None other than a person who has performed purification can touch the Qur’an.’¹¹⁹ This is the view of many scholars, but the Qur’anic verse is preceded by a verse that mentions that the Qur’an is ‘in a well-guarded record’ which can be touched only by the angels, who are described as ‘the purified’. A large number of early eminent scholars are of the view that the Qur’an is permissible to be held by a person who has not performed the ordinary ablution, i.e. *wudu*’, provided that he has not incurred the need for major ritual bath, i.e. *ghusl*.

¹¹⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,641; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,235.

¹¹⁷ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 15,423; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 960; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 2,922; Ibn Hibban, *hadith* No. 3,836; al-Hakim, *hadith* 1,686.

¹¹⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 305; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,211.

¹¹⁹ Related by Malik, vol. 1, p. 199; al-Darimi, *hadith* No. 2,312; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 435; al-Bayhaqi, *hadith* No. 1/87; al-Hakim, *hadith* No. 1,447.

When ablution is recommended

1. Before glorifying Allah or reciting the Qur'an, because a person is in his best situation when he has performed the ablution.
2. Before every prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) always did that, as reported by Anas: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform the ablution before every prayer.'¹²⁰ This means that even when he had already performed an ablution that was still valid.
3. A person who is in the state of ceremonial impurity (i.e. *janabah*) is recommended to perform the ablution if he wants to have a second intercourse, or sleep, or eat or drink. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'If any of you has had sexual intercourse with his wife and wants a second, he is recommended to perform the ablution first.'¹²¹ [A'ishah reported: 'When Allah's messenger wanted to go to sleep and he was in the state of ceremonial impurity, he would perform the ablution before he went to sleep just as he would do for prayer.'¹²² In another version she said: 'When Allah's messenger wanted to eat or go to sleep...'¹²³
4. Before taking a bath. [A'ishah reported: 'When Allah's messenger wanted to take a bath to remove the state of

¹²⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 214.

¹²¹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 308.

¹²² Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 305.

¹²³ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 305.

ceremonial impurity, he would start by washing his hands, and then he would pour water by his right hand over his left to wash his private part, then he would perform the ablution, as he would do for prayer...¹²⁴

5. Before going to bed. Al-Bara' ibn [Azib reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When you want to go to bed, perform the ablution as you would for prayer, then lie on your right side...'¹²⁵

Wiping over the *khuff*

The Arabic word *khuff* refers to what is worn over one's feet, whether it be in leather, wool or other material, including socks.¹²⁶

Ruling and its basis

To wipe over the *khuff* instead of washing one's feet for ablution is valid according to the general view of Sunni scholars. It is a concession given by Allah to make things easier for His servants. This concession is based on the Sunnah and unanimity of scholars. As for the Sunnah, there are numerous *hadiths* confirming its validity as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did it and instructed others to do it. Sunni scholars are unanimous that it is valid in travel and at home, whether there is a necessity or not.

¹²⁴ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 316.

¹²⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 247; Muslim, *hadith* No. 2,710.

¹²⁶ Ibn [Abidin, *Al-Durr al-Mukhtar*, vol. 1, p. 240; Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, vol. 1, p. 17.

Likewise, it is permissible to wipe over socks, because they are equally needed by people, and they are widely used. Hence, the permissibility to wipe over socks provided they cover the feet up to the ankles.¹²⁷

Conditions for wiping over the *khuffs*

1. One must have a valid ablution at the time when one wears the *khuff*, or socks. Al-Mughirah reports: ‘I was accompanying the Prophet (peace be upon him) on travel, and I went down to help him take off his *khuffs*, but he said to me: “Leave them on, as I wore them (while in the state of purification and wudhu).” He wiped over them.’¹²⁸
2. Covering all the feet. The *khuffs* must cover all the part of one’s legs that must be washed for ablution, i.e. all the feet up to the ankles. If any part is uncovered, wiping over them is invalid. Ibn Taymiyyah differs with such a ruling and makes it clear in his *Fatawa* that this condition has no firm basis.
3. They should be permissible to wear. It is not permissible to wipe over the *khuffs* or socks if they are taken from their owner by force, or stolen, or made of silk because wearing silk is forbidden for men.

¹²⁷ Al-San[ani, *Subul al-Salam*, vol. 1, p. 57.

¹²⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 206; Muslim, *hadith* No. 274.

4. They should be pure, as it is not allowed to wipe over *khuffs* made of something impure, such as the hide of a donkey.
5. Using the concession within the time allowed. Wiping over the *khuffs* is valid for one day and night for one who is in his own home town, and for three consecutive days and nights for one on travel.

How to wipe

The place where the wiping should be done is the top of the *khuffs* and what is required is what is understood by saying ‘to wipe’. In the *hadith* in which al-Mughirah ibn Shu[bah describes how the Prophet (peace be upon him) wiped over his *khuffs* during his ablution he said: ‘I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) wiping over his *khuffs*, on their top.’¹²⁹

If one wipes over the bottom or the back of the *khuffs* and not the top, one does wrong and the wiping is invalid. [Ali said: ‘Had things in religion always been based on logic, the bottom of the *khuffs* would have been more appropriate to wipe upon than the top. I saw Allah’s messenger wiping over the top of his *khuffs*.’¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 18,156; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 98.

¹³⁰ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 162; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 1,386.

Duration

There is a specific duration for wiping over the *khuffs*, which is one day and one night for a person staying in his home town or travelling a short distance that does not permit him to shorten his prayers. As for a traveller beyond the distance allowing shortening prayers, the duration is three days and nights. [Ali reports: ‘Allah’s messenger permitted three days and nights for a traveller and one day and night for a resident.’¹³¹

Conditions making wiping over the *khuffs* invalid

The concession to wipe over the *khuffs* for ablution is rendered invalid in the following cases:

1. When taking a bath becomes obligatory. Safwan ibn [Assal reported: ‘Allah’s messenger ordered us not to remove our *khuffs* for three days and nights, except when one finds himself in the state of ceremonial impurity.’¹³²
2. If any part of the feet is exposed.
3. Taking the *khuffs* off; and taking one of them off is like taking them both off, according to most scholars.
4. The lapse of the time limit. This is a time-related concession, therefore, it cannot be extended over its allotted time.

¹³¹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 276.

¹³² Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 18,091; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 127; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 96.

5. Taking the khuffs of doesn't invalidate the wudhu but one can't wipe over the khuffs again if he puts them on unless he performs a new wudhu with washing the feet.

Starting time

The period allowed for wiping over the *khuffs* starts at the time when one's ablution has been invalidated after one had worn them. For example, if one performs the ablution for Fajr (i.e. dawn) prayer and wears the *khuffs*, then his ablution is invalidated after sunrise, and he does not perform another ablution until he performs the ablution for Thuhur (i.e. noon) prayer, his period of the concession starts at Thuhur time. Some scholars are of the view that it starts at the time he performs the ablution for Thuhur prayer, i.e. from the time of his first wiping.¹³³

Ghusl, or taking a bath

Definition: The Arabic word *ghusl* means to take a bath to wash the whole of one's body. In the Islamic context, it means pouring pure water over the entire body in a particular way, with the intention of worshipping Allah by uplifting the state of major ritual impurity.¹³⁴

¹³³ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 26.

¹³⁴ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 1, p. 158.



Ruling: The *ghusl* is obligatory when there is a cause requiring it. Allah says: ‘If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves’ (5: 6). A number of *hadiths* reported by the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Companions explaining how the *ghusl* should be performed clearly indicate that it is obligatory.

Taking a bath, i.e. performing the *ghusl*, is obligatory in the following cases:

1. The ejaculation of semen as per the ayah mentioned above. [Ali said: ‘If you ejaculate, then perform the *ghusl*.’¹³⁵ However, if the discharge is in a wet dream, it still requires a bath, even if the sleeper does not feel the orgasm. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked whether a woman must take a bath if she had a wet dream. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Yes, if she confirms a discharge.’¹³⁶ This is agreed by all scholars. It is important to note that the discharge of semen without an orgasm, as in the case of illness, does not require a *ghusl*, and the same is the case for one who sees a sexual dream but there is no trace of a discharge of semen. On the other hand, if on rising from sleep, one feels wetness but cannot remember a wet dream, one must perform the *ghusl* if one ascertains that the wetness is semen. Moreover, if one finds on one’s clothes traces of a discharge of semen but cannot ascertain its time, and he has already prayed once or more, he should perform the *ghusl* and repeat any prayer he offered since his last sleep.

¹³⁵ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 868; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 206; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 193.

¹³⁶ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 313.

2. The insertion of the top of the penis into a woman's vagina, even if no discharge takes place. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'If a man lies between her four limbs and the two private parts are in touch, the *ghusl* becomes obligatory.'¹³⁷ In this case, taking a bath is obligatory for both man and woman.
3. Embracing Islam by an unbeliever. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Qays ibn [Asim to take a bath when he accepted Islam.¹³⁸ This applies also to an apostate when he reverts to Islam.
4. When a woman finishes her menstrual period or postnatal bleeding. [A'ishah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Fatimah bint Abi Hubaysh: 'When you start your period, do not pray, and when you finish it, perform the *ghusl* and pray.'¹³⁹ It is universally agreed that postnatal bleeding is treated in the same way as menstruation.
5. Death. When Zaynab, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) eldest daughter, died, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the women attending: 'Wash her.'¹⁴⁰ He also said in reference to a man who died when he was in the state of consecration, i.e. *ihram*, 'Wash him with water and lotus leaves.'¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 349.

¹³⁸ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 355; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 605; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 188.

¹³⁹ Related by al al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 320; Muslim, *hadith* No. 333.

¹⁴⁰ Related by al al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,253; Muslim, *hadith* No. 939.

¹⁴¹ Related by al al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,265; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,206.

Recommended *ghusl*

Taking a bath is recommended in the following situations:

1. After every sexual intercourse. Abu Rafi [, the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) servant, reported that one night the Prophet (peace be upon him) took a bath after being with one wife and another after being with another. ‘I said: “O Messenger of Allah, could you not have taken one bath?” He said: “This way is better, fresher and purer.”’¹⁴²
2. Before Friday prayer, which is the most important of recommended cases of *ghusl*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘When you go for Friday prayer, take a bath.’¹⁴³
3. On the two Eid days.
4. Before entering into the state of consecration, i.e. *ihram*, for performing the pilgrimage or the [*umrah*. It is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) took a bath when he was about to enter into consecration.
5. After washing a deceased person. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Whoever washes a deceased person should take a bath.’¹⁴⁴

Performing *ghusl* – How it is done

¹⁴² Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 23,862; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 219; al-Nassa’i in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 8,986; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 590.

¹⁴³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 877.

¹⁴⁴ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 7,771; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,463.

There are two forms of ghusl:

- A) Acceptable form: in the sense that if a person only does ghusl in this manner, his ghusl is valid and he becomes purified from major impurity. But if a person fails to perform this kind of ghusl properly, his ghusl is not valid.
- B) Complete and preferred form: this is the type which it is recommended to do but is not obligatory.

As for the obligatory and acceptable form it is as follows:

1. Form the intention to purify oneself from impurity: *janaabah* (impurity following ejaculation), menses or *nifaas* (postpartum bleeding).
2. Wash the entire body with water once, making sure that the water reaches the roots of the hair and the places that it cannot reach easily, such as the armpits and backs of the knees, as well as rinsing the mouth and nose, according to the correct scholarly opinion.

As for the complete form, it is as follows

1. Form the intention in the heart to purify oneself from major impurity: *janaabah* (impurity following ejaculation), menses or *nifaas* (postpartum bleeding).
2. Then say Bismillah and wash the hands three times, then wash any dirt from the private part.
3. Then do a complete wudoo' as for prayer.
4. Then pour water over the head three times, and rub the hair so that the water reaches the roots of the hair.
5. Then wash the body, making sure that the water reaches all parts, rubbing it with the hands so that the water reaches the entire body.

The evidence for this preferred form of ghusl is:

It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did ghusl for janaabah, he would wash his hands and do wudoo’ as for prayer, then he would wash himself, then he would run his fingers through his hair, then when he thought that it [the water] had reached his skin, he would pour water over it [the head] three times, then he would wash the rest of his body.¹⁴⁵

Dry ablution

The Arabic word *tayammum*, which is translated as ‘dry ablution’, means wiping one’s face and arms with dust in a particular way as an act of worship when using water is not possible.

Ruling: Dry ablution is a legitimate concession granted by Allah to His servants. It is one of the distinctive aspects of Islamic law and it is peculiar to the Muslim community. Allah says in the Qur’an: ‘Believers, when you are about to pray, wash your faces, and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and pass your wet hands lightly over your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or if you have been

¹⁴⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 248 and Muslim, *hadith* No. 316.

in intimate contact with women and can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands. Allah does not want to impose any hardship on you, but He wants to purify you, and to bestow on you the full measure of His blessings, so that you may be grateful' (5: 6). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to one of his Companions: 'Pure dust is adequate, even if you continue to be without water for 10 years. When you have water, then use it to wash yourself.'¹⁴⁶ He also said: 'The entire earth is made a place of worship and purification for me.'¹⁴⁷

Scholars are unanimous that dry ablution is perfectly legitimate when the conditions for it apply. They also agree that it replaces purification with water, making it permissible to pray, perform the *tawaf*, recite the Qur'an, etc.

Conditions allowing dry ablution

Dry ablution is valid if it fulfils the following conditions:

1. Intention to uplift minor or major impurity: Intention is required in all types of worship, and dry ablution is an act of worship.
2. Possession of mental faculties: Dry ablution is invalid if done by an insane person or performed for an unconscious person.

¹⁴⁶ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 21,568; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 333; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 124; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 322; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 284; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 880.

¹⁴⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 335; Muslim, *hadith* No. 521.

3. Awareness: It is not valid if done by one who does not distinguish actions, such as a child below seven years of age.
4. Inability to use water for ablution: This may be due to the unavailability of water. Allah says: ‘If you [...] can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands’ (5: 6). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Pure dust is a source of purification for a Muslim when he does not find water, even if this continues for 10 years. If water is available, he should use it for ablution, as this is better.’ Alternatively, the inability to use water may be due to fear that it causes harm. This may apply to a person who is ill and fears that water might aggravate his complaint or delay his recovery. In the Qur’anic verse mentioning ablution, Allah mentions illness as a valid reason for dry ablution. Moreover, Jabir reports: ‘We were on travel and one of us was hit by a stone which caused a cut in his head. Then he slept and had a wet dream. He asked his companions: “Do you think I can resort to dry ablution in my condition?” They said that the concession did not apply to him as water was available. He, therefore, took a bath, and he died soon after. When we returned, we mentioned this to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he said: “They killed him; may Allah kill them. Could they not have asked when they did not know? Asking gives information to one who does not know. It would have been sufficient for him to resort to dry ablution and put a bandage over his wound, wipe over

it and wash the rest of his body.”¹⁴⁸ Again, dry ablution may be resorted to in very cold weather when the use of water may be harmful. [Amr ibn al- [As reports that once on an expedition ‘I had a wet dream on a very cold night. I feared that I might die if I had a bath, and resorted to dry ablution. I then led my companions in the Fajr prayer.’¹⁴⁹

5. Dry ablution must be with pure dust that has not been contaminated by any impurity. For example, it is invalid if the dust had been urinated upon and it was not subsequently purified. It should also be dry with fine dust attaching to one’s hand when it is struck. Ibn [Abbas explained the Qur’anic statement, ‘If you [...] can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands’ (5: 6), stating that it means ‘soil that had not been contaminated with impurity’. If such soil is unavailable, one may do the dry ablution on whatever surface can be found, such as sand, stone, etc. Allah says: ‘So fear Allah as much as you are able’ (64: 16). Imam al-Awza [i confirms that sand is adequate.

Conditions rendering dry ablution invalid

1. Dry ablution is invalidated by anything that invalidates normal ablution.

¹⁴⁸ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 3,056; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 336; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 572; al-Hakim, vol. 1, pp. 284–5.

¹⁴⁹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 17,812; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 334; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 285; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 681.

2. The availability of water, if the dry ablution has been resorted to for the unavailability of water. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told his Companion whom he had advised to resort to dry ablution: ‘If you find water, then perform the ablution.’
3. Dry ablution also becomes invalid if the reason for it, such as illness, no longer exists.

How it is done

To perform dry ablution, one needs to have the right intention, then say ‘in the name of Allah’, then strike the ground with both hands once, blow the dust off them or shake them, then wipe over one’s face and hands up to the wrists. [Ammar reports a *hadith* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is quoted to have said: ‘*Tayammum* is done with one strike for both one’s face and hands.’¹⁵⁰ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said to [Ammar: “It was sufficient for you to do like this:” He struck on the ground with his hands, then shook them, then wiped with them the back of his hand with his left hand, then wiped his face with both hands.’¹⁵¹

Impurities and how to remove them

¹⁵⁰ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 183,191; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 327; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 144; al-Nassa’i, in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 302.

¹⁵¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 347; Muslim, *hadith* No. 368.

The Arabic term, *najasah*, i.e. impurity, applies to every foul material thing Islam requires to be avoided.¹⁵²

Removing impurities

1. Impurities that are on the ground or the floor are removed by washing them off once, ensuring that the impure matter is gone. When a Bedouin urinated in the mosque, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that a pail of water be poured over the urine.¹⁵³
2. Impurities that are not on the ground, such as being on clothes or utensils or some other container. Such impurities must be washed until they are removed.

If the impurity is that of a dog which licked a utensil or ate from it, it is removed by washing it seven times, one of which should be with using soil. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘If a dog licks your plate, you should wash it seven times, and mix the first with soil.’¹⁵⁴ This ruling applies to utensils. Other materials such as clothes or furniture items would only be washed once.

As for the impurity of the pig, it is the correct view that it is like other impurities and its removal requires washing it off once

¹⁵² Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 35.

¹⁵³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 220; Muslim, *hadith* No. 284.

¹⁵⁴ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 279; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 338.

only, provided that the wash leaves no trace of the impurity. It is not required to be washed seven times.¹⁵⁵

If the impurity is urine, faeces, blood, or the like, it is washed, rubbed and squeezed until no trace of it is left. One wash is enough if it leaves no trace. The impurity of the urine of a male infant who has not eaten normal food may be removed by sprinkling water over it, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The urine of a female child should be washed while that of a male child should be sprinkled with water.’¹⁵⁶

The hide of carrion becomes free of impurity when tanned, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Any hide that is tanned is free of impurity.’ If menses stains a woman’s garment, it is washed with water; a woman came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Menstrual blood may get onto the clothes of any one of us; what should she do with it? He said: “She should scratch it, then rub it with water, then wash it, then pray in it.” This has been related by al-Bukhari (227) and Muslim (291).

It is important to take the necessary care to remove any impurity, whether it falls on one’s body, clothes or the place where one prays, because to be free of impurity is essential for the validity and acceptance of prayer.

Menses: definition and rulings

¹⁵⁵ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 37; *Mawsu'at Masa'il al-Jumhur fi al-Fiqh al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 122.

¹⁵⁶ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 757; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 525; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 270.

The Arabic term *al-Hayd*, which means ‘menstruation’, refers in Islamic context to the natural discharge of blood by a healthy woman on certain times from the lining of the uterus through the vagina, without the woman having had a childbirth.¹⁵⁷

Beginning and end

It has been confirmed that no period of menstruation occurs in girls younger than nine years of age. [A’ishah is quoted as saying: ‘When a girl completes nine years, then she is a woman.’¹⁵⁸ Likewise, by the age of 50 most women will have stopped menstruating. [A’ishah is reported to have said: ‘When a woman is 50 years of age, she stops menstruation.’¹⁵⁹

Duration

In most cases, menstruation lasts for six or seven days. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Hammah bint Jahsh, who had blood discharge that continued for a very long time: ‘Your period of menstruation is six or seven days, as Allah knows best, then take a bath and pray for 24 or 23 days, as other women menstruate and have their time of purification in their regular periods.’¹⁶⁰ Some scholars are of the view that there is no minimum or maximum length of a woman’s period, and that

¹⁵⁷ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁸ Mentioned by al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 1,109; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, but without a chain of transmission.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 1, p. 406.

¹⁶⁰ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 27,144; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 287; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 128; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 726.

it is determined by the custom of women in the family or community.

What it entails

1. It requires a bath at the end: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to a woman: ‘Do not pray for the same number of days as your normal period, then take a bath and offer your prayers.’¹⁶¹
2. Puberty: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Allah does not accept the prayer of a girl who experiences the period without covering her head.’¹⁶² This signifies that once a girl begins to have the period, she must cover her head, which means that Islamic duties apply to her and this takes place only when a person attains puberty.
3. It is a significant mark: A divorced woman’s waiting period is considered to have been completed when she has had three menstruations. Allah says: ‘Divorced women shall wait, by themselves, for three monthly periods’ (2: 228).
4. A woman’s period is a sure mark that she is not pregnant.

Important note: When a woman finishes her period before sunset, she must offer her Thuhur and [Asr prayers for that

¹⁶¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 325.

¹⁶² Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 25,167; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 641; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 377; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 655.

day; and if she finishes her period before dawn, she must offer her Maghrib and [Isha' prayers for that night. The time of each two prayers is considered one when there is a valid reason to delay the first prayer. This is the view of the majority of scholars, and it is upheld by Malik, al-Shafi'i and Ahmad.

Things forbidden during menstruation

Certain things become forbidden when a woman is in menstruation:

1. Penetrative sexual intercourse: Allah says: 'They ask you about menstruation. Say: "It is an unclean condition; so keep aloof from women during menstruation, and do not draw near to them until they are cleansed"' (2: 222). When this verse was revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) advised that foreplay is permissible. He said: 'You may do everything except intercourse.'¹⁶³
2. Divorce: A man may not divorce his wife when she is in her period. Allah says: 'O Prophet (peace be upon him), when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period and keep count of the waiting period' (65: 1). When [Umar reported to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that his son [Abdullah divorced his wife and she was in the period, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that [Abdullah must re-instate the marriage.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 302.

¹⁶⁴ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 521; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,471.

3. Prayer: A woman does not offer prayers during her period. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Fatimah bint Abi Hubaysh: ‘When you start your period, do not pray.’¹⁶⁵
4. Fasting: A woman does not fast during her period. In a conversation with women the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: ‘Is it not the case that when a woman is in her period she neither prays nor fasts?’ They answered: ‘Yes.’¹⁶⁶
5. Performing the *tawaf* at the Ka[bah: When [A’ishah started her period shortly before reaching Makkah for her pilgrimage, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to her: ‘You may do all the rituals required of pilgrims, except for *tawaf*, which you may not do until you have cleansed yourself.’¹⁶⁷
6. Reciting the Qur’an: This is the view of most scholars among the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Companions and the following generations. However, if a woman needs to recite the Qur’an, as in the case of fearing to forget what she had memorized, or if she is a teacher and needs to teach the Qur’an to her class, or to read her regular portion, she may do so. But if she has no such need, then it is better not to recite the Qur’an, as some scholars maintain.
7. Holding the Qur’an: As Allah says in reference to the Qur’an: ‘only the purified can touch’ (56: 79).

¹⁶⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 331; Muslim, *hadith* No. 333.

¹⁶⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 304.

¹⁶⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 305; Muslim, *hadith* Nos. 1,211 and 119.

8. Staying in a mosque: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘I do not permit staying in the mosque for a man in the state of ceremonial impurity, (i.e. *janabah*), or a woman in her period.’¹⁶⁸ When the Prophet (peace be upon him) stayed in the mosque during Ramadan, he used to let his wife [A’ishah comb his head, but she remained in her home as she was in the period].¹⁶⁹

It is also not permissible for a woman in the period to pass through the mosque if she fears to stain it.

Postnatal bleeding: This refers to the blood discharged by women after childbirth.

Duration

There is no minimum period for postnatal discharge, and therefore it depends on whether the bleeding stops or continues. Its maximum duration is usually 40 days, however with some women it takes longer to finish. Al-Tirmidhi said that all scholars among the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Companions and their successors agreed that a woman does not pray for 40 days after childbirth, unless she becomes clean before that, and in this case she takes a bath and offer her prayers normally. Umm Salamah reports: ‘During the Prophet’s (peace be upon

¹⁶⁸ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 232; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 4,323.

¹⁶⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 296.



him) lifetime, a woman who has given birth used to stay 40 days.¹⁷⁰

Rulings: The same rules regarding menstruation apply to postnatal discharge.

¹⁷⁰ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 26,584; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 312; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 139; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 648.