

IQRA TRUST

**A BOOKLET OF TAHARAH
Ritual Cleanliness
in Islam**

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*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful*

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah The Creator and Sustainer of the worlds, and all blessings and peace be upon the most noble human being, our master Muhammad and his household and companions

Allah the Almighty stresses the importance of *taharah* – cleanliness – in different places in the Holy Quran. He says; ‘Allah loves those who turn to Him contantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean’

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘Cleanliness is half of faith’.

Taharah is important is Islam because in order to perform *salah*, or most other acts of Islamic worship, it is obligatory to be in the state of *taharah*.

1 DEFINITION OF TAHARAH

Taharah is an Arabic word which means cleanliness

Taharah al-Khabath means cleaning the body and the clothes of the person and the place where prayer is performed, by using clean fresh water. Cleanliness here is intended to remove the following kinds of organic dirt from: **the body, the clothes and place of prayer**: Faeces, urine, vomit, blood, alcohol, dogs saliva, and pigs blood.

Taharah al-Hadath

(*Hadath*) is caused by the release of some substance from the penis, vagina or anus, including urine, faeces, menstrual blood, postnatal blood or wind. *Hadath* also includes falling into a deep sleep. *Taharat al-hadath* is the removal of these substances.

Taharah can either be done using water or, if there is no water or if it is impossible to use it, by performing an alternative form of *Taharah* called *Tayammum* (form of wudu in which sand/rock is used instead of water in a specific way).

Taharat al-Hadath is two types:

Al-Hadath al-Asghar i.e. the minor ritual impurity, and

al-Hadath al-Akbar, the major ritual impurity. The first makes it a must to perform Wudu (washing), while the second makes it a must to perform Ghusl (washing the whole body).

The acts of each form of Taharah are divided into:

- **Obligatory** acts (Fard): those acts that must be done. If they are not done this makes the whole process of intended Taharah unacceptable.
- **Recommended** acts (Sunnah): defined as the acts strongly recommended. Missing out these does not make the process of Taharah unacceptable, but if they are done, they are rewarded.
- **Desirable** acts: Recommended acts, which earn you more reward.

2 TYPES OF WATER

For *Wudu* and *Ghusl* purposes, water can be divided into three types:

- Purifying water, that is pure in itself and purifying for other things, such as the water of rain, well, rivers, sea, melted snow and hail.
- Water that has come into contact with **pure** material such as flour, sugar or the like.
- Water that has come into contact with **impure** materials such as urine, alcohol or the like.

The first type 'purifying water' is the only type that may be used for *wudu* and *ghusl*. The second type, '*tahir*' (clean, pure), may be used for habitual activities such as cooking but not for acts of worship.

The extent and importance of *taharah* are well explained in the Quran (5:6):

O you who believe! When you rise up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to elbows, and lightly

rub your heads and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. And if you are unclean, purify yourselves. And if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you comes from the closet, or you have had contact with women and you find no water, then go to clean, high ground and rub your faces and your hands with some of it. Allah would not place a burden on you, but he would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you, that you may give thanks.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also emphasised the importance of Taharah by saying: "Allah will not accept the prayer of a person who is in the state of Hadath until he performs wudu"

3 CLEANSING OF PRIVATE PARTS (ISTINJA')

After urinating it is recommended that private parts are thoroughly cleaned that no drops of urine are left behind, and that the bowels are fully relived. This can be done using water, tissue paper or even stones if water is not available. The recommended way of cleaning or washing one's private part is as follows:

- Start by washing the left hand before touching the place to be cleansed

- Wash the outlet for urine first, then the anus
- Pour water continuously on the hand while washing the private parts.

(It is a *sunnah* to use the left hand for cleaning ones private part)

Islam sets the following rules to be observed by Muslims while reliving themselves.

They should NOT:

- bring to the toilet any thing on which the name of Allah the Almighty is written
- face nor turn their backs to the direction of Makkah
- urinate or relieve themselves in shaded places and places where people gather and walk
- urinating in shower-rooms or in still or sunning water should also be avoided

They should:

- seek privacy from others

- say: '*Bismi-llah Allahumma Inni audhu bika min al-khubth wa al-khabaith*' ('In the name of Allah, O Allah I seek refuge in You from male and female harmful beings (devils)').
- Observe silence while in toilet rooms.

4 GHUSL (WASHING WHOLE BODY)

Ghusl is the major ritual ablution (bathing / showering) which is intended to remove the state of major ritual impurity (*al-Hadath al-Akbar*). By doing *Ghusl* a Muslim becomes ritually pure (*Tahir*) to perform his worship.

***Ghusl* is obligatory in the following cases:**

- after discharge of semen after having normal sexual orgasm, whether in a wet dream or when awake;
- after sexual intercourse or when the private parts of the male touch the private parts of the female;
- at the end of menstruation and after post-natal bleeding;

- to prepare the dead for burial; (The obligation to do this Ghusl falls upon the Muslim community.)
- when a non-Muslim accepts Islam

Beside that, *Ghusl* is recommended in certain circumstance such as:

- Before Jumu'ah (Friday) prayer.
- Before Eid prayers
- Before entering into the state of ihram (consecration) for Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages.

How to Perform Ghusl

To perform *ghusl* you should:

Make your intention (*Niyah*) that you want to remove the impurity (*al-Hadath*)

1. Start by saying '*Bismi-Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*'
2. Wash all you private parts thoroughly

3. Perform *wudu* as if you were going to pray
4. Pour water on your head and wash thoroughly making sure that the water reaches the scalp.
5. Wash the right side of your body starting with the upper parts (shoulder & armpits) down to feet.
6. Wash the left side of your body the same way.

Make sure that the water reaches every part of your body with special attention to places, like the navel, armpits and those parts where water cannot reach easily. You can of course perform *salah* straightaway after *ghusl* without having to perform *wudu* again. This can happen as long as your *wudu* was not broken.

5 WUDU (ABLUTION)

Wudu' is a ritual ablution intended to remove state of minor ritual impurity (*al-Hadath al-Asghar*). It permits Muslims to perform *salah* and other worship acts. Allah the Almighty ordered us, in *Surat Al-Ma'idah*

verse 6 mentioned above, to perform wudu whenever we get up to pray. Washing and wiping over parts mentioned in this verse are obligatory. That is; washing the face, hands to the elbows, feet and wiping the head.

Benefits of *Wudu*

Wudu has many physical and spiritual benefits:

- *Wudu* is an act of piety, because Muslims do wudu in obedience to the command of Allah in the Holy Quran.
- By doing wudu a Muslim prepares himself or herself to stand before the Creator.
- *Wudu* removes dirt and ritual impurity from the body parts.
- *Wudu* washes out sins from the body according to the hadith of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

How to perform *Wudu*:

1. Start by saying, 'Bismi-Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim'

2. Confirm the intention of wudu in your heart
3. Wash your hands to the wrists three times
4. Rinse your mouth three times
5. Cleanse your nose by sniffing up and blowing out water from your nostrils three times
6. Wash your face three times. Note that the length of the face, for the purposes of wudu, starts from the point where hair usually beings, down to the chin, and the width is from ear to ear.
7. Wash your arms up to the elbows three times each beginning with the right arm, then the left.
8. Wet your hands with fresh water then wipe your head starting from the forehead moving your hands backwards to the nape of the neck and then returning them back to the forehead.

9. Wet your hands with fresh water then wipe your ears inside and outside.

10. Wash your feet up to the ankles, beginning with the right one. Make sure that toes and the gaps between them are thoroughly washed.

Actions that break the *Wudu*

Occurrence of any of the following acts will break the *Wudu*:

- Any discharge from the penis, vagina or anus. This includes, stool, urine or breaking wind. *Wudu* should also be done after the release of *madhi*, (a thin sticky white fluid discharged as a result of sexual excitement), or *wadi* (a thick cloudy white discharge that usually comes out after urinating or carrying a heavy weight).

- Touching the private parts (penis), with the inner part of the palm without any barrier separating the organ from the hand.

- Touching a person's body intending sexual pleasure.

- Being in doubt whether you *wudu* is valid or not
- Apostasy: *wudu* would be considered broken if a Muslim rejected Islam
- Deep sleep: deep sleep is defined as when a sleeping person becomes unaware of what is going on around him/her
- Loss of consciousness. This includes insanity or loss of consciousness due to drunkenness, taking a medicine or the like.

6 TAYAMMUM (DRY ABLUTION)

Tayammum is a substitute for *wudu*. If there is no water, or it is impossible to use water, one may resort to *tayammum* in which sand, clean dust or rock is used in a specific way, instead of water.

A Muslim may do *tayammum* in the following cases:

- Lack of water

- Inability to use water due to illness, whether using water may be a cause for the illness or increase an existing one.
- If water is in a far away location and cannot be reached easily
- If reaching the place of water is dangerous

Tayammum must be performed for each fard (obligatory) prayer separately i.e. two fard prayers cannot be done with one *Tayammum*, whereas one *wudu* can last for more than one fard prayer, so long as it has not been broken. If a prayer has already been performed with *tayammum*, and then water became available before the prescribed time of the said prayer has expired, one should do wudu or ghusl and repeat the prayer.

How to perform *Tayammum*:

- Try to find clean sand or rock (it could be a small amount of sand or small piece of rock to be carried with the person)
- Start by saying, '*Bismi-Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*'

- Confirm the intention of doing *tayammum* together with the prayer
- Place your hands gently (with open palms) on the sand or rock
- Remove your hands and shake them gently with your palms facing down
- Rub your face with your palms.
- Repeat placing your hands in the above manner again and wipe all over your arms up to the elbows, rubbing over the right hand with your left palm and on your left hand with your right palm. Moving your fingers over the outer part of the arm and up to the elbows, then moving your palm over the inner part of the arm from the elbow down to the palm does this. Attention must be paid to the spaces between the fingers.

Whatever breaks the *wudu* also breaks *tayammum*.
Tayammum also ceases to be valid if the circumstances that made it permissible cease to exist.
 That is: when water becomes available, when the

person recovers from the illness that caused them not to use water, or when the danger that prevented people from reaching water is gone.

7 WIPING OVER CASTS

Bandages (*jabirah*) and footwear (*khuf*)

Casts (*jabirah*) mean either surgical splints or medicine applied to wound in the form of a poultice or soft paste.

1. It is allowed to wipe over *jabirah* or bandages covering wounds, or over wound directly (not to wash them), if it is feared that washing with water might cause infection or worsen the wound or delay its recovery. This may be done in both *wudu* and *ghusl*.
2. It is also allowed to wipe over *khuf* (a kind of light leather footwear), whether this is done during travelling or while staying at home. A *khuf* must meet the following specifications so that one may consider wiping over it:

- It should be made of pure leather
- It should cover the feet completely including the anklebones
- It should be worn if the person was in a state of complete *taharah*, i.e. having done *ghusl* and *wudu* with water.

**Note: this booklet is only intended as a quick reference. For further information please seek advice from your local imam.*

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info@iqratrust.org
www.iqratrust.org