

Al-Tayammum

Performing tayammum (as a substitute for Wudhu') is justified under certain circumstances. It is performed in a particular manner and with specific substances and there are certain rules which are applicable to it.

Conditions in which Tayammum is Performed

The schools differ concerning the permissibility of tayammum by a healthy person who is not travelling, in the event of his not finding water (for Wudhu'). The question is, does the absence of water justify the performance of tayammum only in the state of journey or ill-health, or is the permissibility general and includes the state of health and non-travel?

Abu Hanifah observes: A healthy person who is not travelling will neither perform tayammum nor salat if he is unable to find water¹. He cites verse 6 of Surat al-Ma'idah as the basis of this opinion:

وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا

If you are sick or on a journey, or if any of you comes from the privy, or you have touched women, and you can find no water, then perform tayammum on wholesome dust.... (5:6)

The verse (the Hanafis say) is explicit that the sole unavailability of water does not justify tayammum unless the person is sick or on a journey. Therefore, if tayammum is limited to a sick person and a traveller, a healthy person who is not travelling has no obligation to perform salat in this situation because he cannot acquire tahara.

The remaining schools concur that a person not possessing water will perform tayammum and offer salatt regardless of his being a traveller or not, and irrespective of his being healthy or sick. This is in consonance with the following mutwatir tradition accepted by all the schools:

إن الصعيد الطيب طهور للمسلم، وإن لم يجد الماء عشر سنين

Wholesome dust is surely a purifier for a Muslim even if he does not find water for ten years.

These schools omit the condition of travel mentioned in the verse since it also implies the usual non-availability of water during journeys in the past.

Apart from this, if the argument of Abu Hanifah be accepted, the position of a traveller and a sick person would be more taxing than that of a non-travelling healthy person, because salat will be wajib on the two and not on the latter.

The Shafi'is and the Hanbalis say: If water available is not sufficient for performing complete tahara, it is wajib to perform as much of it as is possible with water and to do tayammum for the remaining parts. Hence if he has water which is only sufficient for washing the face, he will wash the face and then resort to tayammum.

The other schools observe: The presence of insufficient water is equivalent to its absence, and nothing is wajib in such a situation except tayammum.

However, the issue of non-availability of water does not have that applicability in our times because water is available in sufficient quantity for all people and at all places, at home as well as during travel.

The reason the legists dealt in detail with the wujub of searching for water and the extent of effort to be made, and with the case when there is a danger to one's life, ions or honour from robbers and wild animals and the case where he finds a well without a bucket, and the case where he has to pay more than the usual price for it, etc., was that travellers used to face great difficulty in obtaining water.

Harm to Health

The schools concur that among the reasons justifying tayammum is the harm the use of water may do to one's health or the probability of such a harm. Anyone who fears falling ill, or fears that his illness would become more acute or prolonged or that its cure would become more difficult, can reason to tayammum for tahara instead of using water.

A Subsidiary issue

Where there is no time for using water (such as when a person wakes up in the morning and finds so little time left for the wajib salat that if he intends to procure water for fahiuah he would have to perform its qada after the appointed time while if he resorts to tayammum he would be able to perform it ada¹) is it wajib for such a person to perform tayammum or must he perform tahara with water?

The Malikis and the Imamis observe: He should perform salat by making tayammum, but must repeat

the salat with Wudhu'.

The Shaf'i's say: In no situation is tayammum permissible in the presence of water.

The Hanbalis differentiate between the states of journey and stay, observing: If such a situation arises during a journey, he must perform salat with tayammum without being required to repeat it, and if it arises during a state of non-travel, there will be no justification for tayammum.

The Hanafis state: Tayammum is permissible in such a situation for performing those supererogatory (nafilah) salats which have a specific time of performance, e.g. the sunnah salats after the noon and sunset prayer. But tayammum is not permissible for a wajib salat if water is available, even if there is insufficient time; rather, he will do wu4u' and perform the qada', and if he performs it with a tayammum during the appointed time, he will have to repeat it after the time has passed.

The Substance on which Tayammum is Performed

There is a consensus among the schools regarding the wujub of performing tayammum on 'wholesome dust' (al.-sa'id al-tahur) in consonance with the verse and the noble tradition

خلقت الأرض مسجداً وطهوراً

(The earth has been created a place for performing prostration and as a purifier). Tayyib means 'pure', and 'pure' means that which has not come into contact with najjisah. The schools differ concerning the interpretation of the word 'sa'id'.

The Hanafis and a group of Imamis understand it to mean the ground surface and therefore permit tayammum on dust, and sand and rocks and prohibit it on minerals such as quicklime, salt, arsenic, etc.

The Shaf'i's interpret it as soil (turiib) and sand and consider tayammum wajib on these two if they contain fine dust. They do not permit tayammum on stones.

The Hanbalis take it to mean only dust and hence tayammum is not valid in their opinion if performed on sand and stones. This is also the opinion of most Imami legists, though they allow it on sand and rocks in case of necessity.

The Malikis take the word sa'id rather liberally and include in its meaning dust, sand, rocks, snow and minerals provided they have not been moved from their place. But they exclude gold, silver and precious stones and do not permit tayamnuun on them under any condition.

The Manner of Performing Tayammum

The schools concur that tayammum is not valid without niyyah. Even the Hanafis observe: It is required in tayammum though not in wuu; and as they accept that tayammum removes hadath like Wudhu' and ghusl, they allow the niyyah of removing hadath to be made for its performance just like the niyyah of permissibility of salat (istibahat al-salat).

The other schools state: Tayammum only permits hadath without removing it. Hence a person performing tayammum should make niyyah of permissibility of that which requires tahara and not niyyah of removal of hadath. But an Imami legist says: The niyyah of removal of hadath is valid with the knowledge that tayammum does not remove it, because the niyyah of removal of hadath necessarily implies the niyyah of permissibility.

The best way of reconciling all these opinions for a person performing tayammum is that he make niyyah of seeking the nearness of God (qurbatan ila Allah) by obeying the command pertaining to tayammum, irrespective of whether this command pertains to it as such or arises from the command of salat or some other act which requires the performance of tayammum.

The schools, in the same way as they differ in interpreting the word sa'id, also differ in their interpretation of the words wajh (face) and aydi (hands) occurring in the verse.

The four Sunni schools and Ibn Babawayh, an Imami, say: By wajh is meant the whole face including the beard, and by yadayn, the hands and the wrists along with the elbows. Accordingly, the parts of the face and arms to be wiped in tayammum are exactly the same as (are washed) in wut'.ii'. Thus the hands will be struck twice (on that upon which tayammum is valid), and the first time the whole face will be wiped and the second time the two arms from the end of the fingers to the elbows.

The Malikis and the Hanbalis say: The wiping of hands is fard up to the wrist-bones, and sunnah up to the elbows.

The Imamis state: The word wajh is to be interpreted as 'part of the face because ba' in the verse فامسحوا بوجوهكم connotes the meaning of a part (tab'id) when prefixed to an object (maf'ul). And if the ba' does not signify a part, it will have to be considered superfluous because the verb imsahu is transitive by itself. The part of the face that must be wiped in their opinion is from the upper part of the forehead where the hair grow, to the upper part of the nose including the eye-brows.

They say: By yadayn is meant only the hands (kaffan); since the word yad in Arabic has various meanings and the most common of them in usage is kaff [2](#).

Accordingly, the manner of performing tayammum in the Imami school is by first striking on the earth with the palms and wiping the face from where the hairs grow to the upper part of the nose, then striking a second time and wiping the entire back of the right hand with the left palm and then the entire back of

the left hand with the right palm.

The Imamis also consider sequence to be wajib; hence if the hands are wiped before the face, the tayammum becomes invalid. Similarly, it is necessary to start from the top and proceed downwards; doing the opposite would invalidate it. Most of them consider striking on the earth as wajib, so that if one only places his hands on it without striking, the tayammum becomes batil.

The Hanafis observe: If dust settles on his face and one places his hand on it and wipes it, he can do without striking the earth.

All the schools concur that the taharah of the parts of the body involved in tayammum is a necessary condition, irrespective of whether it is the wiping or the wiped part. The same applies to the substance on which tayammum is being performed.

They also concur that it is ntial to remove one's ring while performing tayammum and that just moving it, as in Wudhu', is not sufficient.

They differ concerning continuity; the Imamis and the Malikis require it between its different parts. Hence if there is a time gap between them which vitiates continuity the tayammum becomes invalid.

The Hanbalis say: Both continuity and sequence are wajib if the tayammum is for minor hadath, but none for major hadath The Shafi'is require sequence, not continuity. The Hanafis require neither sequence nor continuity.

The Rules of Tayammum

1. All the schools, except the Hanafi, concur that it is not valid to perform tayammum for a salat before its time has arrived. The Hanafis say: Tayammum is valid before the arrival of time.

The Imamis observe: If one performs tayammum before the time of salat for any other purpose for which tayammum is permissible and then the time of salat arrives while his tayammum is still intact, he may perform salat with that tayammum.

The Imamis and the Hanafis allow the performance of two salats with a single tayammum.

The Shafi'is and the Malikis say: It is not permissible to offer two obligatory (fard.) salats with a single tayammum. The Hanbalis allow them, both as ada and qada'.

2. After one performs tayammum in accordance with the Shari'ah, he will be like one who has performed tahara with water, and everything which is permissible for the latter will be permissible for him. The tayammum is broken by all those kinds of major and minor hadath which require renewal of Wudhu' or ghusl, as well as on the disappearance of the excuse of unavailability of water or disease.

3. If water becomes available after the performance of tayammum but before beginning the salat, tayammum becomes invalid in the opinion of all the schools. If it becomes available while he is performing the salat, some Imamis say: If that happens before his first ruku', both the tayammum and salat become batil, and if after the ruku, he will complete the salat, which will be deemed valid.

The Shafi'is, Malikis and Hanbalis in one of the two opinions narrated by them, as well as some Imamis state: After saying the takbirat al-'ihriun, he will continue the salat without paying attention, and the salat will be valid because God Almighty says: *وَلَا تَبْطُلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ* (And do not make your acts invalid). The Hanafis observe: Such a salat will be invalid. The schools concur that if the justification (for performing tayammum) disappears after the performance of the salat while its time is still there, one is not obliged to repeat the salat again.

If a person in state of janabah performs tayamnuun in place of ghusl and then a minor hadath occurs and there is water enough for only performing Wudhu', will Wudhu' be wajib along with the repetition of tayammum in place of ghusl.

The Malikis and most Imamis observe: He will perform tayamnuun in the place of ghusl.

The Hanafis, Shafi'is, Hanbalis and a group of Imamis state: He will perform Wudhu' because the tayammum was in place of janabah and was broken by something other than janabah. Hence he will not become junub again unless the janabah recurs, and he will be considered as being affected only by the minor hadath.

The Hanbalis differ from all the other schools in their acceptance of tayammum for material najiisah present on the body³.

If both the ways of acquiring taha.rah (i.e. with water and tayamnum) are not possible (such as in the case of a person who is imprisoned in a place where there is neither water nor any substance on which tayamnuun is performed, or he is so ill that he can neither perform Wudhu' nor tayamnuun and there is no one to help him in performing them) will it be wajib to perform salat without taharah? Further, presuming that the salat is wajib and he performs it, must he repeat it after taharah becomes possible?

The Malikis say: He is not required to perform salat, neither ada nor qada.¹

The Hanafis and the Shafi'is observe: It will remain wajib, either as ada or qada¹. In the opinion of the Hanafis, the meaning of performing it ada¹ is that he will simulate the movements of a musalli, while the Shafi'is require him to perform real salat. After the excuse disappears he will repeat this salat as required by the Shari'ah.

Most Imamis state: He is not required to offer it as ada¹, though it will remain wajib as qada¹.

The Schools and the Verse Concerning Tayammum

It became clear from our discussion on the topics of al-ma al-mudaf , the causes which break the Wudhu", and tayammum, that the difference of opinion among the schools of Islamic fiqh relates mostly to the interpretation of the words of the verse dealing with tayammum:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ

If you are sick or on a journey, or if any of you comes from the privy, or you have touched women and you can find no water, then perform tayammum on wholesome dust and wipe your faces.... (5:6)

The legists first differ concerning one on whom tayammum is obligatory in the event of unavailability of water: is it one who is sick or on a journey, or does it also apply to a healthy non-traveller?

Is the meaning of 'touching' women sexual intercourse or just touching them with the hand? Does the word 'water' mean only plain water (al-ma al-mutlaq) or does it include al-ma al-mudaf as well? Does the word sa'id mean just dust or does it signify the surface of the earth, irrespective of its being dusty, sandy or rocky? Does the word wajh mean the complete face or just a part of it? Does the word yad imply only the hand or does it include the hand and the forearm? Here we will give a summary of the opinions discussed:

1. Abu Hanifah observes: Tayammum is not valid in the absence of water for a healthy person who is not travelling, and thus salat is also not wajib upon him because the verse permits only a sick person and a traveller to perform tayammum in the absence of water.

The four schools say: Touching a woman who is a 'stranger' (ajnabiyyah) with the hand has exactly the same effect as returning from the privy and breaks the Wudhu'.

The Imamis state: Sexual intercourse breaks the taharah and not touching with the hand.

2. The Hanafis say: The meaning of *فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا* is water, either mutlaq or mudaf. The other schools say: The word 'water' occurring in the verse is commonly understood to mean plain water and not al-ma al-mudaf.

3. The Hanafis and a group from among the Imamis observe: The word sa'id means dust, sand and rock.

The Shafi'is say: It means only dust and sand. According to the Hanbalis it means only dust. The Malikis state: It includes dust, sand, rock, snow and minerals.

The four schools say: By wajh in the verse is meant the whole face.

The Imamis say: It means only a part of it.

4. The four schools observe: The word aydi should be interpreted as including the hands, wrists and elbows.

The Imamis consider it to mean only the hands.

This difference of opinion among the schools, if it proves anything, proves that this divergence of views is superficial, not substantial, and one of language and not of principle. It resembles the difference between philologists concerning a particular word or between men of letters concerning the interpretation of a verse or couplet. This is the reason why we find that legists belonging to the same school differ among themselves exactly like one school differing with another.

[1.](#) Ibn Rushd, al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah, i, 63, 1935 ed. and Ibn Qudamah, al-Mughni, i, 234, 3rd ed.).

[2.](#) Ibn Rushd, al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah, i, 66

[3.](#) al-Fiqh 'ala al-madhahib al-'arba'ah, mabhath arkan al-tayammum

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