

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > Jurispudence Made Easy > Dialogue on Tayamum

Dialogue on Tayamum

When my father said he would talk today about tayamum, the word rang a bell, which is no wonder, for I have come across it when I recite the Holy Qur'an, or listen to it recited. I have been brought up to recite and learn as much of the Qur'an as possible. It has become a daily routine. When I do so, I feel peace of mind, serene heart, and refreshed memory.

Reciting the Holy Qur'an is not an end in itself. But a means to understanding the Creator's injunctions. It should be a way of refining one's character, learning how to conduct oneself within the family and in society at large. Reciting the Holy Book should be a source of knowledge and a means to becoming firm in belief.

Despite the discovery of the familiarity of the word of tayamum, I remembered neither the verse it was in nor the name of the chapter. So, the first thing I did was to ask my father about the verse.

- * Father, I can't remember the name of the Chapter in which the verse of tayamum is mentioned. Could you remind me of it?
- The Chapter is that of Nisa,
- "..and if you were sick, or on a journey, or one of you passed stool, or you have touched (had a sexual intercourse with) women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands; surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving". (4/43).

As you may have noticed the verse outlined when, with what, and how we perform tayamum. Let's then discuss them one by one.

- * So, when do we perform tayamum?
- We do tayamum instead of ghusl or wudhu in certain situations, some of which are:
- 1. When there is not sufficient water for either ghusl or wudhu.
- 2. When there is sufficient water, but there may be a barrier to fetching, or using it, such as you may

have a disability, or your using the water could entail a sinful act – using a maghsoub utensil for example – or you may fear for your safety, honour, or possessions.

- 3. When there may be a possibility that using water for ghusl or wudhu might deplete your supply of water, so much so that there may not be sufficient quantity of water to quench one's thirst, including members of your family, relatives, and even one's livestock.
- 4. When there is not ample time to conduct ghusl and say an obligatory prayer in full and on time.
- 5. When obtaining water could lead to putting oneself in an untenable situation.
- 6. When water has changed in both colour and property to the extent that you find yourself in real in a state of revulsion when using it.
- 7. When your responsibility is to use the limited quantity of water to remove the najasah from the mosque.
- 8. When you fear you become sick as a result of using water for ghusl or wudhu, or using water could complicate your ill health. However, this should be the case when the matter does not come under the subject of wiping (mas'h) over a jabirah (lit. splint: a generic name used for any form of dressing any part of the body after injury or illness), especially when there is a risk of worsening the state of the injury or ailment if the dressing is removed, and the part of the body is not among that which is covered by the ruling concerning the wiping on jabirah.
- * And what is jabirah?
- We'll discuss it in detail in our forthcoming dialogue.
- * Now, I know when I should do tayamum. But with what should I perform it?
- You can use earth dust, sand, shingle, stone, or anything of that sort, provided that each one of these should be tahir, [clean], and not usurped (maghsoub).
- * How should I go about tayamum?
- I'll show you how it is done.

As he was talking he started by taking off his ring. He then hit the bare earth with [both] the palms of his hands once. With both the palms of his hands, he wiped his forehead, between the hair line, and the top of the nose including the eyebrows. When he reached the top of his nose, he stopped, and removed his hands. Then he wiped the back of his right hand with the palm of his left hand from the forearm to the fingertips. He did the same thing to wipe the back of his left hand, using the palm of his right hand.

* Isn't it quick and easy!

- Yes, it is not only taymum that is so easy. Allah, the Exalted says in the Holy Qur'an,
- ".. Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty.." (4/185)
- * Are there any conditions that should be observed when performing tayamum?
- Yes:
- 1. You must have a valid reason for not using water for ghusl and/or wudhu, as has been explained earlier on.
- 2. You must make niyyah, seeking closeness to Allah.
- 3. That which is used for taymum must be tahir, [clean], not usurped, and not mixed with other substances, such as ash, unless the mixture was greatly diluted.
- 4. [That which is used for taymum must leave traces in your hands. Thus, it is not permissible to use smooth stone with no dust covering it].
- 5. [Wiping of the forehead should be done from top to bottom].
- 6. You must not do taymum unless you have exhausted every possible alternative before the time of prayer or any other act of worship that has a prescribed time for performing it.
- 7. You must do taymum yourself so long as you can do it.
- 8. The whole process of taymum should be carried out without breaking the sequence of wiping.
- 9. There must not be any barrier between the part of the body that is being wiped and that part of it that is doing the wiping.
- 10. You must wipe your forehead before your right hand and your right hand before your left hand.
- * Since I had a good reason for not using water for ghusl or wudhu because of my ill health, I performed taymum and said prayer. I then consulted the doctor who directed that I could use water. It so happened that there was still time to say the prayer again, after I do ghusl or wudhu. What should I do?
- You need not repeat your prayer, as you had a good reason not to use water there and then, and the fact that you had exhausted all possible avenues during the time.
- * If I did tayamum and said prayer, then another became due, and the reason for not using water for wudhu was still valid, should I do another tayamum?
- No, there will be no need for a fresh tayamum so long as the reason for not using water was still valid.

- * If I performed tayamum instead of ghusl of janabah, do I have to do wudhu for prayer?
- No, tayamum makes up for both the ghusl and wudhu.
- * If I performed tayamum, then I used the toilet or had a nap, should I do tayamum again for wudhu or ghus!?
- Do wudhu if you can. Otherwise, do tayamum instead of ghusl.
- * While I was wiping the back of my left hand, I doubted whether I wiped my forehead or my right hand. What should I do?
- Do not pay attention to such a doubt.
- * Should I become unsure whether I have finished tayamum, do I have to ignore it too?
- Yes, you need not worry.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/jurispudence-made-easy-sayyid-ali-hussaini-sistani/dialogue-tayamum#comment-0