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Home > Jurispudence Made Easy > Dialogue on Wudhu

## Dialogue on Wudhu

Today, I'll talk to you about wudhu, ghusl and tayamum", said my father. I murmured, "We are, therefore, at the threshold of the first purifying agent which renders the body tahir, after it has been stripped of its purity by an occurance of some kind". I soon started recalling some examples of what happens to the body to render it unclean. I then started asking myself why I should cleanse my body with wudhu. However, since my father was present, I said I would rather ask him.

- \* Why do we perform wudhu?
- We perform wudhu to be in a state of tahara to, for example, say prayer, do tawaf around the Ka'ba during hajj or umrah, touch the writing of the Holy Qur'an [and His names and attributes, such as ar-Rahman, al-Khaliq].
- \* Of course, wudhu is performed with water. However, are there any conditions attached to the water?
- Yes.
- 1. The water must be tahir to cleanse the parts of your body that are normally washed and wiped during wudhu. It is sufficient for the water to be abundant for it to render them tahir as a result of performing wudhu, if the water was abundant (mu'tasim).
- 2. The water and the place where you perform the wudhu, must be ownerless and not usurped.

The reason why the place must be free is that if the water was confined to the usurped place, wudhu would not become obligatory. You must perform tayamum instead. However, should you choose not to comply, you shall be deemed sinful. Your wudhu, though, will be in order.

- 3. The water must be pure not mixed, such as the running tap water in our homes and places of work, not, for example, orange juice.
- \* How should I conduct wudhu?
- After you have made your intention, to perform this act of worship to seek proximity to Allah, you

## should start thus:

- 1. Wash your face from the forehead, i.e. from the hairline to the chin vertically and that which falls within the expanse of your hand between the thumb and the small finger horizontally. [Noting that, you should do the washing from the top to the bottom of the face, without the need to soak thick (beard) hair].
- 2. Wash your arms from the elbow to the finger tips, starting with the right arm. The manner of washing should be from the elbow down to the finger tips.
- 3. Wipe with your right hand (while it is still wet) the front of your hair, preferably with the palm of the hand, starting from the top to the hairline excluding the forehead.
- 4. Wipe your feet with your hands from the toes to the ankle. Use your right hand to stroke the right foot and the left hand to stroke the left foot, while both hands are still wet with the original water of wudhu. That is, you are not allowed to use new water. [It is not allowed to start with your left foot before your right foot].

You must also observe the following when performing your wudhu:

- 1. Wudhu must be sequential, i.e. washing of the face should come before that of the arms; your right arm has to be washed before the left one; and wiping the head should be done before that of the feet.
- 2. The ablution act should be carried out uninterrupted. In an emergency, however, such as running out of water or due to forgetfulness, you should continue the process while the previous parts washed or wiped are still wet. Otherwise, the wudhu shall not be in order. It is worth mentioning, though, that wudhu can be deemed valid even though all the parts of the body, that were washed, become dry as a result of wind, hot weather, or drying up, provided that in the process of wudhu uninterrupted washing was observed.
- 3. You must do it yourself as long as you are able to do so.
- \* What about if I become unable to perform wudhu myself?
- Someone else can do wudhu for you. It could be done by aiding you to do it. That is, by lifting your hand and washing your face with it; then washing both your arms in the same way; and finally, do the wiping of the head and the feet, using your own hands.
- 4. There must not be any barrier masking the body skin from wudhu water, such as paint, glue, or nail polish.
- 5. There must be a reason that could make using water detrimental to one's health. In such a case, you should perform tayamum instead of wudhu.
- \* If I performed wudhu for an earlier prayer, can I still say another one later with the same wudhu?

- You do not need to renew your wudhu, unless your wudhu was invalidated.
- \* How and when would a wudhu be invalidated?
- Things that invalidate wudhu are seven: Urination, passing stool, breaking wind, sleep, anything that render the faculty of reasoning idle, such as passing out and drunkenness, medium and minor istihadha (see Dialogue on Istihadha), and janabah.

My father added that it was worth discussing some general rules to wrap up the topic of wudhu.

- 1. If after wudhu some doubt lingers in your mind as to whether or not your wudhu was in order, you should assume that it still be in order.
- \* Could you give me an example?
- Suppose you performed wudhu in the morning and after few hours, you wanted to say Dhuhr prayer. There and then, you harboured some doubt that you might have used the toilet in between. In this case, you should ignore your doubt and assume you are still tahir and say your prayer.
- 2. If you did not perform wudhu or did perform one, that was later rendered invalid, and afterwards became unsure whether you renewed your wudhu, you should treat such case as if you did not perform wudhu.
- \* Such as?
- Suppose you woke up in the morning. Then the time for Dhuhr prayer was due. You could not remember whether you performed wudhu in between. You should treat the matter as if you did not perform wudhu. You have to start afresh.
- 3. If you have just completed wudhu, and doubt crept in as to whether it was properly carried out, your wudhu is in order, i.e. you should not renew it.
- \* For example?
- Suppose you performed wudhu and immediately became doubtful whether you washed your face, or the washing of your face was properly carried out, you should assume it was correct.
- \* If I became doubtful whether I carried out the wiping of the left foot, what should I do?
- If the doubt crept up on the spot, you should perform the wiping afresh. Otherwise, you need not worry. That is, if you have already moved on to another act, such as you are in the process of saying prayer.

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