
فقه الطهارة

Understanding
Purification

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

“Truly Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance, and loves those who purify themselves.”

(2:222)

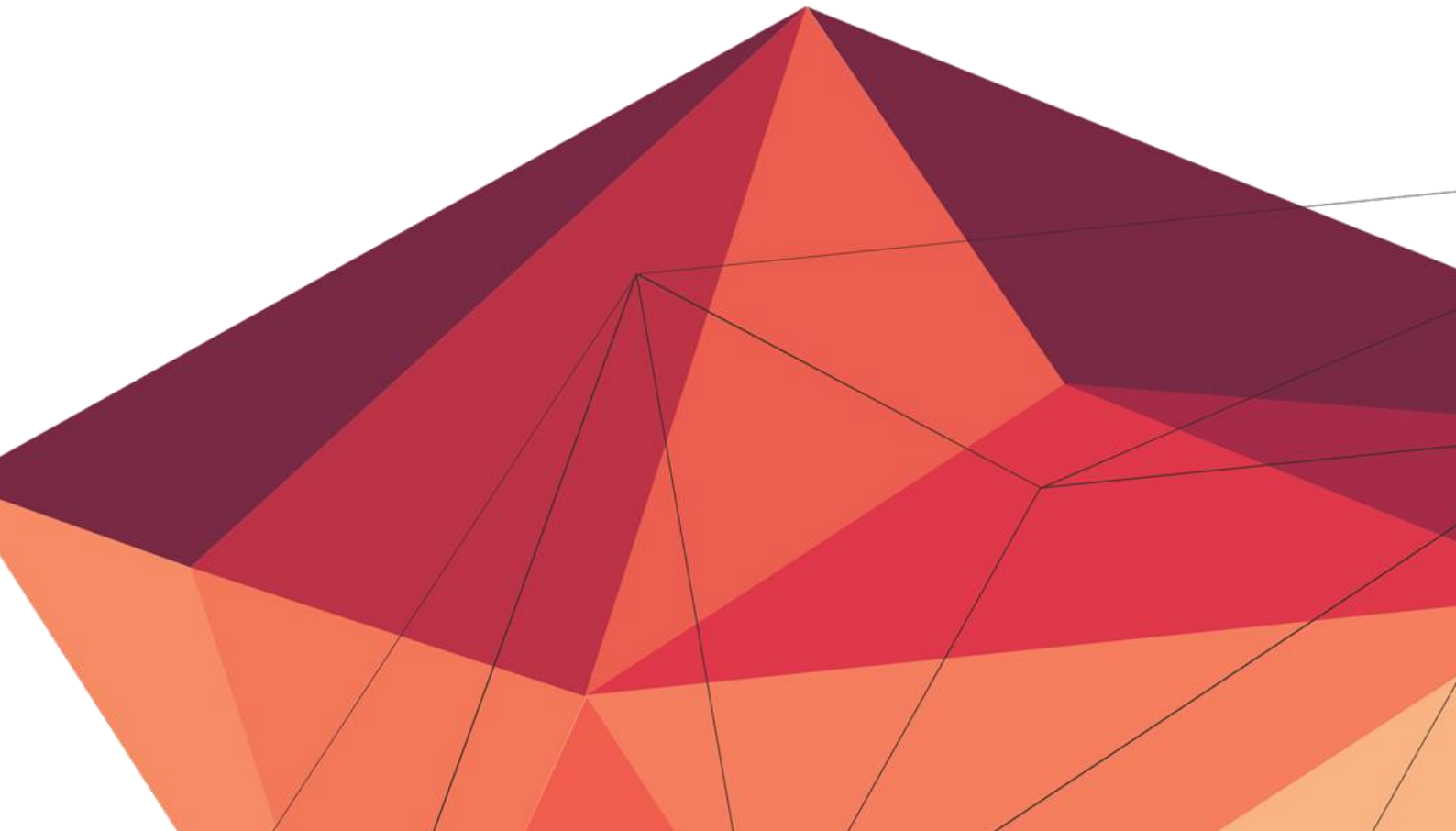


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1. Introduction

All praise is due to Allah (سبحانه و تعالی), Lord of all the worlds. Peace and blessings be upon the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم), upon his family, companions and all those that follow them until the Day of Judgement.

Purification is an essential aspect of our faith, often neglected and disregarded, seldom taught of its true concept as it stands in the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition. A lax approach to purification may result in a negative impact on one's spiritual progress. Purification is the basis for important devotional acts, and is the foundation upon which the prayer is built. If one's purification is lacking, this can lead to deficiency in other acts of worship.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, highlighting the importance of understanding purification, *"Purification is a branch of faith."*

2. Legal Terminology

2.1 Understanding Legal Terms

To understand the legal rulings concerning purification, certain legal terms must be defined. There are six major classifications of actions within the sacred law:

1. **Fard; mandatory**

Leaving a mandatory act is sinful, and to deny a mandatory act as being part of Islam constitutes disbelief.

2. **Wajib; necessary**

Leaving a necessary act is sinful. Academically the mandatory and necessary are distinct, but in practice they are treated synonymously. To deny a necessary act does not constitute disbelief.

3. **Sunnah; recommended**

There are two types of Sunnah:

1. Established Sunnah.
2. Less established Sunnah.

An established Sunnah must be performed; its implementation is rewarded, and its intentional abandonment reprehensible. Performing a less established Sunnah is rewarded, but leaving it is not reprehensible.

4. **Mubah; permissible**

There is no reward or punishment whether the act is performed or not.

5. **Makruh; disliked**

There are two types of disliked acts:

1. Slightly disliked.
2. Highly disliked.

To perform an action that is slightly disliked is not punished, but there is hope for reward in abstaining from it. Avoiding an act which is highly disliked is required, and there is the potential for punishment in performing it. The prohibited and highly disliked are academically distinct, but in practice are treated synonymously.

6. *Haram*; prohibited

Leaving a prohibited act is rewarded, while its performance results in punishment.

3. Understanding Water

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا

“And we have revealed water from the sky, pure and purifying.” (25:48)

3.1 Suitable and Unsuitable Water

Rain water, including all of its sources (lakes, springs, wells, oceans etc.) may be used for purification.

Legal Issue

Recycled water is permissible to use for purification.

Water from the following sources may not be used for purification:

- Liquid squeezed out of trees or fruits.
- Water preponderated by another substance, removing the characteristics of water.
- Used water (discussed in section 3.3).

3.2 Addition or Mixture of Substances with Water

Water has three essential characteristics according to Islamic law: 1) Colour, 2) Taste and 3) Smell.

If water is contaminated with any substance, these characteristics are used to determine whether the water may be used for purification. Water may be contaminated with a pure or impure substance:

1. Pure Substance

Two of the characteristics of the water must be overcome for the water to be rendered impure.

2. Impure Substance

The ruling of the water when it is contaminated with an impure substance is subject to the amount of water that is present. The amount of water can be classified as follows:

1. Little; less than approximately two hundred litres.
2. Abundant; more than approximately two hundred litres, or flowing water.

If the water is little, a single drop of impurity contaminates the water, and the water is rendered impure. If an impure substance mixes with water that is abundant, the impurity must overtake one of the characteristics for the water to become impure.

3.3 Ruling of Used Water

The water that comes off a person during Wudu', although pure, cannot be used for the purposes of purification; the washing away of sins renders the water spiritually impure.



4. Wudu'

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

“O you who believe! When you intend to offer the prayer, wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles.” (5:6)

Wudu' is the means of attaining purification from a state of ritual impurity. There are two types of ritual impurity:

1. Major ritual impurity e.g. after relations with one's spouse.
2. Minor ritual impurity e.g. after answering the call of nature.

In order to remove oneself from major ritual impurity, one has to perform the Islamic bath, Ghusl, and in order to remove oneself from minor ritual impurity, one must perform Wudu'.

4.1 Mandatory Acts of Wudu'

There are four mandatory acts of Wudu', as established by the verse mentioned above:

1. Washing the face

The length of the face is defined from the base of the hair to the chin, and the width, from ear lobe to ear lobe.

2. Washing the hands up to the elbows

This includes washing the elbows themselves.

3. Wiping the head

It is mandatory to wipe one fourth of the head.

4. Washing the feet up to the ankles

Care must be taken when wiping the ankles, as there are curves which may not be washed if the Wudu' is performed quickly.

What has been listed is the minimum Wudu', taking a person out of a state of minor ritual impurity to a state of purity.

Note

One must be careful when performing Wudu' if there are objects covering the skin, such as a ring; if areas of the skin remain dry, the Wudu' is not considered valid.

Women should be careful with regards to waterproof nail polish; the Wudu' will not be valid if performed with waterproof nail polish applied.

Intention is not a mandatory act in the Hanafi School, as water inherently purifies.

Legal Issue

If a person requires application of water resistant medicine to the skin, this is excused.

4.2 Recommended Acts of Wudu'

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Say: “If you (really) love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” ” (3:31)

- **Niyah; intention**
The intention is an act of the heart, and does not require manifestation on the lips. The intention is necessary to obtain the reward for the Wudu’.
- **Miswak; tooth stick**
Cleaning the teeth at the time of Wudu’.
- **Tasmiyyah**
Reciting بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ before each individual act in the Wudu’.
- **Washing the hands before starting**
If there is impurity present on the hands, it is mandatory to wash the hands to remove the impurity.
- **Rinsing the mouth**
One should rinse the mouth and gargle such that the water reaches the back of the throat (one should be careful of this during Ramadan, as water may pass down the throat).
- **Rinsing the nose**
The nose should be rinsed to the soft bone (one should also be careful of this during Ramadan as the nose leads to the throat).
- **Khilal of the fingers**
To intersperse fingers between the fingers, washing the web of the hands.
- **Khilal of the beard**
- **Wiping the ears**
- **Wiping the whole head**
- **Rubbing the body parts**
To rub the body parts as they are washed.
- **Wiping the neck**
- **Beginning with the right side**
‘A’isha (RA) narrates, *“The Prophet used to love the right side when putting on his shoes, when combing his hair, and in purifying himself.”*
- **Beginning with the tips**
When washing the hands, to start with the tips of the fingers, and when washing the feet, to start with the tips of the toes.
- **Order**
To perform the acts of Wudu’ in the order mentioned in the Qur’an.
- **Continuity**
To immediately wash one part of the body after another.

Legal Issue

If during the Wudu' one forgets to wash a mandatory part of the body, only the part that has been missed needs to be washed.

- **Repetition**

The body parts should be washed three times. If one has not washed the part completely after three times, then the person should continue until the part has been washed.

4.3 Etiquettes of Wudu'

- **Facing the Qiblah**

- **Avoiding used water**

- **Recitation of the Du'aa after Wudu'**

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له و أشهد أن محمدا عبده و رسوله، اللهم إجعلني من التوابين، و إجعلني من المتطهرين

- **Performing Wudu' before the time of prayer**

- **Drinking from the water after Wudu'**

- **Tahiyah al-Wudu'**

To perform two units of prayer to greet the Wudu'.

4.4 Disliked Acts during Wudu'

- **Extravagance in usage of water**

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was known to make Wudu' with approximately half a litre of water.

- **Stinginess in usage of water**

Enough water should be used as is necessary to properly complete the Wudu'.

- **Talking during Wudu'**

One should not become heedless of the act being performed.

- **Seeking assistance without an excuse**

If one legitimately requires help, seeking assistance is permissible.

4.5 Invalidators of Wudu'

The general rules for invalidating the Wudu' are as follows:

- **Exit from the urinary or rectal tract**

Anything that exists from the urinary or rectal tract, whether the substance is impure, e.g. urine, or pure, e.g. mucous, invalidates the Wudu'.

- **Exit from any other part of the body**

Anything impure which exists from other than the urinary and rectal tracts invalidates the Wudu', e.g. bleeding which flows across the wound. Pure substances exiting any other part of the body do not invalidate the Wudu', e.g. sweat.

Note

If somebody has a pimple which is popped, and puss crosses the area, the Wudu' is invalidated.

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of specific things that invalidate the Wudu':

- **Bleeding**

Blood must pass across a wound for the Wudu' to be broken.

Note

If one is cleaning their nose sees a small amount of blood on their finger, this does not break the Wudu' unless the blood is thin and flowing.

If one is brushing their teeth spits and sees a small amount of blood, this does not break the Wudu'. The blood must dominate over the saliva for the Wudu' to be broken.

- **Vomiting**

There must be a mouthful of vomit before the Wudu' is broken.

- **Sleeping**

If one sleeps with their rear firmly planted on the ground, and without leaning on an object, or such that if the object was to be removed they would not fall, the Wudu' is not broken.

- **Fainting**

- **Loss of Sanity**

- **Intoxication**

- **Laughter in prayer**

Laughter which is only audible to the one laughing breaks the prayer. Laughter which is audible to others breaks both the prayer and the Wudu'.

- **Touching of the private parts**

If the private parts of a male and female touch, this requires Wudu'. If there is penetration, Ghusl is required.

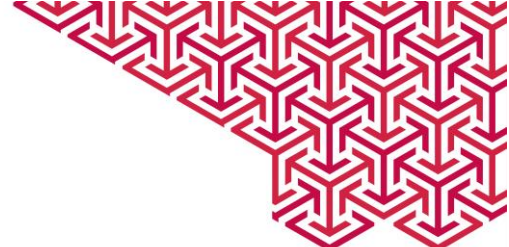
The following do not invalidate the Wudu':

1. Cutting the hair.
2. Cutting the nails.
3. Seeing another's private parts.
4. Cleaning a child from impurities.
5. Peeling away scab (crust over a healing wound).

4.6 Performing a Complete Wudu'

1. Confirm availability of pure water.
2. Face the Qiblah.
3. Recite the Basmallah.
4. Make the intention.
5. Wash the hands to the wrists three times.
6. Use the Miswak.



- 
7. Rinse the mouth to the back of the throat three times.
 8. Rinse the nose to the soft bone three times.
Take water in with the left, and out with the right.
 9. Wash the face three times.
 10. Do Khilal of the beard three times.
 11. Wash the hands, with Khilal, up to the elbows three times.
 12. Wet both hands and wipe the head, from the front to the back.
The index finger should be used to clean inside the ear, and the thumb to clean behind it. The back of the hand should then be used to wipe the neck.
 13. Wash the feet three times.
The left little finger should be used to clean in between the toes from the little right toe, to the little left toe.
 14. Recite the Du'aa for completing the Wudu'.
 15. Perform two units of prayer to greet the Wudu'.

4.7 Responsibility of Wudu'

There are three basic conditions that must be fulfilled for an act of worship to become obligatory:

1. *Islam*; the individual must be a Muslim.
2. *Adulthood*; the individual must have reached the age of puberty.
3. *Sanity*; the person must be sane.

In addition to the above, the following conditions are specific to Wudu':

- *Haydh*; a woman must not be menstruating.
- *Nifas*; a woman must not be suffering from post-natal bleeding.
- *Hadath*; relating to something causing a person to be impure e.g. chronic bleeding.
- *Presence of water*; in the absence of water, Tayammum may be performed.

4.8 Categories of Wudu'

- **Fard; mandatory**

Performing Wudu' is mandatory in the following instances:

- *Prayer*; whether obligatory or superogatory.
- *Prostration of recitation*; reciting certain verses of the Qur'an requires a prostration.
- Touching the Qur'an.

- **Wajib; necessary**

Wudu' is necessary to perform Tawaf around the Ka'bah.

- **Mustahab; recommended**

It is recommended to perform Wudu' for:

- Every Salah.
- Exiting from the differences of opinions among the Scholars e.g. touching a non-Mahram.
- Before going to sleep.

5. Wiping Over Leather Socks

5.1 Permissibility of Wiping over Leather Socks

Wiping over a leather sock, or a sock with the characteristics of leather, is permissible for both men and women. If the sock is not leather, then it should have the characteristics of a leather sock: is waterproof, has its own form, and can be walked in for a good distance without tearing.

5.2 Rulings Concerning Wiping over Leather Socks

- It is not permissible to wipe over a sock containing a big tear from which the extent of three toes is visible.
- To wipe over a sock, one must have first performed a complete Wudu', and then put the sock on. Subsequently, when Wudu' is required, the sock may be wiped rather than washing the feet.
- Once the socks have been put on, wiping may be performed for twenty-four hours if one is a resident, and seventy two hours if one is a traveller. The time begins from the breaking of the Wudu' after the sock has been put on.
- When performing Wudu' and one reaches the stage of washing the feet, the hands should be wet, and using three fingers, the sock should be wiped from the toes to the shin.
- The wiping of the sock expires with:
 1. Removal of the sock.
 2. Expiration of the time.
- If the time expires, the sock must be removed and the foot washed to re-enter a state of Wudu' (only the foot needs to be washed if the Wudu' was not been broken).

Note

Wiping over a cast is permissible. Wudu' does not have to be performed before putting the cast on.

6. Ghusl

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا

"If you are in a state of Janabah (i.e. had a sexual discharge), extensively purify yourselves." (5:6)

Janabah is a state of major ritual impurity. Major ritual impurity is caused by the following:

- *Haydh*; menstrual bleeding.
- *Nifas*; post natal bleeding.
- Insertion of the male private part into the female private part (with or without ejaculation).
- Forceful release of fluid in a state of excitement e.g. a wet dream.

In a state of major ritual impurity one must not:

- Touch **or** read the Holy Qur'an.
- Pray.

- Enter the Masjid.

6.1 Mandatory Acts of Ghusl

There are three mandatory acts of Ghusl:

1. Rinsing the mouth.
2. Rinsing the nose.
3. Pouring water over the entire body.

Every single part of the body that can easily be reached must be washed, including the navel and the roots of the hair.

6.2 The Prophetic Ghusl

The prophetic method of Ghusl is as follows:

- Make the intention.
- Wash the hands to the wrists.
- Wash the private parts, whether they have impurity on them or not.
- Wash impurity that is visible on any other part of the body.
- Perform the Wudu'.
- Pour water over the head three times, rubbing the body.
- Pour water over the right hand side of the body three times, rubbing the body.
- Pour water over the left hand side of the body three times, rubbing the body.

6.3 Etiquettes of Ghusl

- **Not** facing the Qiblah.
- Being careful with the amount of water used.
- Sitting down.

6.4 Categories of Ghusl

- **Fard; mandatory**

Ghusl is mandatory after the following:

- *Haydh*; menstrual bleeding.
- *Nifas*; post-natal bleeding.
- Insertion of the male private part into the female private part (with or without ejaculation).
- Release of fluid in a state of excitement, e.g. a wet dream.

- **Mustahab; recommended**

- On Jumu'ah (for the **day** of Friday).
- On both 'Eids.
- Before putting on Ihram.
- Before visiting Makkah and Madinah.
- Before visiting the grave of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم).



- After giving a bath to the deceased.

6.5 Additional Points Concerning Ghusl

There are certain fluids which exit from the urinary tract that do not require Ghusl, but require Wudu’:

- Fluid released before sexual relations through excitement.
- Fluid released after sexual relations.
- Thick white fluid released after urination.

7. Tayammum

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ

“And if you are ill, or on a journey, or any of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (i.e. sexual intercourse), and you find no water, then perform Tayammum with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands.” (5:6)

Tayammum refers to purifying oneself with types of earth, given a valid excuse for not using water. Tayammum removes an individual from both a state of major and minor ritual impurity.

7.1 Excuses Permitting Tayammum

1. Lack of water

The definition of lack of water is considered to be the unavailability of water in a one-mile radius.

2. Inability to use water

The inability to use water that is available could be the result of one of a number of reasons:

- Using water would be detrimental to one’s health.
- Only a small amount of water is available.
- Using the water for purification could result in the person dying of thirst.

3. Missing an act of worship that has no substitute

Tayammum is permissible if an act of worship that has no substitute, and would be missed if purification using water is performed. There are two such acts:

1. The ‘Eid prayer.
2. The funeral prayer.

7.2 Materials for Performing Tayammum

Any type of earth (soil, sand, stone, gravel, dust etc.) may be used for Tayammum.

7.3 Manner of Performing Tayammum

1. Making the intention

The intention for Tayammum is mandatory given that dirt does not inherently purify.

2. Wiping the face

The type of earth is hit with the hands, blowing off any excess. The face is then wiped as for Wudu'.

3. Wiping the arms

The type of earth is struck a second time, blowing off any excess. The arms are wiped as in Wudu'.

7.4 Invalidators of Tayammum

1. Any action breaking one's Wudu' or Ghusl.
2. The opportunity of utilising water arising.

8. Haydh, Nifas & Istihadha

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ

“They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified.” (2:222)

8.1 Definitions

1. Haydh; monthly cycle

The Haydh is the blood that comes from a woman's uterus during her monthly cycle. Any blood that occurs during the expected time of the cycle, irrespective of the colour, is considered to be bleeding of the Haydh.

General principles of the Haydh:

- It is a minimum of three days (anything less is Istihadha).
- It can be a maximum of ten days (anything more is Istihadha).
- The minimum period between two Haydh is fifteen days (no maximum).

The Haydh is equal to habit, and anything beyond this is Istihadha. If there is no regular habit (the number of days is constantly changing), the number of days of bleeding for the previous month is regarded as the habit, and will be used for any calculations.

2. Nifas; post-natal bleeding

Nifas refers to the blood that comes from the uterus of a woman after child birth, with a maximum period of forty days (no minimum).

The principles of habit that apply to the monthly cycle also apply to post-natal bleeding (given a previous pregnancy).

Note

The concept of forty days for post-natal bleeding is misunderstood by some; forty days is the maximum period. If bleeding ceases before forty days, Ghusl must be performed and the obligatory prayers carried out.

Any blood occurring during pregnancy is regarded as Istihadha, not Nifas.

3. *Istihadha*; any blood that is not from the monthly cycle or post-natal bleeding

Any blood that comes from the uterus of a woman that is not due to the monthly cycle or post-natal bleeding falls under the category of *Istihadha* (dysfunctional uterine bleeding). This category also includes women who have not reached the age of puberty, or are post-menopausal.

8.2 Rulings of Haydh and Nifas

The following actions are not permitted during Haydh or Nifas:

- Salah (will not be made up).
- Fasting (must be made up).
- Conjugal relations (specifically intercourse).
- Entering the Masjid.
- Touching or reading the Qur'an.
- Tawaf of the Ka'bah.

Note

If a woman has the habit of reciting certain Du'aas which contain verses of the Qur'an, it is permissible for her to recite these Du'aas during the monthly cycle or post-natal bleeding.

9. *Istihadha* & the Excused Person

The rulings of *Istihadha*, blood that is not from Haydh or Nifas, and the rulings of the excused person e.g. a person with a chronic nose bleed, fall under the same category.

The excused person is able to perform any act requiring ritual purity, but must perform Wudu' for each prayer time when it falls upon them. The Wudu' is invalidated with all things that would ordinarily invalidate the Wudu', and additionally, with the exit of each prayer time.

There are three essential characteristics concerning the individual falling under the category of the excused person:

1. That which causes an individual to become an excused person

To become an excused person, the cause e.g. a nose bleed, must last the length of one entire prayer time.

2. That which perpetuates the excuse

To remain in the category of an excused person, the cause must occur for at least one moment during each prayer time.

3. That which removes a person from the category of an excused person

An individual is removed from the category of an excused person if the cause does not occur, even for a single moment, for the length of one entire prayer time.

Note

Small drops of urine that may be released after using the washroom do not place one into the category of an excused person. This is an issue of *Istinja'*, and performing it correctly.



10. Impurities

The sacred law classifies objects as either pure or impure. Impure objects, e.g. urine, cannot be purified. If a pure object e.g. cloth, is affected by an impurity, purification is the means by which it is re-purified.

There are three essential tools used for purification: 1) Water, 2) Earth, and 3) Sun (the means by which the earth may be purified).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of impurities:

- Blood.
- Stool.
- Human urine.
- Human semen.
- Alcohol.
- Anything from a pig.
- Saliva of a dog.

10.1 Means of Cleansing Impurities

If an impurity is present on one's clothing, or the ground upon which one will pray, the impurity must be removed. Purification is permissible with water or any pure liquid e.g. rose water.

If the impurity is removed with one wash, leaving no residual stain, the object is considered pure. If after the first wash a residual stain is visible, the object must be washed three times. Washing three times purifies, even if a stain remains.

If the impurity cannot be seen, the object must be washed and wringed three times. The third wringing must be tight, such that most of the water is forced out.

If the object is solid and cannot be wringed, water should be run over the object three times. If the impurity can be scratched away, this also purifies.

If the impurity present is less than the size of a coin, it is overlooked, although praying in such a state is disliked.

Note

If the impurity present is blood, which is less than the amount that breaks the Wudu', the object is considered to be pure.

11. Istinja'

Istinja' refers to purification after answering the call of nature. The following should be observed when using the washroom:



- **One should enter with the left foot**

The Du'aa *"O Allah! I seek refuge in you from the male and female Jinn."* should be recited before entering. One should confirm that rings, or anything else of the like that have the name of Allah upon them is removed.

- **One should sit while relieving themselves**

If one fears that by sitting they will become affected by some impurity, it is permissible to stand. One should not face, or turn their back to the Qiblah.

- **Performing purification**

Purification after one has relieved themselves may be permitted in three ways (depending on the circumstances):

1. Water only.
2. Stones/toilet paper only.
3. Water and stones/toilet paper.

If one has urinated, all three are permissible. If one has passed stool, which did not spread while exiting, all three are permissible. If one passed stool which spread upon exiting, it is necessary to use water. The most superior method is to use both. The companions that practiced this have been praised by Allah (سبحانه و تعالی) in the Qur'an.

Note

Istinja' should not be performed with the right hand.

- **One should leave with the right foot**

The Du'aa *"Your forgiveness, O Allah!"* should be recited when leaving.

Legal Issue

Individuals that often feel small drops of urine being released after having relieved themselves should do the following to prevent whisperings of uncertainty:

- One should completely finish relieving themselves.
- One should cough a few times (increases intra-dominal pressure).
- Starting from the base of the private part, one should wring their way up the organ.
- The private part/underwear should be wet.

11.1 Adab of Istinja'

The following are the etiquettes that should be maintained when performing Istinja':

1. The head should be covered.
2. The Awrah should not be unnecessarily uncovered.
3. One should not talk.
4. One should not stand.

- End -