

GHUSL

There are two types of ablutions in Islam: *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*. We already talked about *wuḍū'*, which is a partial washing/wiping of the body. The other type of ablution is called *ghusl*. The word *ghusl* in Arabic literally means 'the purity that a person attains after washing and removing dirt from something.' The jurisprudential (*fiqh*) definition of *ghusl* is 'washing the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ.' By performing *ghusl*, a person attains spiritual purity. Thus, *ghusl* is an important part of worship (*ibādah*), and the validity of certain aspects of the religion depend on this.

HOW DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

Ghusl can be performed in two ways: *irtimāsī* or *tartībī*. *Irtimāsī* is when a person submerges one's entire body underwater all at once. This can be difficult to do, so it is less common. We usually do *ghusl tartībī*, which means sequentially, where the parts of the body are washed in a certain order. The conditions and manner for *ghusl tartībī* are the following:

REMOVE BARRIERS & IMPURITIES

A person needs to ensure that one's body is free from any impurity or barrier that would block water from reaching the actual skin/body. A barrier in this case would be anything that prevents water from reaching an area.

- *Examples of barriers are: nail polish (even breathable ones), paint, band-aids, etc. Henna or ink that has been absorbed into the skin are not considered barriers because the skin is not covered by them.*

MAKE INTENTION

Make the intention of performing *ghusl* for the sake of obeying and attaining closeness to Allah ﷻ.

- *The intention does not have to be said out loud, as long as you know what you are doing and why you are doing it.*

STEP OUT OF WATER

If you are already in the shower, you need to step out of the flow of the water and then step back in when you intend to start your *ghusl*. When moving on to the next part of the *ghusl*, it is again important to step out of the shower and step back in for the next part. This particular rule is the ruling of Āyatullāh Sīstānī and is per obligatory precaution. Therefore, you can refer to the rulings of other *marāji'* who do not require this movement out and back into the flow of water.

WASH HEAD AND NECK

Wash the head and neck, making sure that the water reaches every part.

- *Some marāji' say that it is better to run your hands over all parts of the body.*
- *There is no need to go inside of the ears or nose when washing your head.*
- *As you stand under the shower head, there is no problem if the rest of your body gets wet with your neck.*
- *Short hair that is considered part of the body must be washed. For long hair:*
 - ▷ *According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, It is not obligatory to wash long hair.*
 - ▷ *According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, as per obligatory precaution, long hair must be washed.*

WASH BODY

Wash the body.

- *According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, after washing the head, one can simply wash the entire body. There is no need to wash the right side, then the left. However, it is better to wash the right side first.*
- *According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, as per obligatory precaution, the right side must be washed first, and then the left side.*
- *When washing the body, we should make sure that water reaches every part of the body (a person can be under the shower and water can be reaching all places, but if they are making the intention for the right side and then the left side, they must step out of the flow of the water between the two parts).*

TIPS FOR GHUSL TARTĪBĪ:

- While washing each section of the body, it is best if you wash a bit extra to make sure that you have completely washed the part that is necessary (e.g., as you are washing the right side, wash a little bit of your left side as well).
- It is better to wash central areas (e.g., entire belly button and private parts) with each side of the body.
- Unlike *wuḍū'*, when washing a particular part, you do **not** need to wash from the top to bottom, or use your hands to wash over that part.
- Unlike *wuḍū'*, continuity is **not** a condition. So, if you wash your head and neck, then decide to shampoo your hair, and then wash your right side, that is acceptable. It also means that if you miss a part of the left side and realize later, you can wash that part again after the *ghusl* without restarting all over again. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, even if you miss a part of the right side and realize later, you can wash that part again after the *ghusl* without having to restart.
- If you realize after *ghusl* that you missed a part of your body, then you have to restart from that point. For example, if you come out of the shower and realize that you missed your right hand, you should:
 - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī: wash your right hand, but then you do not need to wash the left side of the body again afterwards.
 - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei: wash your right hand only, then your left side fully all over again.



WHEN IS GHUSL PERFORMED?

We will discuss the specific situations for when *ghusl* becomes obligatory in other lessons. There are other instances when *ghusl* is recommended (*mustahab*), the most common of which are:

- **Ghusl al-Jumu'ah:** It is recommended to perform *ghusl* on Friday morning before the time of *Zuhr*. This has the effect of washing away many of our sins.
- **Ghusl on special days:** There are many days or nights throughout the year on which performing *ghusl* is highly recommended, such as the nights of Qadr (*Laylatul Qadr*), night preceding the 15th of Sha'bān, Eidul Aḍḥā and Eidul Fiṭr, and many other days which are mentioned in the books of Jurisprudence.

GHUSL: washing the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ

IRTIMĀSĪ: by submersion

TARTĪBĪ: sequentially

TAYAMMUM: WHEN SHOULD IT BE PERFORMED?

In certain situations, we may need to purify ourselves with clean earth or soil instead of performing *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*, and this is called *tayammum*. This option can only be exercised in specific circumstances, such as: when we do not have access to any water, water is harmful for us to use, we do not have enough time to perform *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*, and a few other instances which can be found in the books of Jurisprudence.

RULES OF TAYAMMUM

Tayammum can be performed on one of the following things (in order of preference):

1. Earth
2. Sand
3. Pebbles or stone

The item on which *tayammum* is performed must be:

- Dry
- Pure and clean (*ṭāhir*)
- According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is *iḥtiyāṭ wājib* (obligatory precaution) that it leaves some particles of soil or dust on our hands, and it is better that we do not shake these off. According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, this is *mustaḥab* (recommended), but not required.

Practical Demonstration of Tayammum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh0gxMmyPSk>



HOW TO PERFORM TAYAMMUM

Niyah: Make the intention to perform *tayammum* for the sake of attaining nearness to Allah ﷻ.

Remove any barriers: Like in *wuḍū'*, any barriers on the forehead and hands, such as rings or nail polish, must be removed.

Step 1: Strike the palms of the hands simultaneously on the earth, sand, or stone (in order of preference) that is dry and pure.

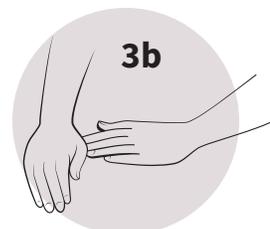
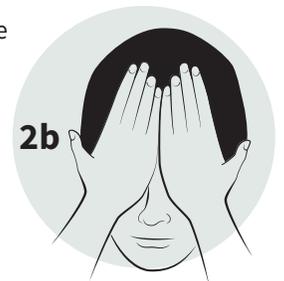
Step 2: Pull both palms together from the top of the forehead where the hair grows down to the bridge of the nose. Both sides of the forehead joining the ears and over the eyebrows should be included. Try to cover the entire forehead.

Step 3: Wipe the palm of the left hand over the back of the right hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips, and then the palm of the right hand over the back of the left hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips.

Step 4: Repeat Step 1.

Step 5: Repeat Step 3.

Note: this step is a recommended precaution as per Āyatullāh Sīstānī; but an obligatory precaution as per Āyatullāh Khamenei.



Activity 2.2c: Make a Tayammum Kit

It is useful to have a *tayammum* kit ready for those emergency situations where we are not able to do *wuḍū'* or *ghusl* for whatever reason. You will need the following to make your *tayammum* bag:

- A small pouch that is easy to access.
- One of the things that *tayammum* can be done on (so earth, sand, or stone).

Try to keep this pouch handy in your room, or in your school bag in case you may need it in an emergency.

Activity 2.2d: Review Questions

1. Which of the following is the correct order of washing the body during *ghusl*?
 - a. Washing the head and neck, then the right side of the body, then the left side.
 - b. Washing the left side of the body, then the right, then the head and neck.
 - c. The order does not matter.
2. On which day of the week is it most recommended (*mustaḥab*) to perform a *ghusl*?
 - a. Friday
 - b. Thursday
 - c. Sunday
3. When touching the name 'Allah' in English, *wuḍū'* is necessary:
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. What can be used to perform *tayammum*?
 - a. Mud
 - b. Dry soil
 - c. Grass
5. When performing *tayammum*, one must wipe the face:
 - a. From the hairline to the bridge of the nose.
 - b. From the cheeks to the chin.
 - c. The entire face must be wiped.
6. For *ghusl tartībī*:
 - a. I can only wash from top to bottom.
 - b. I can interrupt my *ghusl*, then continue where I left off.
 - c. I can keep nail polish on my toes.
7. The water used for *wuḍū'* must be:
 - a. Pure and unmixed (*muṭlaq*).
 - b. Pure and clean (*tāhir*).
 - c. Both a & b are correct.

FLASHBACK! METHOD OF PERFORMING WUḌŪ'

- 1. Make the intention:** Before performing *wuḏū'*, one must make the intention that they are performing *wuḏū'* to become closer to Allah ﷻ and out of obedience to Him. A person is not required to say anything out loud. It is enough just to know that you are performing *wuḏū'* and why you are doing it.
- 2. Mustahab actions:** The following initial three actions are recommended to perform:
 - Washing both of the hands
 - Rinsing the mouth three times
 - *Istinshāq* (putting water into the nostrils) three times
- 3. Wājib actions:** The following six steps are obligatory to perform:
 - Washing the face from the top to the bottom
 - Washing the right arm from the elbow to the fingertips
 - Washing the left arm from the elbow to the fingertips
 - Wiping the top of the head
 - Wiping the right foot from the toes to the ankle
 - Wiping the left foot from the toes to the ankle

In these steps, there is a difference between the parts that are **washed** and the parts that are **wiped**. The parts that are washed—your face and arms—can be wet before you do *wuḏū'*; however, the parts that are to be wiped—your head and feet—must be dry before you begin, and you cannot take new water from the sink or anywhere else to wipe them. In certain cases, if your hands dry up before you are able to wipe your head, then you can take some water from your eyebrows or beard (for men who have one) in order to wipe the head and feet. In every step, make sure to use your hands to wipe each part of the body, meaning that your hands are moving, not the body parts.

The Story of Āyatullāh Mar'ashī Najafī

Āyatullāh Mar'ashī used to go to the Shrine of Sayyidah Ma'sūmah of Qum every day, around one hour before the *adhān* of *Fajr*. He would sit there and answer questions, pray *Ṣalātul Layl*, etc. As the time of *adhān* would approach, one of his helpers would bring him a cup of water, which was usually not even full. Using this water, he would perform *wuḏū'* right there, and oftentimes, there was some water left over after he finished his *wuḏū'*.



Tip: It is good to close the tap (from where the water is coming out) after you use the water for each part so that you do not waste any water. The Prophet ﷺ used to use very little water (only about a *mod* which is equal to approximately 800ml), for his *wuḏū'*.³ After you finish washing the left arm, be careful that you do not get any new water from the tap on the part of your hands that will do the wiping, because *mash* (wiping) of your head and feet cannot be done with new water.

3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*, Vol.1, P. 34.

WASHING THE FACE



Before you wash: face does *not* have to be dry

Fill your hand with water.⁴

Pour water on your face from where the hair grows on the top of the forehead to the bottom of the chin, covering the width of your middle finger to your thumb.

Direction of washing must be from the top to the bottom, and not in reverse.

MUSTAḤABBĀT: Washing once is *wājib*, and washing twice is *mustaḥab* (recommended). Washing more than two times makes your *wuḍū'* invalid (*bāṭil*).

EXTRA TIP!

Wash a little bit of the inside corner of the eyes, the inside of your nose, and inside the edges of your lips to make sure the water has reached.

WASHING THE RIGHT AND LEFT ARMS



Before you wash: arms do *not* have to be dry

Fill your hand with water¹

Pour it on your right arm to wash from above the elbows to the tips of the fingers

Do not forget to wash in between the fingers as well

Repeat the same thing for the left arm

You must keep your arm still, and move your hand across it

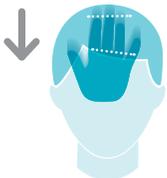
MUSTAḤABBĀT: Washing once is *wājib*, and washing twice is *mustaḥab* (recommended). Washing more than two times makes your *wuḍū'* invalid (*bāṭil*). It is *mustaḥab* for girls to start washing from the inner side of the arm and for boys to start washing from the outer side of the arm (from the elbow).

EXTRA TIP!

How to calculate the number of washes:

You can use multiple handfuls of water to accomplish a complete wash of the arms, but once all of the parts of the arms have been completely washed, any other water that you pour onto it will count as the next wash (wash number 2).⁵

WIPING THE TOP OF THE HEAD



Before you wipe: the part that will be wiped must be dry

Do not take any new water. Use the same water that is on your hands from washing your left arm.

Wipe the top section of your head⁶ with your right hand from the back to front without going past the hairline.

You must keep your head still, while your hand moves across it

MUSTAḤABBĀT: Wiping just a little is enough even with one finger, but it is recommended to wipe with fingers flat the length of one finger, and the width of three joined fingers.

EXTRA TIP!

When wiping the head, stop before you reach your face, so that the water on the face does not mix with the water on your hand. But if you do end up touching your face, make sure to use other parts of your hand for wiping your feet.

WIPING THE RIGHT AND LEFT FEET



Before you wipe: the part that will be wiped must be dry

Do not take any new water. Use the same water that is on your hands from washing your left arm.

Wipe your right foot with your right hand from the tip of the toes to the ankle.

Wipe your left foot with your left hand in the same manner.

You must keep your feet still, while your hand moves across it

MUSTAḤABBĀT: Wiping of the feet can have any width, (half a finger, one finger, three fingers, or the whole hand), as long as the length that needs to be wiped is wiped; but it is better that the width of the wiping should be three joined fingers, and it is still better that the wiping of the entire foot is done with the entire hand.

EXTRA TIP!

Sometimes, when we are performing *wuḍū'*, some water may fall on to our feet. If this happens, we *must* dry our feet before wiping them.

4 You must fill your hand with water, then pour it to wash these areas, not just use a damp hand.

5 The same counting method applies for the face.

6 The parting or roots of the hair should be wiped, or if there is short hair on the top of the head.