

Cultivating young Hearts on the Fertile soils of Islam

فِقْهُ الطَّهَارَةِ

The Fiqh of Tahaarah¹

Lesson 4

الإِسْتِنْجَاءُ

(Cleaning Oneself after Using the Toilet)

This lesson will cover الإِسْتِنْجَاءُ and the etiquettes of going to the toilet

In our last lesson, we learnt about النَّجَاسَةُ and its various types. In this lesson, we will learn how to clean ourselves correctly (according to the Sunnah) after we have used the toilet. The Arabic word used for 'cleaning oneself after using the toilet' is الإِسْتِنْجَاءُ. This is a very difficult word to find in the dictionary so we will not learn its meaning according to its dictionary definition. The scholars of الفقه have defined الإِسْتِنْجَاءُ as

إِزَالَةُ الْحَارِجِ مِنَ السَّبِيلَيْنِ بِمَاءٍ

Cleaning away whatever has been passed from the front passage and the back passage with water.

¹ Compiled by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

So **الإِسْتِجَاء** means to clean ourselves from drops of urine or faeces (bodily waste) with water after we have been to the toilet. Let us learn from the Sunnah of our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the manners of going to the toilet and how to do **الإِسْتِجَاء** correctly.

The first thing we should do before entering the toilet is say **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ** (in the name of Allah). This is the Sunnah of our Prophet, based on a hadith reported by the cousin of our Prophet (رضى الله عنه), Ali ibn Abi Taalib (رضى الله عليه وسلم):

سَتْرُ مَا بَيْنَ أَعْيُنِ الْجِنِّ وَعَوْرَاتِ بَنِي آدَمَ إِذَا دَخَلَ أَحَدُهُمُ الْخُلَاءَ أَنْ يَقُولَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

The screen between the eyes of the jinns and nakedness of the children of Adam when one of you enters the area of relieving oneself is saying 'Bismillaah'.²

The companion Anas ibn Maalik (رضى الله عنه) also reported that

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْخُلَاءَ قَالَ " اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخُبَائِثِ

Whenever the Prophet used to enter the toilet, he would say, 'O Allah, I seek refuge with you from male and female devils'.³

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) teaches us in this hadith to seek Allah's protection from the male and female shayaateen (devils) from the jinn because the toilet is a place of filth and evil. So in order to protect ourselves from these devils among jinn, we should seek Allah's protection before we enter any toilet. Remember that we cannot see the jinn but they can see us so it is very important that we seek Allah's protection when we enter these filthy places. We also must remember that if we go to the toilet outside in an empty place that we should say this supplication before we go to the toilet.

How should we enter the toilet?

² Reported by at-Tirmidhi and graded as authentic by Shaykh al-Albaani.

³ Sahih al-Bukhaari (334).

When entering the toilet, we should enter with the left foot first and when we exit, we should exit with the right foot first. This is the opposite to the Sunnah of entering the masjid: we enter with the right foot and exit with the left foot. The general principle is that we do all good things with the right and all undesirable things with the left.

Should we stand or sit when going to the toilet?

The first thing we should know is that it is not حَرَام (forbidden) to go to the toilet standing but it is the Sunnah to go to the toilet sitting based on the statement of the Mother of the Believers, Aa'isha (رضي الله عنها). She said,

مَنْ حَدَّثَكُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَبُولُ قَائِمًا فَلَا تُصَدِّقُوهُ مَا كَانَ يَبُولُ إِلَّا قَاعِدًا

Whoever tells you that the Prophet would urinate while standing then do not believe him. He would not urinate except while sitting."⁴

The reason why the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to sit when going to the toilet is because it would conceal his private parts and it reduced the risk of urine splashing onto him. The above hadith from Aa'isha (رضي الله عنها) reads as if the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) never sat when going to the toilet, but we do have other reports that permit us to go to the toilet standing up, provided that (1) there is no risk of urine splashing up onto us and (2) and that we do not expose our private parts (عَوْرَة). The great companion Hudthayfah ibn al-Yamaan (رضي الله عنه) reported that

أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سُبَاظَةَ قَوْمٍ فَبَالَ قَائِمًا ثُمَّ دَعَا بِمَاءٍ فَجِئْتُهُ بِمَاءٍ فَتَوَضَّأَ

Once the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) went to the dumps of some people and urinated while standing. He then asked for water and so I brought it to him and he performed ablution.⁵

The scholars say that these two hadith do not contradict each other because it was possible that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was in a place where he could not

⁴ Jaami' at-Tirmidhi (12).

⁵ Saheeh al-Bukhari (224).

go to the toilet sitting and so he did this to show the people that it was not حَرَام (forbidden) to stand up in times it is difficult to sit down.

Is it permissible to face القبلة (prayer direction) when we are on the toilet?

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade us from facing or having our backs to القبلة whenever we go to the toilet in open spaces. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

إِذَا جَلَسَ أَحَدُكُمْ عَلَى حَاجَتِهِ فَلَا يَسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ وَلَا يَسْتَدْبِرُهَا

When any one amongst you sits to answer the call of nature, he should neither turn his face towards the Qiblah nor turn his back towards it.⁶

The scholars are all agreed that no one should face or turn his back towards القبلة in open space or outside. However, most of the scholars say it is permissible to face القبلة when the toilet is in a building or there is a screen between him and القبلة. This is due to the hadith of Abdullah ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) who said

رَقِيتُ يَوْمًا عَلَى بَيْتِ حَفْصَةَ فَرَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى حَاجَتِهِ مُسْتَقْبِلَ الشَّامِ مُسْتَدْبِرَ الْكَعْبَةِ

One day I climbed on Hafsa's house, and I saw the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) relieving himself while facing Ash-Sham, with his back toward the Ka'bah.⁷

One day, someone noticed that Abdullah ibn Umar (رضي الله عنهما) had made his camel kneel (for cover) facing القبلة and he was urinating in the direction of القبلة. He was asked if it was forbidden to urinate in that direction and so he answered

إِنَّمَا نُهِىَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ فِي الْفَضَاءِ فَإِذَا كَانَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الْقِبْلَةِ شَيْءٌ يَسْتُرُكَ فَلَا بَأْسَ

It is only forbidden to do so in open space, but when there is something between you and the Qiblah that conceals you then there is no harm.

⁶ Saheeh Muslim (508).

⁷ Jaami' at-Tirmidhi (11).

Some scholars state, such as Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen, that facing القبلة when going to the toilet is forbidden when in open space and in an enclosed space, but having our backs towards it is only forbidden when we are relieving ourselves in open space.

Is it permissible to talk when we are in the toilet?

Abdullah ibn 'Umar reported that

رَجُلًا مَرَّ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَبُولُ فَسَلَّمَ فَلَمْ يَرُدَّ عَلَيْهِ

A person passed by the Messenger of Allah when he was urinating and he gave the salams, but he did not respond to his salams.

The scholars said about this hadith that if it were permissible to talk while in the toilet the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would have returned the salams to the person because returning the salams to someone is an obligation. They said that only out of necessity should a person talk in the toilet. For example, he needs someone to give him some water so that he can do الاستنجاء.

What hand should a person clean himself with?

Abu Qataadah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

لَا يُمَسِكَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ ذَكَرَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ، وَهُوَ يَبُولُ، وَلَا يَتَمَسَّحُ مِنَ الْخَلَاءِ بِيَمِينِهِ، وَلَا يَتَنَفَّسُ فِي الْإِنَاءِ

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "Nobody should touch his private part with his right hand when urinating, and should not clean himself using his right hand and should not breathe in the utensil (he is drinking from).⁸

So this hadith teaches us that we should not touch our private parts with our right hands when urinating or when cleaning ourselves because the right hand is used for doing good things.

⁸ Agreed upon (102).

With what substances should a person clean himself?

When a person has finished from the toilet, he can clean himself in one of three ways:

(1) He can clean himself with just water (الاستنجاء) and this is permissible based on the hadith Anas ibn Maalik (رضي الله عنه) who said

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدْخُلُ الْخَلَاءَ فَأَحْمِلُ أَنَا وَغُلَامٌ إِذَاوَةٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ وَعَنْزَةٌ يَسْتَنْجِي بِالمَاءِ .

Whenever Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went to answer the call of nature, I along with another boy used to carry a tumbler full of water (for cleaning the private parts) and a short spear (or stick).

(2) He can clean himself with just stones (الاستجمار) and this is permissible based on the hadith of Salmaan (رضي الله عنه) who said

نَهَانَا أَنْ نَسْتَقْبِلَ الْقِبْلَةَ بِعَاطِطٍ أَوْ بَوْلٍ أَوْ نَسْتَنْجِي بِأَيْمَانِنَا أَوْ نَكْتَفِي بِأَقْلٍ مِنْ ثَلَاثَةِ أَحْجَارٍ

He (the Prophet) forbade us from facing the Qiblah when defecating or urinating, or cleaning ourselves with our right hands, or to use less than three stones.⁹

(3) He can clean himself with water (الاستنجاء) and stones (الاستجمار). This practice has not been reported from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) but the scholars say that this is the best way to clean oneself.

What do we say after we have finished from the toilet?

After we have finished relieving ourselves, Aa'isha, the wife of the Prophet said that

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنَ الْعَاطِطِ قَالَ عُفْرَانِكَ

When the Messenger of Allah exited the toilet, he would say, 'I seek Your forgiveness'.¹⁰

⁹ Saheeh Muslim (504).

¹⁰ Sunan Ibn Maajah (300).

So why do we say **غُفْرَانَكَ** when we leave the toilet? Some of the scholars said that when a person has relieved himself of the harms of his body (body waste), he should now relieve himself from the harms of his sins by seeking Allah's forgiveness!

Al-hamdulilaah, this concludes our lesson on **الِاسْتِنْجَاءَ** .

Questions on الإستنجاء

Answer the following questions by reading the text of the lesson carefully:

1. Write the Arabic word for 'cleaning oneself after using the toilet'.
2. How do the scholars of **الفقه** define 'cleaning oneself after using the toilet'?
3. What is the first thing we should say before entering the toilet?
4. What is the Arabic word for 'toilet' used in the hadith of our Prophet?
5. The companion Anas ibn Maalik reported a supplication we should say before entering the toilet. Can you remember the Arabic?
6. How should we enter the toilet? And what is the general principle when doing good things and undesired things?
7. How did the Prophet used to urinate when he went to the toilet?
8. Why did the Prophet used to urinate in the way that he did?
9. Finish the sentence: It is permissible for us to stand when going to the toilet, provided that_____.
10. Do the two hadith that show the Prophet going to the toilet in two different ways contradict each other?
11. According to all the scholars, when is it forbidden to face or have our backs to **القِبْلَة**?
12. According to the majority of the scholars, when is it permissible to face **القِبْلَة**?
13. What is the position of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen?
14. Is it permissible to talk when we are in the toilet?
15. What hand should a person clean himself with? And what hand should he touch his private part with when he is urinating?
16. Can you briefly explain the three ways a person can clean himself after using the toilet?
17. What is the Arabic word for 'cleaning oneself with stones'?

18. What supplication did the Prophet used to say whenever he left the toilet?
19. What is a possible wisdom behind this supplication?