

The Little Green Book

Volume II Chapter 14

On Ablution

There are two kinds of ablutions; the kind known as “step by step,” which consists of washing the different parts of the body one after the other, and the kind known as “total,” in which the whole body is immersed in water.

In step-by-step ablutions, one must begin by proclaiming in both loud and a low voice that one is planning to perform his ablutions; after that, one should wash one's head and the back of the neck, then the right side of the body, followed by the left side. If this precise order is not followed, whether deliberately or out of ignorance, the ablutions are not valid. It is to be pointed out that the right side of the navel and the right side of the genitals must be washed with the right side of the body, and the left side of the navel and genitals with the left side of the body. However, it is more prudent to wash navel and genitals in their entirety along with each side of the body. If once the ablution is completed, one suspects that some part of the body has been overlooked, the ritual must be repeated; in that case, if the overlooked part is on the left side of the body, it is enough to wash only that part, but if it is on the right side of the body, after washing that part, the whole left side of the body must be washed again.

In a total ablution, one must immerse the entire body in water, after having proclaimed in both a loud and a low voice that this is one's intention. If one notices, after the ablution, that some part of the body remained outside the water, even though one may not know exactly which part of the body it was, the entire ritual must be repeated.

It is necessary that during ablution not one part of the body remain unwashed; however, it is not required that one wash those parts which are not visible, such as the inside of the ears or nose. In the case of ears that are pierced, the holes in them must be washed if they are large enough so the insides of them can be seen; otherwise, this is not necessary.

During ablution, one must wash the shortest hairs on the body, but it is recommended that even the longest be washed. If one washes his anus in the water of a public bath, one must first obtain the permission of the owner of this bath for the ablution to be valid. If during ablution, one breaks wind or urinates, the ritual remains valid. If one performs his ablutions after having ejaculated and

The Little Green Book

one has a verse of the Qur'an or the name of Allah written or tattooed on his body, one's hand must not touch that part of the body during the ablution, but that part must be washed without being touched.

Sperm is always impure, whether it results from actual coitus or from an emission while one is either conscious or asleep, whether it is abundant or not, whether or not it results from sexual pleasure, whether emission is intentional or not.

It is recommended that one urinate after ejaculation; if one does not, the discharge that might follow one's ablution would have to be considered to be sperm, even though it seems doubtful.

During sexual intercourse, if the penis enters a woman's vagina or a man's anus, fully or only as far as the circumcision ring, both partners become impure, even if they have not reached puberty; they must consequently perform their ablutions.

If the man thinks that he has not entered the woman's vagina beyond the circumcision ring, ablution is not required.

If a man – Allah protect him from it! – fornicates with an animal and ejaculates, ablution is necessary.

If a sperm moves inside the penis but does not come out, or if there is doubt about whether it actually was emitted, ablution is not required.

A man who has ejaculated and has not yet performed his ablutions must avoid the following ten acts: eating; drinking; reading more than seven verses of the Qur'an; touching the binding of the Qur'an, or the margins of its pages, or the spaces between the lines; carrying the Qur'an on his person; sleeping; dyeing his beard with henna; anointing himself with grease or oil; having sexual intercourse after having ejaculated in his sleep.

If a man has sexual intercourse with his wife during the periods of prescribed abstinence, such as the month's fast of Ramadan, his sweat is impure, and he may not say his daily prayers while in such a state.

If a man becomes aroused by a woman other than his wife but then has intercourse with his own wife, it is preferable for him not to pray if he has sweated; but if he first has intercourse with his spouse and then with another woman, he may say his prayers even though he be in a sweat.

The Little Green Book

A man who has ejaculated as a result of intercourse with a woman other than his wife, and who then ejaculates again while having coitus with his legal wife, does not have the right to say his prayers while still sweating; but if he had intercourse with his wife first and then with a woman not his wife, he may say his prayers even though still sweating.

If a fly or any other insect settled first on something impure that is moist and then on something pure that is moist, the latter in turn becomes impure, provided one can be certain that the former was impure; failing that, it remains pure.

Besides the ablutions that are necessary and unavoidable there are a number of ablutions that are highly recommended in order to please Allah. A few of them are:

Ablution performed Friday between dawn and noon.

Ablution performed on the eve of the first day of Ramadan and the eves of all the odd days of that month, (third, fifth, seventh, and so on). The ablutions on the eves of the first, fifteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty-fifth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-ninth days of Ramadan are especially recommended. On the eve of the twenty-third day, one would be well advised to perform two ablutions, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the night.

Ablution performed by a woman who has used perfume for a man other than her husband.

Ablution of the man who has fallen asleep while in a drunken state.

Ablution of a man or woman who, during a total eclipse of the sun or the moon, have not said their prayers.

Ablution of one who has witnessed the hanging of a person condemned to death. If he did not witness it of his own free will, ablution is not necessarily required.