

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

WUDU (ABLUTION) ACCORDING TO THE QURAN

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Many Muslims today learn their ablution rituals from others and accept majority practice. Despite slight variances between certain schools of thoughts, many align their ritual cleansing to popular practice with little thought to ascertain if there is any support for it in the Quran.

Often questions are asked and at times apparent contradictions in the [Islamic secondary sources](#) are also cited (once, twice or thrice?)

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas:

The Prophet performed ablution by washing the body parts only once. [1]

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zaid:

The Prophet performed ablution by washing the body parts twice. [2]

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zaid:

Once Allah's Apostle came to us and we brought out water for him in a brass pot. He performed ablution thus: He washed his face thrice, and his forearms to the elbows twice, then passed his wet hands lightly over the head from front to rear and brought them to front again and washed his feet (up to the ankles). [3]

However, it is not the intention of this article to provide an intricate survey of the [Islamic secondary sources](#) which are arguably superfluous to the prescriptions of the Quran. (Please note that while I fully accept the difference between the transmission of Ahadith and Sunnah practice, I nevertheless humbly assert with reasons that both transmissions remain subservient to the actual text of the Quran. Please see related article below)

What comes as a surprise to many Muslims is that the ablution method is actually clearly imparted by the Quran.

THE QURAN'S METHOD CLEARLY STATED

Let us note the relevant Quranic verse that deals with ablution.

005.006 (Part)

"O you who believe! when you stand up for prayer, then wash (Arabic: ghusl) your faces and your hands (and arms) to the elbows and wipe (Arabic: Mas'ahu) your heads and your feet to the ankles..."

The rest of the verse addresses the state of impurity and what to do when there is no water (tayammum).

It is clear that the ablution as stipulated in the Quran simply carries the following requirements:

- (1) To wash the face and hands including the arms till the elbows
- (2) To wipe the head
- (3) To wipe (or wash) the feet to the ankles (Please see related article 1 below)

Simply then, from the Quran's perspective, everything else is superfluous. There are no number of ritual washes prescribed (in twos or threes), there is no mention of passing water through the nostrils, rinsing the mouth, passing the fingers around the ears, wiping the back of the head (nape), facing the qibla, sitting on a high ground and starting the ritual ablution from the right. If these extra practices are to be performed, it should be appreciated they are out of choice and not a requirement as stipulated by the Quran.

It is often asserted by many Muslims that attempt to reconcile existing traditional ablution methods with the Quran that the Prophet elaborated and showed additional ways which has been passed on through Sunnah practice. Quite apart from this assertion being in breach of verse 69:44-48 (below), it seems difficult to accept that the prophet of God would add to any prescriptions given to him by his Lord and present them as 'deen' (religion) when he himself was instructed to strictly follow the Quran (7:203; 10:109)

069:044-48

"And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath). But verily this is a Message for the God-fearing"

Even if the Prophet were to incline and introduce anything in God's name, his punishment would be doubled.

017:73-75

"And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed to you, to substitute in our name something quite different; (in that case), behold! they would certainly have made you (their) friend. And had We not given you strength, you would nearly have inclined to them a little. In that case We should have made you taste an equal portion (of punishment) in this life, and an equal portion in death: and moreover you would have found none to help you against Us!"

007.203

"And when you bring not a verse for them they say: Why have you not chosen it? **Say: I follow only that which is inspired in me from my Lord.** This (Quran) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy for a people that believe"

010.109

"And (O Muhammad) **follow that which is inspired in you**, and forbear until God give judgment. And He is the Best of Judges"

FINAL THOUGHTS

Despite the clear and simple instructions given by scripture, the majority of Muslims still remain content to follow blindly the inherited traditions and practices of their forefathers.

017.036

"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed! the hearing and the sight and the heart - of each of these you will be questioned"

Related Articles:

- (1) [Washing or Wiping the Feet in Wudu \(Ablution\)?](#)
- (2) [Do I Need to Perform Ablution \(Wudu\) Before I Can Touch the Quran?](#)
- (3) [The Difference Between Hadith and Sunna](#)
- (4) [Did Prophet Solomon ^{\(pbuh\)} Really Slaughter His Horses? \(Quranic use of Mas'ha\)](#)

REFERENCES

- [1] SAHIH BUKHARI, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 159, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/004.sbt.html> [Accessed 31st August 2011]
- [2] SAHIH BUKHARI, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 160, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/004.sbt.html> [Accessed 31st August 2011]
- [3] SAHIH BUKHARI, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 196, University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement [online], Translation available at <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/004.sbt.html> [Accessed 31st August 2011]

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