

Questions of Faith:

What to do in the toilet

Recently I was informed that it is wrong to face the Qiblah, in the toilet, even if there is a wall in front of you.

This lead (sic) to further discussin (sic) and eventually to an argument about what Muslims should and shouldn't do in the bathroom.

Although I was convinced this issue made me

realise (sic) just how little I know about this important matter.

I shall therefore be grateful if you could spare the space and inform us in detail what a Muslim is supposed to do when in the toilet.

Please publish this on a Monday.

Nafeesah O, Jubail.

In Islam, going to the bathroom involves the following etiquette:

1. It is not proper for one to carry something that has Allah's name upon it (unless he is afraid of losing it or having it stolen) while he is in the bathroom. Anas related that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had a ring engraved with Muhammad Rasool-ullah, (Muhammad the Messenger of Allah), which he would remove when he went to the bathroom. Ibn Hajr says that this hadith is *malul* (a type of weak hadith having a defect).

2. He should conceal himself from others.

3. One should mention the name of Allah and seek refuge in Him when entering the privy or removing his clothes to relieve himself. Anas reported that when the Prophet (pbuh) entered the privy he would say, "In the name of Allah. O Allah! I seek refuge in you from male and female noxious beings (devils)."

4. One should not talk. One should not respond to a greeting or repeat what the caller to prayer is saying. He may however speak if there is some necessity.

5. If he sneezes, he should praise Allah to himself and simply move his lips (without making a sound). Ibn 'Umar related that a man passed by the Prophet (pbuh) and greeted him while he (the Prophet) was urinating. The Prophet did not return his greeting.

Abu Sa'eed reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah say (sic), "Isn't it true that Allah detests those who converse while they relieve themselves?" This was related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah.

This hadith seems to support the position that it is forbidden to talk. Many scholars, however, say that it is only disliked, not forbidden.

6. One should neither face nor turn his back on the *qiblah* while relieving himself. Abu Hurairah

reported that the Prophet said, "When one of you relieves himself, he should neither face the *qiblah* nor turn his back on it."

7. One should seek a soft and low piece of ground to protect himself from impurities. Abu Musa related that the Messenger of Allah came to a low and soft part of the ground and urinated. He then said, "When one of you urinates, he should choose the proper place to do so.

8. One should not use a hole in the ground. Qatadah related from Abdullah ibn Sarjas who said, "The Messenger of Allah forbade urination into a hole." Said Qatadah, "What is disliked about urinating into a hole?" Said he, "It is the residence of the *jinn*."

9. One should avoid shaded places and those places where people walk and gather. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said, "Beware of those acts which cause others to curse." They asked, "What are those acts?" He said, "Relieving yourself in the people's walkways or in their shade."

10. One should not urinate in bathing places or in still or running water. Abdullah ibn Mughaffal narrated that the Prophet said, "None of you should urinate in a bathing place and then make ablution in the water. The majority of *waswas* comes from that."

If there is a drain in the bathing place, it is permissible to urinate into it.

11. One may not urinate while standing. If a person can guarantee that no impurities will touch his clothes, it is permissible to urinate while standing. Said 'Aishah, "If someone relates to you that the Messenger of Allah urinated while standing, do not believe him. He only urinated while sitting."

One should not forget that what 'Aishah said is based on the knowledge that she had. Hudhaifah relates that

the Messenger of Allah went to a public garbage dump and urinated while standing. Hudhaifah went away, and the Prophet then called him over. The Prophet made ablution and wiped over his shoes.

Commenting upon the issue, an-Nawawi says, "To urinate while sitting is most desirable in my opinion, but to do so standing is permissible. Both acts are confirmed by the Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace.

12. One must remove any impurities from his clothes and body. To do so, he can use a rock, stone or any other pure matter. One may use only water to clean the area, or any combinations of purifying agents.

Anas also related the Prophet as saying, "Purify yourselves from urine, as most punishment in the grave is due to it."

13. One should not clean himself with his right hand.

Hafsah reported, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) reserved his right hand for eating, drinking, putting on his clothes, taking and giving. He used his left hand for other actions.

14. One should remove any bad smell from his hands after cleaning himself. Abu Hurairah said, "When the Messenger of Allah relieved himself, I used to bring him a container of water. He would cleanse himself, then rub his hands against the soil."

15. Entering the bathroom. One should enter the bathroom or a privy with his left foot, and exit with his right foot, saying: "O Allah! I seek your forgiveness." 'Aishah related that when the Prophet left the bathroom, he would say this supplication."