

# Dry Ablution (Tayammum)

**Description:** A summarized study of *Tayammum* (dry ablution), its method of performance, permissibility and nullification.

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## Prerequisites

- Ablution (*Wudoo*).

## Objectives

- To learn about *tayammum* - the substitute for *wudoo* when water is not available.
- To know the situations where *tayammum* can be performed.
- To learn how to perform *tayammum*.
- To know the surfaces which can be used for *tayammum*.
- To learn what nullifies *tayammum*.

## Arabic Terms

- *Wudoo* - ablution.
- *Ghusl* - ritual bath.
- *Sunnah* - The word *Sunnah* has several meanings depending on the area of study however the meaning is generally accepted to be, whatever was reported that the Prophet said, did, or approved.
- *Tayammum* - dry ablution.

## Introduction

What should you do in the situation where you have to pray *salah* (ritual prayer), yet neither have no water suitable for making *wudoo*, nor the time be able to find such water soon enough to pray on time?



What if you are sick and either not able to make *wudoo*, or making *wudoo* is detrimental to your health. What is the correct procedure in such a case?

The answer to these common questions is to perform a “dry” ablution, which is called *tayammum*. *Tayammum* consists of using clean soil or dust to wipe your face and hands with the intention of preparing oneself to pray, and, as such, substitutes *wudoo* in special circumstances.

The procedure and basic conditions of making *tayammum* are mentioned in the Quran and *Sunnah*. The Quran says:

**“And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from relieving himself, or you have touched women, and you do not find water, then perform *tayammum* with clean earth. Certainly, Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving.” (Quran 4:43)**

The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

**“All of the earth has been made a clean place to pray for me and my nation. Whenever a person from my nation wants to pray, he has something with which to purify himself, that is, the earth.”[\[1\]](#)**

*Tayammum* is one of the five blessings from Allah to Muslims that He did not give to any other prophet before Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him. The Prophet said:

“I have been given five things that were not given to anyone before me: ...the earth has been made a place of prayer for me - wherever and whoever of my nation wants to pray, he may pray...”[\[2\]](#)

## Situations Where *Tayammum* Is Done

*Tayammum* cannot be made at will or when one feels *wudoo* is inconvenient. There are specific situations where it can be made:

(1) If you cannot find water or the water is not enough for *wudoo*. Before making *tayammum*, you should try to get appropriate water from any accessible place you can find it. Only if you cannot find good water, or it is too far away, can you make *tayammum*.

‘Imran bin Husain, one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad said, **“We were with**

**the Messenger of Allah during a journey. When he led the people in prayer, one man stayed apart. He asked him, “What prevented you from praying?” He said, ‘I need a purifying bath and there is not sufficient water.’ He said, ‘Use the soil, for it is sufficient.’”**[\[3\]](#)

(2) Injury or illness.

You may perform *tayammum* if you think using water will worsen your disease based on past experience or the doctor’s advice. A person hospitalized who is unable to make *wudoo*, may keep a bag with some clean soil to make *tayammum*.

(3) If the water is harmful to you because it is too cold and for some reason you cannot heat it up.

‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas narrated that he was participating in an expedition. He had a wet dream during an extremely cold night, and was afraid that if he performed *ghusl* he would die. He prayed the morning prayer with his companions. He then went to the Messenger of Allah to ask him about this. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, **“O ‘Amr, did you pray with your companions while you needed a purifying bath?”** ‘Amr mentioned the verse, **“Do not kill yourselves, Allah is merciful to you”** to the Prophet. The Prophet just smiled and didn’t say anything.[\[4\]](#)

(4) If the water is nearby, but you cannot reach it due to fear.

(5) If you have water, but you need it for cooking, or are saving it for use later. For example, this may arise while camping. Many of the companions would save their drinking water and performed *tayammum*.

(6) If you fear the time for *salah* (ritual prayer) will be over by the time you get to water.

## How to Perform *Tayammum*

1. You must have the intention of purifying yourself and removing impurity. The intention is in the heart and is not uttered.
2. Say ‘*Bismillah*’ (I begin with the name of Allah).
3. Gently touch the ground or a dusty surface with the palms of both hands.
4. Blow on the hands and shake off any excess, so as not to make the face dusty.
5. Wipe the palms together, then the face, and then the palms and backs of the hands up to the wrists.

Ammar, Prophet’s companion, said, “We became sexually impure and had no water, so we rolled in the dirt as does an animal and prayed.” This was mentioned to the Prophet and he said:

“This would have been enough for you,”

...and he struck the earth with his hands, blew in them and then wiped his face and hands with them.”[\[5\]](#)

## Soil Used for *Tayammum*

It is permissible to do *tayammum* with anything that is from the earth:

- clean soil or dust
- any dusty surface
- sand
- a wall **if** it is made of something from earth (rocks or mud bricks), but **not** if it has a clean painted or wooden surface
- any type of wall with dust on it

## What Can You Do After Making *Tayammum*?

You can basically do anything for which *wudoo* is done like praying *salah* (ritual prayer) and touching the Quran.

## What Nullifies *Tayammum*

*Tayammum* is invalid if water is present and can be used for *wudoo*. Other than that, everything that nullifies *wudoo* nullifies *tayammum*:

- (1) Breaking wind.
- (2) Passing urine.
- (3) Passing feces.
- (4) The release of prostatic fluid and *wadiy* (thick white fluid that comes after urinating).
- (5) Deep sleep.
- (6) Sexual intercourse or emission of sperm or female orgasmic fluid.

If you pray *salah* (ritual prayer) after performing *tayammum* and then find water, you do not have to repeat that *salah* even if time is left for that *salah*.

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Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Ahmad

[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[3] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[4] *Ahmad, Abu Dawud*

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

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