

Manners of relieving oneself

Article taken and slightly adapted from: newmuslims.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Something as mundane as relieving oneself is tied to a Muslim's sense of cleanliness and modesty. There is nothing odd or strange about it, as Islaam literally is all encompassing, something that evokes a pleasant surprise in some people. Even in the time of the Prophet, there was a polytheist who exclaimed with astonishment to Salmaan, the Persian, "Your Prophet has taught you everything, even how to defecate!" Salmaan responded, "Yes, he forbade us to face the direction of Makkah when urinating or defecating..."¹

We will detail the manners of relieving oneself, something apparently minor, but implies much about personal hygiene and religious observance.

Supplications before Relieving Oneself

There are certain supplications one should recite when entering or leaving the place one relieves oneself, whether it be in a bathroom or in nature.

- One should say "Bismillaah" (I begin with the Name of Allaah) before entering, because the Messenger of Allaah said:

"The eyes of the jinn are blocked from seeing the nakedness of the sons of Aadam when one of them says before entering the place for relieving oneself, 'Bismillaah.'"²

- (b) Allaah-humma innee a'oodhu bika min al-khubuthi wa'l-kha-baa'ith.

"O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from male and female devils."³

Enter with your left foot.

Inside the Toilet

- **Facing the Qiblah**

Out of respect a Muslim should not face the Qiblah⁴ when urinating or defecating. The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

¹ Al-Tirmidhee

² Al-Tirmidhee

³ Abou Daawood, Al-Tirmidhee

Manners of relieving oneself

“When any one of you sits down to answer the call of nature, he should not face the Qiblah or turn his back towards it.”⁵

- **Concealment**

We must conceal ourselves from the sight of others when answering the call of nature. The Messenger of Allaah preferred to go behind a rise on the ground or a garden of date palms.⁶ If a person is in the open and cannot find anything to conceal him when he needs to answer the call of nature, he should move away from public sight. One of the Companions described how he was with the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) on a journey, and when the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) felt the need to answer the call of nature, he went far away.⁷

When outdoors, one should not uncover their private parts until they squat close to the ground, as it is more concealing.⁸ Indoors, first make sure you have closed the door and are out of sight.

Relieving Oneself

- **Squatting**

Outdoors, it is best to answer the call of nature sitting. It is better to adopt a posture that is more concealing, one which will cause no splash-back on yourself or your clothes. If there is a need and a person does not fear splash-back, it is permissible to urinate standing up.

- **Splash-Back**

One must take great care to avoid the splash-back of urine, both on themselves and their clothes. If urine or stool soils some part of body or clothes, those areas must also be washed, and the impurity must be totally removed from them. The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) passed by two graves, and said:

“Indeed they are being punished, but for something which seemed trivial to them: this one used not to guard himself from urine, and the other used to walk about spreading malicious gossip.”⁹

⁴ The direction of formal prayer and the Ka’bah, the House of Allaah.

⁵ Saheeh Muslim

⁶ Saheeh Muslim

⁷ Al-Tirmidhee

⁸ “When the Prophet wanted to answer the call of nature, he would not lift his garment until he had squatted close to the ground.” (Al-Tirmidhee)

⁹ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree

Manners of relieving oneself

Prohibited Places

Islaam forbids urinating in places where people might pass by, or seek shade therein, such as a park, because it is something disturbing to people. The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said, **“Fear the two things that bring curses.”** They asked, “What are the two things that bring curses, O Messenger of Allaah?” He said:

“When a person relieves himself in the road where people walk or in the place where they seek shade.”¹⁰

Also, it is forbidden to urinate in stagnant water, as it was forbidden by the Messenger of Allaah.¹¹ It obviously makes the water impure and will disturb those who use it.

Conversation

Don't say, 'As-Salamu 'Alaikum' to a person who is answering the call of nature, or reply with 'Wa-'Alaikum us-Salam' while relieving yourself, out of respect for God's name. Al-Salaam is one of Allaah's beautiful Names.

A man passed by the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) while he was urinating, and greeted him with Salam. The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said to him:

“If you see me in this state, do not greet me, because if you do, I will not respond.”¹²

It is disliked to speak while relieving oneself unnecessarily.

Urinals

Urinals should be avoided for four reasons. First, there is no privacy. Private parts are exposed, which is indecent and forbidden. Second, it is almost impossible to avoid splash-back. Third, there is no toilet paper. Fourth, people sometimes talk while urinating, an activity better left outside the toilet!

Cleaning Method

- **Using the Left Hand**

The Prophet's (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) wife Hafsa (*May Allaah the Most High be pleased with her*) reported that he used to use his right hand for eating, drinking, making wudoo, getting dressed, and giving and taking things; and that he used to use his left hand for other things.¹³

¹⁰ Aboo Daawood

¹¹ Saheeh Muslim

¹² Ibn Maajah

¹³ Musnad of Imaam Ahmad.

Manners of relieving oneself

One should not touch the penis with the right hand when urinating, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

“When any one of you urinates, he should not hold his penis in his right hand or clean it with his right hand.”¹⁴

It is not allowed to wipe oneself with the right hand when cleaning stool or urine; the left hand should be used for this purpose, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

“When any one of you wipes himself, he should not use his right hand.”¹⁵

- **Material**

Toilet paper or water can be used. It is preferable to use both. Be careful to remove all impurities after answering the call of nature, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) warned against being careless in cleaning oneself after urinating:

“Most of the punishment of the grave will be because of urine.”¹⁶

- Any impurity should be washed or wiped thrice or more, and it is better that it be an odd number, according to whatever is needed to clean it, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

“When anyone of you cleans himself do so an odd number.”¹⁷

Supplication on Leaving the Toilet

When leaving the toilet, exit with right foot, and say:

Ghufraanak.

“I seek Your forgiveness.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree

¹⁵ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree

¹⁶ Ibn Maajah

¹⁷ Musnad of Imaam Ahmad.

¹⁸ Aboo Daawood, Al-Tirmidhee