



126379 - In order for wudu to be valid, is it stipulated that one should rub the skin and run the fingers between the toes?

the question

When doing wudu, is it stipulated that one should rub between the toes each time? For example, when washing the feet three times, do we have to run the fingers between the toes every time?

Summary of answer

What is required is to make the water reach between the fingers and toes once, by running the fingers between them or otherwise. If the individual runs his fingers between the fingers and toes each of the three times he washes them, there is nothing wrong with that, but it is not a condition of wudu being valid. Rather what is required is to make sure that the water reaches between the fingers and toes at least once.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What is the minimum number of times that each part must be washed when doing wudu?

What is required when doing wudu is to wash each part once, making sure that the water reaches all of that part. If the water cannot reach everywhere except by rubbing, then it becomes obligatory, otherwise rubbing is Sunnah.

What is required is to make the water reach between the fingers and toes once, by running the fingers between them or otherwise. If the individual runs his fingers between them each of the three times that they are washed, then there is nothing wrong with that, but it is not a condition of



wudu being valid; rather what is required is to make sure that the water reaches between the fingers and the toes at least once.

Al-Bukhari (157) narrated that Ibn `Abbas said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did wudu washing each part once.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars are agreed that what is required is to wash each part once.

End quote from *Al-Majmu`*, 1/465. See also: *Sharh Muslim*, 3/106, and *Al-Mughni*, 1/94.

Ruling on rubbing the skin when doing wudu

Rubbing the part with water is not only required to make the water reach between the fingers and toes; rather that applies to all parts that are washed. It says in *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah*:

In Islamic terminology – as was stated by the Malikis – rubbing means passing the hand over the limb with moderate pressure, even if that does not remove dirt and even if that is after pouring water, if it is done before it dries up.

The jurists differed regarding the ruling on rubbing the skin when doing wudu: is it obligatory or Sunnah?

The majority of Hanafi, Shafa`i and Hanbali jurists – and it is one view among the Malikis – were of the view that rubbing is one of the sunnahs of wudu. The Shafa`i is added: One should go to extremes in rubbing the heels, especially in winter, as it was narrated [that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said]: “Woe to the heels from the Fire.” [Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

The Malikis said, according to the well-known view: It is one of the obligatory parts of wudu. Al-Hattab said: There was a difference of scholarly opinion regarding rubbing and whether it is obligatory or not; there are three views:



The well-known view is that it is obligatory. This is the view of Malik in *Al-Mudawwanah*, based on the fact that it is a condition of being able to say that it has been washed.

Ibn Yunus said – regarding the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), “Rub your body with your hand” –: The command indicates that it is obligatory, because the aim is to make the water reach the body in such a way that it may be called washing. The scholars of Arabic language differentiated between ghusl (washing) and inghimas (dipping).

The second view is that it is not obligatory. This is the view of Ibn `Abd al-Hakam, based on the fact that the limb may still be described as having been washed without rubbing it.

The third view is that it is obligatory, not for its own sake but to ensure that water reaches all of the part being washed. So whoever is certain that water has reached all of the part being washed because he allowed water to flow over it for long enough, that is sufficient. Al-Lakhmi attributed this view to Abul-Faraj and Ibn Naji stated that Ibn Rushd also attributed it to him.

Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah, 43/358.

Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The majority are agreed that it is sufficient when washing the limbs in wudu and ghusl to allow the water to flow over the limbs, and that rubbing is not stipulated. Malik and al-Muzani were the only ones who stipulated that rubbing is required.

Sharh Sahih Muslim, 3/107.

The view that makes the most sense regarding rubbing is the third view according to the Malikis. This view states that the purpose is to make sure that the water reaches all of the part that is being washed. If that is achieved without rubbing, then rubbing the part that is being washed is not required, otherwise rubbing it becomes obligatory.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:



As for rubbing the body when doing ghusl and rubbing the limbs when doing wudu, it is obligatory if the individual is not certain that water has reached where it should reach without rubbing, such as under thick hair. But if the water reaches everywhere it needs to without rubbing, then rubbing is merely recommended.

Sharh al-`Umdah, 1/367-368.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Rubbing is prescribed so as to ensure that the water reaches everywhere it should reach, because if someone pours water without rubbing, the water may scatter and not reach all of the body because of grease on the skin. So rubbing is Sunnah.

Ash-Sharh al-Mumtī`, 1/361.

He also said:

What is required when doing wudu and ghusl is to make the water flow over all of the part that is to be washed. As for rubbing, it is not obligatory, but it may become necessary when there is a need for it, such as if the water is very cold, or if there are traces of oil or grease and the like on the part that is to be washed. In that case, rubbing becomes necessary to ensure that the water reaches all of the part that is to be washed. ... Therefore washing is what is obligatory, and rubbing is not obligatory.

Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb, 3/464.

What do we mean by running the fingers between digits, and how is it done?

As for running the fingers between digits, what is meant is using the hand to make the water reach between them, such as the gaps between the fingers or toes.

It was narrated by Abu Dawud (142) and at-Tirmidhi (788), who classed it as authentic, that Laqit



ibn Sabirah said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, tell me about wudu. He said: "Do wudu well, run your fingers between your fingers and toes, and go to extremes in rinsing your nose, unless you are fasting."

The jurists interpreted the instruction to run the fingers between digits in a manner similar to the way in which they interpreted the instruction to rub, as noted above.

It says in *`Awn al-Ma`bud*:

This hadith indicates that it is obligatory to run the fingers between the fingers and toes. End quote.

This may be understood as meaning that the water will not reach between the fingers and toes except by running the fingers between them. If the water will reach everywhere it should reach without running the fingers between the fingers and toes, then doing that is Sunnah.

It says in *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah* (11/49):

Making the water reach between the fingers and toes may be done by running the fingers between them or otherwise. This is obligatory when doing wudu and ghusl according to all jurists, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles} [Al-Ma'idah 5:6].

As for running the fingers between the fingers and toes after the water has gone between the fingers, according to the majority of jurists (the Hanafis, Shafa`is and Hanbalis) running the fingers between the fingers and toes is Sunnah in wudu, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to Laqit ibn Sabirah: "Do wudu well, run your fingers between your fingers and toes." The Hanafis stated that this is a confirmed Sunnah. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said:

The Sunnah is to run the fingers between the fingers and toes in order to make sure that the water



reaches between the digits, especially the toes, because they are close together.

End quote from *Liqā' al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 8/7.

The following answers contain further information that you will find useful: [72450](#), [198604](#), [85031](#), [163829](#), [93056](#), [1175](#), [226947](#).

And Allah knows best.