14506 - Is Praying in a Room with a Toilet Permissible?

the question

I live in a non-Muslim country and find some difficulty when the time of prayer comes while I am outside home as there are not always nearby mosques everywhere you go. A lot of sisters (including myself) have no solution but to pray in the fitting rooms of the shops, or sometimes in the nursing rooms where mums change the nappies for their babies. The problem is that sometimes these nursing rooms have a special section (a corner in the room) where there is a toilet for children. Is it OK to pray there away from the toilet, or is it still considered a "Najis" place? Also can a Muslim woman pray in an open park or car parking? I do not feel shy about my religion and I do not care about people seeing me, but I sometimes feel shy when non-Muslims stand and stare as if you are doing a show! I am also worried that it could be haram for a Muslim woman to pray in front of men. We try to avoid these situations as much as we can, but sometimes we cannot. What should a sister do in these situations?

Summary of answer

While praying in a bathroom is clearly forbidden, praying in a room with a toilet can be valid as long as there is a separation and the area remains pure.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Can you pray in the bathroom?

It was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that it is prohibited to pray in certain places, including bathrooms. It is not permissible to pray in them.

It was narrated in an authentic report from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

that he said: “All the earth is a mosque except for graveyards and bathrooms.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, As-Salah, 291; classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Sunan At-Tirmidhi, 262)

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“Bathroom” refers to every place that is used for the purpose of relieving oneself; it is not permissible to pray in any such place. This room on the edge of which there is a toilet is not considered to be a bathroom so long as there is a barrier between it and the bathroom, with a wall and door etc.

In this case, prayer in that room is valid, because the prohibition on praying in bathrooms is because they are usually impure, and this room is not like that.

What indicates that prayer in this place and elsewhere is valid is the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The earth has been made a place of prayer and a means of purification for me, so wherever a man is when the time for prayer comes, let him pray.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, At-Tayammum, 323)

Guidelines for Women Praying in Public Spaces

So prayer in that place is valid, and it is also valid in parks and parking lots, on condition that the place in which one prays is pure.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked, if there is a bathroom in front of a person in the direction of the Qiblah, is it O.K. to pray facing it?

He said:

The prayer is valid and there is nothing wrong with that, rather what is forbidden is to pray inside the bathroom. (End quote from Fatawa Ash-Shaykh Ibn Baz, vol. 2, p. 196)

One thing to which attention must be paid is that a woman should uncover her face when praying, especially when she is among other women or her Mahrams. But if she is praying in a place where

men can see her, then she should cover her face whilst praying.

The Importance of Praying on Time

Secondly: you will be rewarded, in sha Allah, for your keenness to do the prayers on time. Undoubtedly the Muslim is obliged to do the prayers on time. And you have to make yourself feel that you are obeying Allah when you are praying.

Your adherence to the truth and your establishing prayer and not feeling shy to worship openly may be the means of guiding some of the non-Muslims who see you to Islam, in which case you will have a reward equal to theirs in sha Allah.

And Allah knows best.