178636 - Highlighting the beauty of Islam through its prohibition on extravagant use of water

the question

I am a student studying engineering and water management. I am interested in finding out about ways in which we can solve the problem of misuse of water, such as in the case of wudu', which leads to wasting a lot of water.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is important to highlight the beauty of Islam and draw attention to its superiority, and the fact that following its laws and rulings will lead to all that is good. With regard to the issues that a person learns about religious matters, he may think initially that there is something wrong with the religion and that it should be criticised, but then, after thinking and reflecting on its objectives, it will become clear that his initial impression was completely wrong.

The way in which Islam deals with the issue of water and its emphasis on being economical with water when purifying oneself and doing wudu' is based on two things:

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Islam is keen for people to purify and cleanse themselves both physically and spiritually. Therefore the believer purifies himself of his sins five times a day when he does wudu' for every prayer. If the believer does wudu' five times a day, and washes each body part three times, there is no better way of cleaning oneself than that.

An-Nasa'i (103) narrated from 'Abdullah as-Sanabihi that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When the believer does wudu' and rinses his mouth, sins come

out of his mouth. When he rinses his nose, sins come out of his nose. When he washes his face, sins come out of his face to the extent that they even come out from beneath his eyelashes. When he washes his hands, sins come out of his hands to the extent that they even come out from beneath his fingernails. When he wipes his head, sins come out of his head to the extent that they even come out of his ears. When he washes his feet, sins come out of his feet to the extent that they even come out from beneath his toenails. Then his walking to the mosque and his prayer will earn him additional reward." Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *Sahih an-Nasa'i*.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) spoke of purifying oneself from sins by doing wudu' and praying, comparing that to cleansing oneself of dirt, when he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "What do you think, if there was a river by the door of one of you and he bathed in it five times a day, would any speck of dirt be left on him?" They said: Not a speck of dirt would be left on him. He said: "That is the likeness of the five prayers, by means of which Allah erases sins." (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 528 and Muslim, 667)

How beautiful is the likeness that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave to highlight the virtue of cleansing oneself of sin through wudu' and prayer, by likening it to cleansing oneself of dirt with water.

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With regard to being economical in using water when purifying oneself and not being extravagant with it, this issue could be discussed on the basis that Islam calls for being economical and following guidelines on consumption, and tells us not to be extravagant in all things. So the point we should highlight when speaking about Islam and the issue of being economical with water when doing wudu' is that Islam instructs us to be moderate in all things and not go to extremes in anything, including wudu'.

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

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, sent down in His holy Book verses which speak of extravagance and wastefulness and forbid both, and which praise those who are moderate and

righteous in their actions with regard to food, drink and all expenditures.

So there should be no extravagance, no waste, no stinginess, no miserliness, no going to extremes and no negligence. Thus Allah prescribes moderation in all things, which includes the prohibition on going to extremes. Therefore people are forbidden to go to extremes, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Beware of going to extremes in religion, for those who came before you were only destroyed because of going to extremes in religion.”

And Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion} [An-Nisa’ 4:171]. His forbidding that to them also applies to us. Negligence and falling short are both forbidden; rather we must do what we are obliged to do, refrain from that which is forbidden to us, and strive to do good, without going to extremes or being negligent.

Going to extremes means doing more than is prescribed in Islamic teachings, as in the case of one who is not content to do wudu’ as it was prescribed, so he does more and uses water extravagantly; he is not content to wash his hands and feet three times, so he adds to that. This is a type of going to extremes in something that Allah has prescribed. The same may be said with regard to the adhan, the iqamah, fasting and so on.

Adding to what is prescribed in Islamic teachings is described as going to extremes, excess and innovation. Falling short in prayer by doing less than is required and not doing it properly is called negligence and carelessness. The same applies to expenditure; we should not be extravagant or wasteful and we should not be stingy or miserly; rather we should be somewhere in between those extremes, for the best of matters are those that are moderate, as Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {Thus We have made of you an Ummah [nation, community] justly balanced} [Al-Baqarah 2:143].

Islam teaches moderation in all things, and tells us that we should not go to extremes, be negligent or go to excess. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {O children of Adam, dress well every time you offer prayer [or perform tawaf]. Eat and drink, but do

not exceed the bounds, for He does not love those who exceed the bounds} [Al-A'raf 7:31]. In this verse, Allah, may He be glorified, instructs us to take dress well because our clothing covers the 'awrah and because it is beautiful. Elsewhere He says: {But the garment of piety is best} [al-A 'raf 7:26]. The garment of piety is belief in Allah, and piety means obeying Allah, following that which pleases Him and refraining from what He has prohibited. This is the greatest garment, the garment of piety.

Then Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {Eat and drink, but do not exceed the bounds} [Al-A'raf 7:31]. This is a command to eat and drink, because food and drink contain nourishment that will preserve health, well-being and physical strength, for not eating and drinking leads to death, and that is not permissible. Rather it is obligatory to eat and drink as much as will maintain health, so the individual should be moderate in that regard in order to preserve his health and maintain his well-being. He should not eat and drink to excess, which would lead to indigestion, sickness and various diseases, and he should not fall short in that, which would damage his health; rather he should be somewhere in between the two extremes. Hence Allah says: {but do not exceed the bounds}.

This extravagance in all things is one of the evils of this world. Hence the believer should be moderate in all his affairs, and the believing woman should be moderate in all her affairs. (End quote from *Fatawa Ibn Baz*, 4/10 9-112).

Perhaps you will have noted from the above how Islamic teachings direct the Muslim to be moderate in doing wudu'. As Islam has enjoined that, it has also enjoined being moderate in all things, as it enjoins that when prescribing wudu' five times every day and night, washing each body part three times.

Thus the beauty of Islamic teachings is clear to anyone who has eyes to see. Islam enjoins a kind of cleanliness that is unmatched, and there is nothing that is purer both outwardly and inwardly. Yet it instructs us to be economic when doing that and not go to extremes, which is based on the fundamental teachings and general guidelines of Islam, which enjoin that and urge people to adhere to that, and applies that to minor issues of those fundamental principles.

We ask Allah to help and guide you.

And Allah knows best.