

Fifty Ways to Lose Your Wudu

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May 25, 2011

O ye who believe! When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; Rub your heads (with water); and (wash) your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body. But if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands, God doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favor to you, that ye may be grateful. (The Quran 5:6)

Wudu (ablution) is an essential element of Islamic hygiene. It is a pre-requisite for offering prayers and for reciting and touching the Quran (Mushaf). You don't have to have a cap on your head or a prayer rug on the floor to pray, but you must have wudu. The Quran describes four basic elements of wudu: washing ones face, washing the hands, wiping the head, and washing/wiping the feet.

We either 'make' wudu or 'do' wudu. Once we have the wudu, we either lose it or break it. These verbs may seem to be confusing, but there is a logic behind these actions. Since we are basically washing and wiping, we are doing wudu. Since our wudu could break, it has to be remade, though I do not see anything in the making. Since we could also lose wudu, should we not also acquire or buy wudu then?.

Once we make/do/have wudu, we keep it unless we break it or lose it. We then have to re-make or re-do it. While listening to scholars giving a discourse on losing/breaking wudu, I am often reminded of Paul Simon's song "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover." I get the impression that there must be fifty ways to lose your wudu. Let me give it a try:

1. If you were sitting and dozed off, you can keep your wudu. But if you dozed off while leaning on something, your wudu is gone. I guess it gets short circuited. When a hot wire touches a conducting surface, the electric current discharges. I guess the same happens to your wudu. It discharges through the wall.
2. If you were lying down and dozed off, your wudu is gone. I guess the principal of short circuiting still applies. Except that, instead of a hard brick wall, your wudu is short circuited through your soft cushioned bed.
3. If you went to the rest room, your wudu is gone. It has to. If it can break upon dozing off, it must when something tangible, something you can see, discharges. But if you have a leaky faucet, you are allowed to keep your wudu for one prayer.
4. Don't get into fight if you want to protect your wudu. If you do, limit it to a fist fight. If you get any laceration and blood gushes out, your wudu will be gone.
5. Watch out if you are pregnant or prone to motion sickness, because if you get a mouthful, your wudu will be gone. Take Dramamine when traveling or at least keep some lemon drops with you if you want to protect your wudu. Ladies, watch out! Getting pregnant is hazardous to your wudu. Take pills if you want to protect your wudu.
6. What happens if you pass gas? That is where it becomes tricky. The rule is that if it is small but deadly (SBD) or big and noisy (B&N), your wudu is gone. Otherwise you get to keep your wudu. It looks very complicated but it is not. Just think on the effect. If it was SBD or B&N, everybody around you would know and

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would be running away from you or would at least fuss at you. In case of B&N, some might even run for cover. It was thus not the passing the gas that did you in. It was the other people knowing about it that caused you the damage. As long as you can keep the bad news to yourself, you can keep your wudu. Here again the key is the discharge of something semi-tangible (you do not see gas, but you can feel it), but only if other people find out.

7. What happens if you are having fun? It is okay to have fun, as long as you don't laugh. If you laugh, you are having too much fun and you must pay for it by your wudu. If you can limit yourself to smile, you get to keep your wudu.
8. What happens when you are in the company of non-Muslim friends who are having fun? Of course you are not drinking, but they are. Try not to breathe too hard. You can lose your wudu if you get intoxicated just by smelling beer.
9. What happens if you see someone who looks dynamite? Lower your gaze because if you faint, your wudu will be gone.
10. If you are in a mosque where there is no wall of separation between the men and the women, you could lose your wudu. At least that is what some men claim. I still have to figure out how, especially when you are supposed to keep your gaze down. Probably it works in a manner similar to the way the lightning strikes. "That's all it took hah just one look"

I have only counted up to ten and I am already yawning. Let me "sleep on it tonight". I hope in the morning I will "begin to see the light". One thing I am sure of: I won't have wudu then. It will be floating somewhere up in the heaven.

About the Writer:

The writer has authored "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan, and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where in the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (A Study of Human Origin)," and "Hunting to Cloning – Unearthing Civilizations through Quran" published by InstantPublisher.com (<http://instantpublisher.com/>) and "Lessons from the Qur'an," published by Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>). These books are available from Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>), respectively. He has also published many essays on religious issues in the Charleston Gazette, West Virginia and has written quite a few Islamic satires and poems. He is a Chemical Engineer and possesses Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and has Professional Engineers license from the State of Texas. His e-mail address is mnajawaid@yahoo.com. Many of his writings can be viewed at MahmoodJawaid.com.