

ABLUTION: *WUDHU*

In our religion ritualistic ablution [*wudhu*] is considered to be of great virtue. It is a hallmark of a believer who will be marked out from others on the Day of Judgment. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: On the Day of Resurrection my community will be called and they will proceed in such a state that their hands, feet and faces will be scintillating because of *wudhu*. Performance of *wudhu* reduces one's sins. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: While taking ablution when a person rinses his mouth all sins of his mouth are rinsed out; likewise, when he takes water in his nose and cleans it all sins of his nose get washed; when he washes his face all sins of his face are washed off and even the sins beneath his pupils are removed; when he washes his hands all sins of his hands, even of his nails are removed; similarly, when he rubs his hands over his head all sins of his head and even of his ears are removed. Afterwards, his movement towards the mosque and performance of *salat* is all virtue (Malik, Ahmad).

Wudhu adds bonus to one's virtues and elevates his status (Muslim). It protects him from the evil of the Satan and becomes a shield for him (Ahmad). When a devotee performs *wudhu* properly and in good faith and recites this prayer:

اشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له وأن محمدا عبده ورسوله

(Translation) ["I testify that there is no god but Allah alone having no co-partner and that Muhammad is His bondman and messenger"], then all the eight gates of Paradise are thrown open for him and he is free to enter from whichever gate he likes (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nasai). Because of such virtues carried by *wudhu* a believer must take due care to perform it particularly on the following occasions:

1. Then one desires to remember Allah
2. Just before going to bed in night
3. When one has eaten camel flesh
4. After finishing the washing of the dead body of a person.

Occasions Requiring Compulsory Ablution

1. When a person intends to perform a *salat*

2. When a person intends to circumambulate around Ka'bah while performing Hajj or Umrah.
3. When a person intends to recite the holy Quran.

Conditions of Ablution

1. The ablution of the insane, the intoxicated and the sleeping persons is not valid
2. *Wudhu* can be performed only by adults; it is not binding upon minors
3. *Wudhu* is binding only upon Muslims
4. One must be capable of using water
5. If a previous *wudhu* is intact it is not compulsory to refresh it
6. Females must be clean of the impurities of menstrual and puerperal flow.

Arkan (Basic Elements) of Ablution

Allah (Ta'ala) commands:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ﴾ المائدة: ٦

(Translation of meaning) ["O ye who believe! When ye rise up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and lightly rub your heads and [wash] your feet up to the ankles. And if ye are unclean, purify yourselves. And if ye are sick or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closet, or ye have had contact with women, and ye find not water, then go to clean, high ground and rub your faces and your hands with some of it. Allah would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you, that ye may give thanks" (Al-Maedah: 6)]

1. Intention.
2. Washing of the face: Face means the area from the roots of hairs on the forehead to the bone of the chin and the area between the two ears. According to some scholars washing of face includes the rinsing of mouth and nose.
3. Washing both hands including the whole elbows.
4. Rubbing the head with wet hands wholly or partially. Some scholars also add to it the rubbing of both ears

5. Washing of feet up to the ankles
6. To follow the sequential steps of ablution as laid down in the Quran
7. All parts of ablution must be performed sequentially and continuously and there should be no long pause or break between them.

Sunan (Sunnah Practices) of Ablution

When a Muslim intends to do something he naturally desires to follow the practice of his guide the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and emulate him. This is the very requirement of his testimony to the messengerhood of the Prophet. Allah (*Ta'ala*) Himself has pronounced:

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ آل عمران: ٣١

(Translation of meaning) ["Say [O Muhammad to the mankind]: If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (Al Imran: 31)].

The practices of the Prophet [*Sunan*] in respect of ablution are as follows:

1. To recite "*Bismillah ar-Raman ar-Rahim*" before proceeding to ablution. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said "there is no wudu' for the one who does not mention Allah's name" (Abu Dawood, Ibn-e-Majah, Hakim)
2. Washing both hands up to the joint thrice
3. Rinsing the mouth thrice
4. To infuse water into the nose and clear it. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: You should perform ablution well. Touch the spaces between the fingers with water. Put water into your nose and rinse it, unless you are fasting (*Compliers of Sunan*)
5. To clean the teeth with *miswak*. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Had I not felt it an encumbrance for my community I would have commanded them to use *miswak* for *salat* of each time (Most of the compilers)
6. To insert wet fingers into one's beard and the spaces between fingers (Tirmizi, Ibn-e-Majah)
7. To wash each organ thrice except the rubbing [*masah*] which is only for once
8. To rub both ears inside and outside with fresh water.

9. To begin with the right when washing the hands and the feet. *Hadrat Ayesha (RadhiAllahu Anha)* narrates that the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) preferred to begin all work with his right hand (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

Desirable Acts of Ablution

1. To be in the direction of Ka'bah
2. To perform ablution in a neat and clean place
3. To avoid unnecessary talk while performing ablution
4. If one is wearing a ring he should move it to wet the underneath
5. To put water into the nose with the right hand and wipe it out with the left hand.
6. To massage the organs while washing them to ensure that water has covered the whole skin
7. To wash the organs beyond their limits so that they shine from afar on the Day of Judgment
8. To recite: *اشهد ان لا اله الا الله وان محمدا عبده ورسوله* "I testify that there is no god but Allah alone and that Muhammad is His bondman and Messenger"
9. To perform two cycles of *salat* as the greeting of Ablution [*tahiyyatul-wudhu*]. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: If anybody performs ablution properly and meticulously and then performs two cycles of ablution *salat* with solemnity and devotion Paradise becomes reserved for him (Muslim).

Nullifiers of Ablution

1. Discharge of *wadi*, *madhi* or *mani* from the urinary tract and release of wind from the abdomen.
2. Falling asleep reclining on an object (Abu Dawood)
3. All conditions of loss of consciousness such as fits of insanity or epilepsy or coma.
4. Touching of or playing with one's genitals
5. Touching a woman with sexual desire and playing with her.
6. Flowing of any impure matter from any body part, like vomit, puke, blood and pus, etc, in such a way that they flow from their places and scatter.

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