



THE PROPHET'S ABLUTION (WUDU'U) EXPLAINED

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ABLUTION (*WUDU'U*) EXPLAINED

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Table of Contents

Part I

The Prophet's Manner of <i>Al-Wudu'u</i> (Ablution) Explained	1
Introduction	1
Prophet's Command for Perfect Ablution	2
The Hadith of Humra'an on <i>Wudu'u</i>	3
The Hadith of 'Abdullah bin Zaid bin 'Asim on <i>Wudu'u</i>	4
Sequential Description of the Prophet's Ablution	5
Supplications on the completion of <i>Wudu'u</i> ,	9
Conditions for the Validity of Ablution	10
Obligatory Acts of Ablution (<i>Wudu'u</i>)	10
<i>Sunnah</i> Acts of Ablution	12
Wiping Over Turban or Women's Head Tie or <i>Khimar</i>	13
Nullifiers of Ablution	14
Wiping Over <i>Khuffs</i> or Socks	14
Invalidation of the Wiping	16
Innovations of Ablution	16

Part II

<i>Al-Tayammun</i>	18
Outline of the Process	19
The Soil Used for <i>al-Tayammum</i>	19
Nullifiers of <i>Tayammum</i>	19
Innovation of <i>Tayammum</i>	20
Important Points to Note about <i>al-Tayammum</i>	20

PART I

The Prophet's Manner of *Al-Wudu'u* (Ablution) Explained: Introduction:

All praise is due to Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*), we praise Him and we seek His aid and we ask His forgiveness, we seek shelter from the evil of ourselves and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) guides, there is none who can misguide him and whomsoever Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) sends astray, there is none who can guide him. And we testify that none is worthy of worship except Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) Alone, without partners and we testify that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is His slave and His Messenger.

Prayer is only valid based on proper purification (*Al-Wudu'u*) as demonstrated and taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) commanded in Qur'an 5:6: "*O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbow; rub your head (with water); and (wash) your feet to the ankles.*"

In a *Hadith* reported by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

said: *“The prayer of any one of you breaching purification is not accepted unless he makes Wudu’u.”*

Al-Wudu’u (ablution) is a prerequisite for standing, in prayer, before Allah, the Exalted. Ablution accords a person spiritual cleanness fit for standing before the Lord of Creation. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: *“He who performs Wudu’u and perfects it, his wrong deeds leave his body till it runs off with the last drop of water (he is cleansed completely!” or “till it runs off even from under his nails!”*

It is noteworthy that the active involvement of the heart in all acts of worship is imperative as it augments the weight on the scale.

The Prophet’s Command for Perfect Wudu’u (Ablution):

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that *“When you stand for prayer perform ablution **perfectly**.* And a perfect ablution is that:

- ✓ which is performed exactly in the manner taught by the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him);
- ✓ in which the parts of the ablution are painstakingly washed, with no spot left unwashed; and
- ✓ which is sincerely done for the sake of Allah (i.e. with *Ikhlas*).

Ablution is accomplished with water, pure for purification. And the description of *Wudu'u* based on two *Ahadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is as follows:

The Hadith of Humra'an:

It is reported on the authority of Humra'an (may Allah be pleased with him), the freed slave of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) that Uthman bin Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) called for ablution container with water and then he (Uthman) proceeded to perform ablution as thus: "He washed his hands thrice, then he rinsed his mouth and sniffed water into his nose and exhaled it (three times). He then washed his face three times, then washed his right arm up to the elbow three times, then washed his left arm like that, then wiped his head; then he washed his right foot up to the ankle three times, then washed his left foot like that, and then he said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) perform ablution like this ablution of mine. Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: '*Whoever performed ablution like this ablution of mine and then stood up (for prayer) and offered two Raka'ah of prayer, without allowing his thoughts to be distracted, all his previous sins are expiated*'."

The Hadith of ‘Abdullah bin Zaid bin ‘Asim:

It was said to ‘Abdullah bin Zaid bin ‘Asim (may Allah be pleased with him): Perform ablution (performed) by Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for us. (In response to our request) he called for water and poured some out of that upon his hand and washed (each one of them) thrice. He then put his hand in water and then brought it out (filling his palm with water), and then rinsed (his mouth) and snuffed up water (in the nose) from the palm of one hand. He did this thrice. He again put his hand (in water) and then brought it out and washed his face thrice. He again put his hand in water and brought it out (filling his palm with water) and washed each of his hands up to the elbow twice. He again put his hand (in water) and brought it out and then wiped his head. He (first moved) his hand forward and (then) backward. He then washed his feet up to the ankles and said: This is how Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed the ablution.

In a version (the wording is): He moved them (his hands) to the front and the back; he started with the front of his head and then took them back to the nape of his neck. He then returned them till he reached the place from which he began. Then he washed his feet.

In a version (the words): He rinsed (his mouth) snuffed up water (in the nose) and cleaned (his nostrils) thrice with three handfuls of water.

In another version (the words are): He rinsed (his mouth) snuffed up (water in the nostrils) with one palm and he did this thrice. And in the version of *Bukhari* (the words are): He wiped his hand, and brought (his hands) forward and then (moved them) backward once. He then washed his feet up to the ankles.

And in another version (of *Bukhari*, the words are): He rinsed (his mouth) and cleaned (his nostrils) three times from one handful (of water). *Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

It should be noted that the ablution with which prayer is accepted is the one that conforms to the one demonstrated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), conveyed to us through various authentic *Ahadith*. All the acts described below are based on the above quoted *Ahadith* and supported with other *Ahadith* on the subject.

Sequential Description of the Prophet's Ablution:

Scholars analysed and outlined the Prophet's manner of ablution based on the above *Ahadith* and other authentic ones as follows:

1. **Intention (*An-Niyyah*):** The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Verily the actions are by intention and there is for everyone only what he intended ...”

The intention is the firm resolve, in the heart, to perform *Wudu'u*, in obedience to the order of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And thus, sincerity is connected to the intention. Ibn Taimiyyah (may Allah grant him mercy) said: “The place of the *Niyyah* is the heart and not the tongue, in all forms of *Iba'adah* and that is agreed upon by all Muslim scholars.”

2. **Mentioning Allah's Name:** Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no *Wudu'u* for him who does not mention Allah's name upon it.”

3. **Washing the Hands:** Washing the hands up to the wrist [rubbing through the fingers; including beneath any finger rings] (three times).

4. **Washing the Mouth & the Nose (*Al-Madmadah & Istinshaaq*):**

The washing of the mouth and the inhalation of water into the nostrils are done with the same handful of water. Take a handful of water in your right palm, enter into your mouth enough to gurgle and hold back (in the palm) enough to

inhale into your nostrils. With the intake of the water from your palm into your mouth, wash your mouth by moving the water vigorously around within it and spit out. Then, inhale the leftover water in your palm, into your nostrils breathing it into its backmost part (harmlessly). Then exhale (blow out) the water from the nose (*Al-Istinthaar*) with the left hand. The washing of the mouth and inhalation of water into the nose and blowing it out are done three times with three handfuls of water.

5. Washing the Face: The face is determined as being between the beginnings of the hair down to the cheeks and the chin, and up to the start of the ears, including that which is between the beard and ear. You wash your face, (rubbing it very well) covering the areas described above (three times).

6. Washing the Arms including the Elbows: You wash your arms, from the fingertips up to and including the elbows (three times). Starting with the right arm, washing and rubbing it well, up to and including the elbow, and in-between the fingers, down to the fingertips. And then washing the left arm in this same manner.

7. Wiping the Head: Pour water to your palms to make them freshly wet (without carrying the water). Wipe your head with the two hands put together (the fingers of the two hands

jamming each other), by placing the hands on the forehead, just before the hair growing spot, and moving them (without separating), reaching down to the nape, below the hair, and returning them to the forehead where you started from.

The two ears are part of the head and are to be wiped without taking fresh water for them. That means, after wiping the head, you put your forefingers to your ears with the thumb fingers at the back of the ears and run the forefingers through the layers of the inner parts while rubbing the back of the ears, with the thumb, from the base to terminate at the top part.

8. Washing the Feet to the Ankles: Washing the feet, up to and including the ankles (three times), rubbing between and the underneath the toes with the little finger (i.e. forcefully permeating between them) and ensuring that no part is left untouched by water. Washing the right foot first and then the left.

9. Sequential Performance: The *Sunnah* is to perform the ablution in the sequence outlined above.

If you perform your ablution meticulously well, in the manner described above, without leaving any spot unwashed, then, indeed a perfect ablution validating *Salah* is accomplished.

Supplications on the Completion of Wudu'u:

It is reported on the authority of Umar [may Allah be pleased with him] that he said: "The Messenger of Allah [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] said: 'If anyone amongst you performs Wudu'u, and completes his ablution well and then says: *"I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone and without partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger,"* the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter by whichever of them." And in the narration in At-Tirmidhi, it is added: "O Allah! Make me among those who repent and purify themselves."

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، اللَّهُمَّ
اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

It is also reported on the authority of Abu Sa'eed [may Allah be pleased with him] that: The Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] said: "If any of you performs Wudu'u and says: 'Glorified be You above every imperfection and praise be to You. I testify that none is worthy of worship except You and I asked forgiveness from You in repentance' it will be recorded in a parchment then sealed with a stamp, and that seal will not be broken until the Day of Resurrection."

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

Conditions for the Validity of Ablution (*Wudu'u*):

The following conditions must be upheld for the validity of ablution:

1. Islam - the person must be a Muslim.
2. Sanity and consciousness - the person must be sane and conscious.
3. Intention.
4. He must intend not to stop the ablution until he complete it.
5. Removal of that which makes ablution mandatory.
6. Cleanness of the private parts.
7. Use of clean water that is permissible for ablution.
8. Removal of all the things that prevent water from reaching the skin.
9. It must be the proper time for making the ablution; in the case of those with extended period of ritual impurity, such as women with *Istihaadah* blood flow or those with involuntary leakage of urine or the likes.

Obligatory Acts of Ablution (*Wudu'u*):

The obligatory acts of ablution (*Wudu'u*) are:

1. Intention.
2. Washing the face. And it is noteworthy that washing the face includes rinsing the mouth and sniffing water up into the nose.

The obligation of rinsing the mouth and sniffing up water into the nose being part of washing the face was established from the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) constancy of doing it, whenever he performed ablution.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: *"When any of you performs the ablution, he should put water into his nose, then blow it out ..."*

In another narration, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: *"When you perform ablution, rinse your mouth with water."*

3. Washing the hands i.e. the forearms to the elbows.
4. Wiping the whole head. And it is noteworthy that the wiping of the ears is equally obligatory as they are part of the head. This is based on the Hadith of Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: *"The ears are a part of the head."*
5. Washing the feet to the ankles.
6. Following the sequence as listed above.

7. Permeating water between the fingers and running the little finger, underneath and between the toes.

This is based on the Hadith of Laqeet ibn Sabrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "I said: 'O, Messenger of Allah! Inform me about ablution.' He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: *"Perform the Wudu'u perfectly, making sure that the water reaches the skin between the fingers ..."* And the Hadith of Al-Mustawrid ibn Shaddad (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: *"I saw (that) whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed the ablution, he washed between his toes with his little finger."*

8. Making the ablution without delay i.e. avoiding long intervals between the acts of ablution.

Sunnah Acts of Ablution:

The *Sunnah* acts are the constituent parts of the Prophet's ablution as described earlier and should be preserved with love and passion. Indeed, their meticulous preservation is not only essential for the completeness and perfection of the ablution but for the fullness of reward. The following are the *Sunnah* acts of ablution:

1. Mentioning the name of Allah (saying: *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*).

2. Washing the hands to the wrists, three times, at the start of the ablution.
3. Using the same handful of water, each time, to rinse the mouth and sniff into the nose (to the innermost part of the nostril – unless one is fasting), thrice or twice.
4. Rubbing the parts of the ablution very well.
5. Running the wet fingers through the beards.
6. Washing the right parts before the left parts.
7. Washing the parts of the ablution twice or thrice.
8. Economising the use of water in making the ablution.
9. Using al-Siwak to clean the teeth before commencing the ablution.
10. Making the supplications on the completion of the ablution.

Wiping Over Turban or Women's Head Tie or *Khimar*:

It was narrated from Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) that: "The Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) wiped over his leather socks and his head cover (i.e. *Imamah*)."

Thus, it is equally permissible for a woman to wipe over her head tie or *Khimar* while making ablution. Umm Salamah used to wipe over her head cover as reported by Ibn al-Mundhir as recorded in al-Mughnee. Thus, it is imperative for women or school girls, compelled by necessity to make ablution in public places, to

preserve this *Sunnah*, especially to avoid the exposure of their hair.

Nullifiers of Ablution:

The following factors nullify the ablution and destroy the object of purification like *Salah*:

- i. Anything that comes out of the private parts, front or back: such as urine, defecation, wind, sperm, prostate fluid (*Madhiy*), menstrual blood, etc.
- ii. Deep sleep, of the kind where no trace of wakeful consciousness remains.
- iii. Loss of rational consciousness; whether by way of insanity or fainting or drunkenness or sedation.
- iv. Touching one's private parts with sexual desire.
- v. Apostasy.
- vi. Touching a woman with sexual desire.

Wiping Over *Khuffs* or Socks:

It is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) to wipe over the *Khuffs* or socks in *Wudu'u* (ablution). And this is so, whether the socks are light or thick. The conditions for the permissibility of the wiping are that:

- i. The person must have worn the *Khuffs* or socks while in a state of *Wudu'u*.

- ii. The *Khuffs* or socks must cover the feet, up to and including the ankles (i.e. the points covered in ablution).

If a person puts on his *Khuffs* or socks in a state of ritual purity, i.e. *Wudu'u*, and his *Wudu'u* got nullified; then, when he makes fresh *Wudu'u*, he is at liberty not to remove his socks to wash his feet and instead he can wipe over the upper surface of it, with his wet hand.

Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu'bah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) performed *Wudu'u* and he wiped over his socks and sandals.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked (about the allowable period for wiping over *Khuffs* or socks) and he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) "Fixed a period of three days and nights for the traveler and one day and night for the one at home."

The count starts from the time of first wiping after putting on the socks and not immediately on wearing it after ablution. For instance, if a person puts on his *Khuffs* or socks after making ablution for *Zhuhr* prayer at around 1.00pm and his ablution was invalidated, after *Zhuhr* prayer. He then, made ablution around 3.00pm and wiped over his *Khuffs* or socks; then the count of the

period of validity of wiping (i.e. 24 hours for resident and 72 hours for the traveler) starts from 3.00pm.

It is important to note that, if a person has wiped over his *Khuffs* or socks and he removed it while still the ablution was valid; the mere removal does not invalidate his ablution. He can continue to pray with that ablution until it is invalidated.

And if he wears back the socks again, while still his ablution was valid; then he can still wipe over it, if he were to make fresh ablution again, provided it is within the period of validity for wiping.

If, however, after removing it, his ablution was invalidated before putting it back, then he cannot wipe over it. In this case he must wash his feet to complete his ablution.

Invalidation of the Wiping Over the *Khuffs* or Socks:

- i. Expiration of the permitted time period.
- ii. Being in a state of ritual impurity (*Janabah*).

Innovations of Ablution:

Imam Al-Albani (may Allah grant him mercy) said; an innovation that has been classified in the legislation as misguidance includes: “Everything that opposes the *Sunnah*, from statements,

actions or beliefs, even if (the opposition) was based upon *Ijtihad* [scholarly research and deduction]."

Accordingly, the following acts, commonly practiced by some people are therefore innovations and must be avoided.

- i. Uttering the intention for making ablution.
- ii. Rubbing the teeth or cleaning the mouth by inserting the fingers into it.
- iii. Taking separate handfuls of water for gurgling the mouth and inhalation into the nose.
- iv. Washing the face with both hands.
- v. Taking fresh water or renewing the water for wiping (rubbing) of the ears.
- vi. Rising the index finger towards the sky and looking up while making the *Dhikr* (Testification) on the completion of the ablution.

PART II

Al-Tayammun

Al-Tayammum, is an Islamic ritual to substitute for *Wudu'u* or *Ghusl* in the absence or impossibility of the usage of water.

If one is in a state of major impurity and does not find water or is impossible for him to use water due to sickness, one can perform *Tayammum* and pray.

Similarly, if one wants to make *Wudu'u* and does not find water or cannot use water due to sickness, he can make *Tayammum* and pray.

Al-Tayammum is the action of wiping one's hands (palms) and face with pure soil. In one *Hadith* the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) struck the ground with his hands (palms) once, then wiped the right hand with the left one, the outside of the palms of his hands and his face.

And in another *Hadith*, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) struck the ground with the palms of his hands, blew into them, then wiped his face and the palms of his hands with them. This shows that you can either wipe the hands first or the face.

Outline of the Process:

- i. Make your intention to make *al-Tayammum*.
- ii. Using clean earth, strike it with the inner parts of your two palms (joined together).
- iii. Then with or without blowing into them, wipe the outer part of the right hand palm, from the finger tips to the wrist, with the left palm and then outer part of the left palm with the right palm.
- iv. Then wipe your face with the two hands covering the entire face area as defined for *Wudu'u*.
- v. If you wish you can wipe the face first and then the out parts of the palms.

The Soil used for *al-Tayammum*:

Allah (the Exalted) says: "Perform *Tayammum* with pure soil." And all scholars of Arabic agree that "soil" is whatever covers the earth, dirt or otherwise. Therefore, pure soil can be sand, stone, gypsum, and so on, in their natural state.

Nullifiers of *al-Tayammum*:

Al-Tayammum is invalidated:

- i. by all the things that invalidate ablution:

- ii. by the presence of water for those who made *al-Tayammum* due to its absence; and
- iii. when the excuse ceases or ability is restored, for those who were unable to use water due to sickness or other excuses.

Innovations of *al-Tayammum*:

The following acts are innovated matters in making *al-Tayammum*:

- i. Extending the wiping of the two hands up to the elbows.
- ii. Striking the earth more than once for the *Tayammum*:

Important Points to note about *al-Tayammum*:

It is noteworthy that, if a person performed *Salah* with *al-Tayammum*, and then found water or regained the ability to use it, it is not required for him to repeat the prayer, even if there is time left for it.

It is also significant to note that a traveler or a sick person who is legally excused to combine prayers is allowed to pray each combination of the prayers with a single *al-Tayammum*.

The foregoing are what Allah [the Exalted] Has made it possible for us to put together on the subject of ablution for now. We praise Him for His guidance and blessings.

We seek Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) to accept this humble contribution to Islamic Knowledge and make it beneficial to the Muslim Ummah. We seek His forgiveness for my shortcomings contained in this work. May Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) bless and grant mercy to all those who are mindful of the contents of this Treatise and earnestly facilitate its learning and practice.

May Allah (the Majestic) grant us the ability to preserve our ablution, exactly as commanded by the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until our death. May Allah (the Exalted) forgive us our shortcomings in this compilation and always. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet, his family and companions and those who follow his path till the Last Hour.

