

## Wudhu' – Ablution {الوضوء}

**Qur'an:**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ  
إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ { المائدة: 6 }

O Believers! when you stand up for Salah, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, do Masah (wiping by hands) of your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. (Qur'an 5:6)

**Hadeeth:**

Allah does not accept prayer of anyone of you if he does Hadath (passes wind) till he performs the ablution (anew). (Bukhari)

- The literal meaning of the Arabic word Al Wudhu' is beauty and cleanliness.
- In Shari'ah, Al Wudhu' (ablution) means: ceremonial purification obtained with water which includes the washing of face, arms and feet, and wiping over the head with palms and fingers.
- Salah is not valid without ablution.
- Touching the holy Quran without ablution is not allowed.
- A person who is in a state of ablution all the time is worthy of reward and elevation of rank in the hereafter.

## Essentials of ablution

There are four essential and obligatory constituents of ablution:

1. Washing the face once
2. Washing the two hands along with the elbows once
3. Wiping a quarter of the head with wet hands
4. Washing the two feet along with ankles once

The face starts from the upper level of the forehead and continues down up to under the chin. Breadthwise it is bounded by the two earlobes. All the four bounds are parts of face.

**Note:** The Arabic word for essentials is “Arkan”, plural of “Rukn”. It is the act which is an essential part of the main act (like Salah, Haj) and the evidence for its binding nature is beyond doubt. In other words, its source is established incontrovertibly (e.g. from the Quran or Mutawatir Hadith), and its meaning is also categorical without any ambiguity.

**Note 2:** The English word for obligatory constituents is “Faraidh”, plural of “Fardh”. A Fardh is an act, whose binding nature is established beyond doubt by evidence. The obligatory constituent may be an essential part of the main act or external to it. So, “Fardh” (obligatory constituent) includes both prerequisites and essentials.

## **Prerequisites for validity of ablution**

Ablution is valid only when the following three conditions are met.

Similarly, the desired benefit from ablution can be obtained only when these conditions are fulfilled.

1. Water should reach the entire organ whose washing is essential in ablution.
2. There should be no material on the skin preventing water from reaching the skin underneath, e.g. wax, flour.
3. Things which invalidate ablution should not occur during the act.

If one of the things which invalidate ablution takes place during ablution, it will be considered invalid.

## **Prerequisites for ablution to become essential**

Ablution is essential only when the following conditions are present:

- 1) Adulthood
  - a) Note: Ablution is not essential for a child.
  - b) Note 2: A boy is considered adult when nocturnal ejaculation occurs to him, or he ejaculates at the time of sexual intercourse, or he makes a woman pregnant. If none of these occur to him then he becomes adult on completing 15 years. The minimum age for him to become adult is 12 years.

- c) A girl is considered adult when menstruation, nocturnal ejaculation or pregnancy occurs to her. If none of these occur, then she becomes an adult on completing 15 years. The minimum age for her to become an adult is 9 years. (From Al Hidayah 3/281)
- 2) Sanity: Ablution is not essential for an insane person.
- 3) Islam: Ablution is not essential for a disbeliever.
- 4) Having at one's disposal the amount of water which would be sufficient for washing and wiping all relevant body-organs
- a) If he is not capable of using the amount of water which would be sufficient for all the organs, then ablution will not be essential for him.
- b) Similarly, if he is able to use water but the water is not enough for all the relevant body-parts, then also ablution will not be essential for him.
- 5) Existence of Hadath Asghar
- a) Ablution is not essential for a person already in a state of ablution.
- 6) Being free from Hadath Akbar
- a) Ablution will not be sufficient for a person for whom Bathing is essential.
- 7) Lack of time
- a) If there is ample amount of time available (for Salah, etc.), then ablution will not be essential for the person immediately. It will be permissible for him to delay the ablution.

## Other rulings related to ablution

- If the person's beard is dense, washing the front of the beard lying over the chin will be essential. A beard is said to be dense when its hairs cover the skin so that an onlooker is unable to view the person's facial skin.
- Washing only the front part of a sparse beard will not be enough. It will be essential to make the water reach the skin beneath the beard.
- Washing the beard-hair which flows down from the face is not essential. Wiping it is also not essential.
- If an object which prevents water from reaching the skin beneath, lies inside nails like wax and flour, then first removing it and then washing the underlying skin will be essential.
- Similarly, if the nail is so long that it envelopes the finger-end, then it will be essential to clip it so that water may reach the underlying skin.
- The dirt beneath nails and droppings of fleas do not obstruct water from reaching the underlying skin.
- It will be essential to shake a tight-fitting ring if water does not reach the underlying skin without shaking it.
- If washing feet-cleaves hurts the person, then it is permissible to let the water pass over the ointment which he has applied over the cleaves. Washing the underlying skin is not necessary.
- If a person wipes his head with wet hands during ablution, then shaves his head, he does not need to repeat head-wiping.
- If a person performs ablution, then clips his finger-nails or clips his moustache, he does not need to repeat washing.

## Sunnah Acts of Wudhu:

The following acts in ablution are Prophet's salallahu alayhi wasallam sunnah. So, these should also be performed so that the ablution is perfect. He should:

1. make intention of ablution before starting.
2. say Basmala (Bismillahi Rahmanir Raheem)
3. wash his hands up to the wrists.
4. clean his teeth with a tooth-stick. If it is not available, then he should use fingers.
5. rinse out his mouth.
6. sniff water into his nose.
7. rinse and sniff thoroughly, if he is not fasting.
8. wash every body-organ thrice.
9. wipe the entire head once with wet hands.
10. wipe both the inside and outside of the ears with wet fingers.
11. run his wet fingers through his beard from below.
12. run his wet fingers through the fingers of the other hand.
13. scrub his organs while washing.
14. wash the next organ before the previous one dries up.
15. wash and wipe the organs in this order:
  - 1) wash the face,
  - 2) wash the hands up to the elbows,
  - 3) wipe the head, and
  - 4) wash his feet.
16. wash the right hand before the left and the right foot before the left.
17. start wiping his head with wet hands from the front of his head.
18. wipe his neck with wet hands, but not his throat. (wiping the throat with wet hands is Bid'ah)