

Cultivating young Hearts on the Fertile soils of Islam

فِقْهُ الطَّهَارَةِ

The Fiqh of Tahaarah

Lesson 5

صِفَةُ الْوُضُوءِ

(A Description of Ablution)

This lesson will cover الوُضُوء (ablution) and its description according to the Sunnah of our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

In our last lesson, we studied the etiquettes of going to the toilet and how to make الإِسْتِجَاءَ correctly. The last lesson falls under طَهَارَةٌ مِنَ النَّجَاسَةِ because we are purifying ourselves from impure bodily substances. Today, we are going to learn how to perform الوُضُوء according to the Sunnah of our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This lesson will fall under طَهَارَةٌ مِنَ الْخَدَثِ because we are ritually purifying ourselves in preparation for prayer.



¹ Compiled by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

The word الوضوء comes from the verb وَضَوَّ. In the Arabic to English dictionary, this is the meaning of these letters:

وضاءة, وضوء (wudū', وضوء) يوضو wadu'a وضو
 waḍā'a) to be pure, clean V to perform
 the ritual ablution before prayer

So this is what وَضَوَّ means in the Arabic language, but what does it mean according to the scholars of الفقه? According to the scholars of الفقه, it means

التَّعَبُّدُ لِلَّهِ بِغَسْلِ أَعْضَاءٍ مُخْصُوصَةٍ عَلَى صِفَةٍ مُخْصُوصَةٍ

An act of worship which is performed for Allah by washing the specific parts of the body in a particular described manner.

According to the scholars of الفقه, there are two descriptions for الوضوء: (a) The obligatory description (الصِّفَةُ الْوَاجِبَةُ) and (b) the recommended description (الصِّفَةُ الْمُسْتَحَبَّةُ). In this lesson, we are going to study the recommended description because it gives us more reward and brings us closer to Allah! However, during our description of the Prophet's الوضوء we will highlight all parts that are obligatory for us to do, which we will call أَرْكَانُ الْوُضُوءِ (the pillars of wudhu). These are the parts that can never be missed when performing الوضوء.

The obligation of الوضوء before we pray

Allah, the Most High, states in His Book

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ
 وَأَمْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ٦

O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your forearms up to the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles.

[Al Ma'idah 6]

The Arabic word highlighted in red is a verb in the imperative form² which commands us to wash certain body parts before we pray to Allah. The scholars of Islam say that **general commands in the Book and the Sunnah are an obligation to fulfil**. A hadith of our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also teaches us that الوضوء is a condition for prayer and therefore an obligation:

لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ صَلَاةَ أَحَدِكُمْ إِذَا أَحْدَثَ حَتَّى يَتَوَضَّأَ

Allah does not accept prayer of anyone of you if he break his wudhu until he performs the ablution.

Let us now learn how to perform wudhu according to the Sunnah of our beloved Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

A description of الوضوء according to the Sunnah

(1) Intention (النِّيَّة)

He makes his intention to perform الوضوء with his heart and not with his mouth because Allah knows fully well what is in his heart and also because the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) never said his intent aloud before performing any act of worship. His intention is to remove from himself a state of ritual impurity which is required for acts of worship such as prayer. Correct intention is a condition that we must fulfil for our acts of worship to be accepted by Allah. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in a famous hadith

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى

Actions are to be judged only by intentions and a person will have only what he intended.³

(2) Bismillaah (التَّسْمِيَّة)

² The imperative form is a push word for **commandment** or **order**.

³ Saheeh Muslim (4692).

Saying بِسْمِ اللَّهِ when performing الوُضُوء is from the Sunnah, but if someone does not say it then his wudhu remains valid. Even though it is not an obligation to say بِسْمِ اللَّهِ when performing الوُضُوء, we should try to say it every time before الوُضُوء.

(3) Washing the hands three times (غَسَلَ الْكَفَّيْنِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ)

We wash our hands three times because the hands are the tools we use to perform الوُضُوء therefore it is appropriate to wash the hands first so as to purify these tools.

(4) Rinsing out the mouth and the nose three times (الْمَضْمُؤَةُ وَالْإِسْتِنْشَاقُ)

It is an obligation to do this part of الوُضُوء once and from the Sunnah to do it twice or thrice. He rinses out his mouth with water and swirls it around his mouth. Then he takes some water in his hand and breathes it in through his nose with his right hand and then sniffs it out with his left. We must do this at least once for our wudhu to remain valid.

(5) Cleaning our teeth with the Siwaak (السِّوَاكُ)

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

لَوْلَا أَنِّي يَشُقُّ عَلَيَّ أُمَّتِي لِأَمَرْتُهُمْ بِالسِّوَاكِ مَعَ كُلِّ وُضُوءٍ

Had I not feared burdening my Ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwaak during every wudhu.

We are sure you have seen السِّوَاك before just in case you have not, here is a picture of one:



(6) Washing the face three times (غَسَلَ الْوَجْهِ)

It is an obligation to wash the face at least **once** and from the Sunnah to wash it twice or thrice. We must wash the whole of our faces, from the hairline to the jawbone and chin (down), and from ear to ear (across). We should also wash our beards. If the beard is thick, we should wash the surface of the beard and then just run our wet fingers through it, but if the beard is thin, we have to wash it on the inside and the outside.

(7) Washing the arms (غَسَلَ الْيَدَيْنِ)

It is Sunnah to wash the arms three times, starting from the tips of the fingers all the way up to the elbows. We must make sure that we wash the elbows as well because they are considered a part of the arm that has to be washed. Starting with the right arm is not an obligation because both arms are considered one part during الوُضُوءِ. Some people make the error of just washing their arms without washing their hands. The hands are considered a part of the arm during الوُضُوءِ.

(8) Wiping over the head (مَسَحَ الرَّأْسِ)

We should wipe over the head just once with fresh water. We start by placing our wet hands at the front of our heads and then, in one motion, we wipe our heads by bringing them to the back of our heads then bring them back to the front. Then we place our index fingers (finger next to thumb) in our ears and clean them and use our thumbs to clean the backs of our ears. If a woman has long hair, all she has to do is wipe from the front to the back and stop at the roots of her hair. She does not have to wipe the length of her hair. It is important that we clean the ears when we clean the head because they are a part of it.

(9) Washing the two feet (غَسَلَ الْقَدَمَيْنِ)

He washes his feet three times. Once is an obligation and anything more is Sunnah. He starts with his right foot, washing all of it including between the toes. He washes from the tips of the toes up to and including the anklebone on both sides of each foot.

(10) Supplication after Wudhu (الدُّعَاءُ بَعْدَ الْوُضُوءِ)

After he has finished from performing الوُضُوءِ, he should say

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ • وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ • اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ •
وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ • سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ • أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ • أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. O Allaah, make me one of those who repent and make me one of those who purify themselves. Glory and praise be to You, O Allaah, I bear witness that there is no god but You, I seek Your forgiveness and I repent to You.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said regarding the one who says this supplication after performing a good wudhu that

فُتِحَتْ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ يَدْخُلُ مِنْ أَيِّهَا شَاءَ

The eight gates of Jennah will be opened for him and he will be able to enter any which one he chooses.⁴

Al-hamdulilaah, this concludes our lesson on [صفة الوضوء](#).

Questions on [الوضوء](#)

Answer the following questions by reading the text of the lesson carefully:

⁴ Jaami' at-Tirmidhi (55).

1. When we are purifying ourselves from impure bodily substances, what type of طَهَارَةٌ are we doing?
2. When we are ritually purifying ourselves in preparation for prayer, what type of طَهَارَةٌ are we doing?
3. The word الوُضُوءُ comes from which Arabic verb?
4. What does the word الوُضُوءُ mean according to the scholars of الفقه?
5. How many descriptions of wudhu are there? What are they both called?
6. How would you distinguish between the two types?
7. How do we know that الوُضُوءُ before we pray is an obligation?
8. How do we make our intention?
9. Saying بِسْمِ اللَّهِ when performing الوُضُوءُ is from the Sunnah but what is the state of the prayer if it is not said?
10. Why do we wash the hands three times?
11. What are the Arabic words for rinsing out the mouth and the nose?
12. How many times do we have to rinse out the mouth and nose for our wudhu to remain valid?
13. How do we know that using the siwaak is not an obligatory part of الوُضُوءُ?
14. How many times do we have to wash our faces for our wudhu to remain valid?
15. When washing the arms, where must we start from and end?
16. Why is it not an obligation to start with the right arm?
17. What is considered a part of the arm when performing الوُضُوءُ?
18. How should we wipe over the head and clean our ears?
19. How many times do we have to wash our feet for our wudhu to remain valid?
20. Write the recommended supplication we should say after الوُضُوءُ.
21. What did the Prophet say regarding the one who says this supplication?