The Little Book of Wudu and Salah

Cleanliness and Prayer Made Simple



Ustadh Ibrahim Yusuf

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CHAPTER I

Why Do We Make Wudu?

Think about the last time someone special was coming to visit your home. Maybe you quickly tidied up your toys, or changed into a clean shirt. You wanted everything to look nice. Ready. Your best.

That is exactly the feeling behind wudu.

Wudu is a special kind of washing — your hands, your face, your arms, your feet. Muslims make wudu before salah, before standing up to speak with Allah. And Allah Himself taught us how to do it. Right there in the Quran, He says:

"O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles." (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:6)

So this is not something anyone made up. Allah gave us wudu. A gift. A way to get ready.

Salah Is a Conversation

Here is something beautiful to think about. When you pray salah, you are not just going through some movements. You are actually speaking to Allah — the One who made the sky, the oceans, every star, and you. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told us that when a person stands in prayer, t Lord (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Imagine that for a moment.

Of course we want to be clean first. Of course we want to wash away the dust and the busyness of the day and come to Him fresh. It is a way of saying, without any words at all: I care. I am here. You matter to me.

Clean on the Outside, Calm on the Inside

Here is something else wudu does that you might not expect. When you wash your face with cool, clean water, something shifts inside you too. You feel a little calmer. A little more focused.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Cleanliness is half of faith." (Sahih Muslim, hadith 223

Half. That is a lot. Because being clean is not just about soap and water. It is about showing that you take care of what Allah gave you — your body, your time, your prayer.

And here is the good news: every single Muslim who has ever lived learned wudu, exactly like you are learning it now. Your mum learned it. Your dad learned it. Children in Indonesia, in Egypt, in Nigeria, in Canada — all learning the same steps, all washing in the same order, because Allah told us all how. You are part of something enormous. Something that stretches all the way around the world.

You are not alone in this.

Allah Loves the Ones Who Try

You will not get it perfect the first time. That is completely fine. Allah knows you are young and learning. He is not watching to catch your mistakes. He is watching to see your effort — your honest, real, trying-your-best effort.

Allah says in the Quran that He loves those who purify themselves (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:222). Not only the perfect ones. Not only the grown-ups. The ones who purify themselves — who try, who wash, who show up ready.

That is you.

So take a breath. Relax your shoulders. Wudu is a gift, and you are just about to unwrap it.

CHAPTER II

The Six Must-Do Steps: The Faraid of Wudu

Think of wudu like a recipe. A good recipe has must-do ingredients — miss one, and the dish doesn't quite work. Wudu is exactly the same.

Scholars call the must-do steps the faraid (fah-RA-eed). It is just an Arabic word that means "the things that are required." Allah told us what they are right in the Quran:

> *"O you who have believed, when you rise to perform prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles." — Quran 5:6*

Six steps. That's it. Let's meet them one by one.

Step 1 — Wash your face. Your whole face. From where your hair starts at the top, all the way down to your chin. Side to side, from ear to ear. Every part of your face needs to feel the water.

Step 2 — Wash your right arm. Start at your fingertips and wash all the way up to your elbow — including the elbow itself. Don't miss that elbow. It counts.

Step 3 — Wash your left arm. Same thing on the left side. Fingertips to elbow, water covering every bit of skin.

Step 4 — Wipe part of your head. Wet your hand and pass it over your hair. You don't need to soak it — just a wipe is enough. Even a small part of your head counts for this step, though wiping the whole head is the fuller, better way.

Step 5 — Wash your right foot. All the way from your toes up to your ankle — ankles included. If you're wearing socks, take them off. No shortcuts here.

Step 6 — Wash your left foot. Left foot, same as the right. Every toe, all the way up to the ankle.

Done. Six steps.

Here is the important thing to remember: if you skip even one of these, your wudu is not complete. It is like a chain — every link matters. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ showed his companion they passed it down so carefully that Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim both recorded those descriptions in detail. The whole ummah knew these steps were precious.

Don't let that feel heavy, though. Six is not a lot. You can count them on one hand — with one finger left over!

A quick way to remember them:

Ø=ßæ F a c e Ø=ßæ R i g h t a r m Ø=ßæ L e f t a r m Ø=ßæ H e a d (w i p e) Ø=ßæ R i g h t f o o t Ø=ßæ L

Say them out loud a few times. Point to each part of your body as you say it. Before long, your hands and your feet will remember the order all by themselves. That's how every Muslim in the world learned — one step at a time, practising until it felt as easy as tying their shoes.

These six steps are the heart of your wudu. Everything else you will learn — the sunnah actions, the du'as, starting with the right side — those are beautiful extras that make wudu even more special. But these six? These are the foundation. Get these right, and you have made a real, proper wudu.

Allah loves those who purify themselves. He said so. And now you know exactly where to begin.

CHAPTER III

Let's Make Wudu Together: Step by Step

Are you ready? Take a slow breath. Let's do this together, one step at a time — no rushing, no skipping, just you and the water and a heart pointing toward Allah.

First: Your Intention

Before any water touches your skin, make your niyyah — your intention. No need to say it out loud. Just think, quietly, inside your chest: I am making wudu so I can pray. That small thought in your heart is the real beginning of wudu.

Now say "Bismillah" — In the name of Allah. Then turn on the tap.

Step 1 — Wash Your Hands

Start with your right hand. Rub it under the running water and work the water between every finger. Three times. Then your left hand, three times. The Prophet ﷺ always began on the r

Step 2 — Rinse Your Mouth

Scoop a little water into your right palm and swish it gently around the inside of your mouth. Spit it out. Three times. You're washing away everything you ate and said since the last wudu.

Step 3 — Rinse Your Nose

Sniff a little water softly into your nose with your right hand — not too much, just a small sniff. Then blow it out, using your left hand to help. Three times. Easy.

Step 4 — Wash Your Face

Cup both hands and wash your whole face. Start at your hairline and go down to your chin. Go from ear to ear. Nothing left out. Do it three times.

Allah says in the Quran: "…wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows, and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles." (Quran 5:6). This is the command directly from Allah — so when you wash your face, you are obeying Him.

Step 5 — Wash Your Arms

Now your right arm. Start at the fingertips and go all the way up to your elbow. The elbow is the finishing line — make sure the water reaches it. Three times. Then your left arm, three times. Reach every bit.

Step 6 — Wipe Your Head

This one is different. You don't pour water — you wipe. Wet your hands, then slide them from your forehead back to the nape of your neck. Once. One smooth, calm wipe.

Step 7 — Wipe Your Ears

Keep your hands damp from the head wipe. Put both index fingers gently inside your ears and your thumbs behind them. Run them around once. Done in three seconds.

Step 8 — Wash Your Feet

Last stop. Wash your right foot — from the toes all the way up to the ankle — and guide the water between every toe. Three times. Then your left foot. Three times.

You Did It

That's wudu. Eight steps, and now you are clean and ready.

The Prophet ýú said: whoever performs wudu well, then says "Ash-hadu an la lah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ¿abduhu wa rasuluh" — for them the eight
(Sahih Muslim, Book of Purification)

Say it quietly. Smile. You are ready to meet Allah in prayer.

CHAPTER IV

Oops! Common Wudu Mistakes and How to Fix Them

Everyone makes mistakes. Even grown-ups.

The first time you tie a shoelace, it comes out lopsided. The first time you write the letter alif, it wobbles across the page. And the first few times you make wudu, something might get missed — a dry patch on your arm, a forgotten step, a heel that barely got wet. That is completely fine. Mistakes are exactly how we get better at things.

Here are the most common wudu mix-ups, and the easy fixes that go right along with them.

"I Think I Missed a Spot"

This one happens a lot — especially on the arms. Water slides off one side and the elbow stays dry without you even noticing. Or the fingers do not get properly rinsed.

The fix is simple. Go back and wet that spot. You do not have to start all over again. Allah told us in the Quran to wash our faces, our arms to the elbows, and our feet to the ankles (Quran 5:6). Every bit counts. So if one bit stayed dry, give it another splash — that is all.

The Prophet ﷺ once noticed some companions who had finished wudu but who
"Woe to the heels from the Fire" (Sahih al-Bukhari; Sahih Muslim — sahih). He was not cross. He was reminding them, gently, to be thorough. The heels matter. The elbows matter. Every part matters.

"I Forgot to Wipe My Head"

Wiping part of the head is one of the six must-do steps. Small. Quick. But it really does count.

If you get to your feet and suddenly remember you skipped your head, no problem at all. Go back, pass your wet hand over part of your head, then wash your feet again to keep the right order. Easy fix. Done.

"I Was Going Really Fast"

Rushing happens. You want to catch the prayer. You want to get to the fun part. So the water goes on quickly and... not quite everywhere.

Slow down. Take one breath. The Prophet ﷺ washed each part of wudu three t
(Sahih al-Bukhari — sahih). Three rounds gives every surface a fair chance to get properly wet. It also feels

calm — like you mean it. Wudu is not a race.

"I Am Not Sure If I Did It Right"

Sometimes after wudu you might wonder: Did I wash my left arm? Did water reach that part of my foot?

Here is the rule: if you honestly cannot remember, go back and do just that one step again. Just that step — not the whole thing over. And once you have finished and moved on, stop second-guessing yourself. Small doubts that pop up after you are done do not break your wudu.

Remember This

Making a mistake in wudu does not mean you are bad at praying. It means you are learning. Every Muslim who ever lived — every single one — had to learn these steps exactly like you are doing right now.

Allah is Al-Ghafur — the Most Forgiving. He is Al-Halim — the Most Patient. He sees you trying, and He loves that.

So next time something goes wrong, just fix it, smile, and carry on. You are doing beautifully.

CHAPTER V

When Does Wudu Break?

Imagine holding a glass of clean water. Clear, fresh, ready. Now imagine a little mud falls in — nothing terrible, just something that needs refreshing. Wudu is a lot like that. Once something breaks it, you simply make a new one. That is all there is to it.

Allah told us in the Quran that He wants to keep us pure, not to make things hard (Quran 5:6). So learning what breaks wudu is actually really helpful — it means you always know when to go back to the tap and get ready for salah again.

Four Main Things That Break Wudu

Using the bathroom. The most obvious one. Whenever you use the toilet — for any reason — your wudu is broken. Quran 5:6 says this clearly, describing "one of you comes from the place of relieving himself" as a reason to wash before prayer. The rule is simple: bathroom first, fresh wudu next, then salah.

Passing wind. Yes, even quietly, even by accident. The Prophet ﷺ taught that someone in that state until they make wudu again (Sahih al-Bukhari; Sahih Muslim — both sahih). Not embarrassing — just the body doing what bodies do. Make a new wudu and carry on as normal.

One helpful detail: if you are already in salah and you feel unsure — maybe something happened, maybe not — the Prophet ﷺ said not to leave your prayer unless you are certain you hea (Sahih Muslim — sahih). Doubt alone is not enough. Only act on what you actually know.

Falling into a deep sleep. When you fall soundly asleep, your full awareness goes away. Because you cannot know what your body does during deep sleep, scholars of Islam agreed that it breaks wudu. A small, upright doze is a different matter — but when you properly lie down and sleep, make fresh wudu before you pray again.

Losing consciousness. Fainting, for example. Same idea as deep sleep: when awareness is completely gone, wudu is broken too.

A note on bleeding: In the Hanafi school — followed by many Muslims across South Asia, Central Asia, and Turkey — significant flowing blood breaks wudu. If your family follows this view, simply make a new wudu after a nosebleed or a cut. Ask a grown-up which opinion your family uses. It is easy to learn once you know.

A Broken Wudu Is Completely Normal

A broken wudu is not a sin. Not a failure. Not something to feel any shame about. It is just a small signal: time for a fresh start.

Every Muslim on earth breaks their wudu every single day. Your mum or dad does it. Your teacher does it. Every scholar who ever lived did it. It is as ordinary as getting your hands muddy while playing outside — you simply wash them and go again.

So the next time you use the bathroom, wake up from a nap, or feel the wind pass — you know exactly what to do. Go to the tap. Make wudu. Stand before Allah, clean and ready. Quick, simple, and done.

CHAPTER VI

No Water? No Problem: Tayammum

Imagine you are far from home — maybe on a long car trip with your family, or camping out somewhere with wide open skies — and it is time to pray. You reach for water. There is none. Not a drop.

What do you do?

Here is something wonderful: Allah already thought of this. He always does.

Allah gave us a special gift called tayammum (say it: tah-yam-mum). It is a way to get clean and ready for salah using clean earth or dust instead of water. No tap? No problem. No river, no sink, no bottle? No worry. Allah made the earth itself a way to purify us.

What Does Allah Say About This?

Allah tells us in the Quran:

> *"…And if you are ill or on a journey, or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself, or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and your hands… Allah does not intend to make difficulty for you, but He intends to purify you." (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:6, Sahih International)*

Read that last part again. He does not intend difficulty. Allah said it Himself. He is not looking for reasons to make salah hard. He is always looking for ways to make it possible.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also told us: "The earth has been made for me a pl of purification." (Sahih al-Bukhari 335; Sahih Muslim 521) Clean ground — soil, dust, a dry stone — can stand in for water when water simply is not there.

When Can You Use Tayammum?

Two main times:

- When there is no water nearby — you have looked and truly cannot find any.
- When you are too ill or hurt to use water — maybe washing would make you worse, or hurt a wound.

If water is there and you are well, you make regular wudu. But when it is not — tayammum steps in, calm and ready.

How to Do Tayammum

It is short. Much shorter than wudu.

Step 1 — Make your intention. Think in your heart: I am doing tayammum to become pure for salah.

Step 2 — Say "Bismillah."

Step 3 — Gently strike both palms on clean earth. Soil, dust, a clean dry wall with dust on it. One light strike is enough.

Step 4 — Wipe your face once — forehead down to chin, side to side. Just like washing your face in wudu, but with dusty palms.

Step 5 — Wipe your hands. Sweep your left palm over the back of your right hand, then your right palm over the back of your left.

Five steps. Done. You are pure.

This Is Not Second-Best

Tayammum counts just as much as wudu. Completely. Fully. The Prophet ýú us
And your salah after tayammum is every bit as real and every bit as heard as any salah you have ever prayed.

Allah never closes one door without opening another. He never asks you to pray without giving you a way to get ready first. That is what tayammum shows — that Islam always finds you a path, wherever you are.

CHAPTER VII

A Bigger Wash: A Little About Ghusl

You already know that wudu gets your hands, face, arms, and feet ready for salah. Most of the time, that is exactly what you need. But sometimes — just sometimes — Allah asks for something a little bigger. A full-body wash. Muslims call it ghusl.

Think of it this way. If you spill a little juice on your finger, you wipe your finger. But if you tip the whole cup over your shirt? You need a proper wash. Wudu and ghusl work a bit like that. Different situations call for different levels of cleaning — and Allah, in His wisdom, has made a clear, kind rule for both.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

> *"…And if you are in a state of janabah, then purify yourselves…" — Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:6*

Janabah is an Arabic word that means your body has reached a state where it needs a full wash before you can pray. You do not need to worry about every detail right now — your parents or teacher will explain more when the time is right. What you do need to know is this: ghusl is normal, ghusl is clean, and ghusl is an act of worship just like wudu. Nothing strange about it at all.

What Happens During Ghusl?

The most important thing is simple: water must reach every single part of your body. Every bit of skin. The top of your head, behind your ears, between your toes. Not one dry patch anywhere. That is the heart of ghusl.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ showed us a beautiful way to do it. Here is how it

- Make your intention in your heart — you are doing this for Allah.
- Wash your hands three times, just like you start wudu.
- Wash away any dirt from your body first.
- Make full wudu — the same wudu you already know so well.
- Pour water over your head three times, rubbing so it reaches right down to the roots of your hair.
- Pour water over your whole body — right side first, then left — making sure every part gets wet.

Clean. Done. Ready to pray.

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Ghusl; Sahih Muslim, Book of Hayd — describing ghusl)

It Is a Gift, Not Something to Worry About

Some children hear the word ghusl and feel a little nervous. Please don't be. Allah did not make ghusl to make things hard for you. He made it so that when you stand before Him in salah, you feel completely fresh — head to toe — every part of you in a state of purity. That is something beautiful.

Grown-ups do ghusl too. Your parents do it. Every Muslim does. You are not alone, and there is nothing to feel embarrassed about.

If you ever have questions — like when exactly do I need ghusl, or why does the body reach that state — ask a parent, a teacher, or your imam. That is exactly what they are there for. You will understand more and more as you grow, and that is perfectly fine.

For now, just hold on to this: wudu cleans parts of you. Ghusl cleans all of you. Both are gifts from Allah. Both bring you closer to Him.

CHAPTER VIII

From the Tap to the Prayer Mat

You turned off the tap. Your hands are clean. Your face is clean. Your arms, your head, your feet — all clean.

That feeling right now? That is taharah. Purity. It is a real thing, not just an idea. Allah Himself says in the Quran that He wants to purify you and complete His favour upon you (Quran 5:6). Think about that for a moment. The One who made the stars, the rivers, and every bee and butterfly chose to give you this wash. He designed it for you before you were even born.

So from this moment, every step you take toward the prayer mat is part of worship.

Step One: Dry Off and Slow Down

Grab your towel. Dry your hands and face gently. No rushing. You are still in wudu, and wudu is worth treating carefully. Think of it like carrying a full glass of water — you would not sprint across the room with it. Walk calmly. Stay with the feeling of being clean.

Step Two: Say the Du¿ ¾ After Wudu

Here is a beautiful secret most children do not know yet. After your wudu is done, whisper these words:

Ashhadu an l il ha illall hu wa%dahu l shar+ka lahu, wa ashhadu anna Mu%
raskluhu.

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger."

The Prophet ýú told us that whoever says this after wudu will have all eight g
to enter by whichever they wish (Sahih Muslim). Eight gates. Just for saying those words after washing. That is how much Allah loves this act of yours.

Step Three: Find a Clean, Quiet Spot

Salah needs a clean place. A prayer mat is lovely, but a clean patch of carpet or a folded towel works too. The Prophet ýú sometimes prayed on a small mat called a khumra — just big enoug
al-Bukhari). It does not have to be fancy or expensive. Clean is all that matters.

Find somewhere you will not trip over shoes or bump into furniture. Give yourself enough room to stand, bow, and put your forehead down comfortably.

Step Four: Face the Qiblah

The qiblah is the direction of the Ka¿bah in Makkah. Every Muslim on earth Someone in Indonesia, someone in Nigeria, someone in Canada — all turning the same way. You are part of that circle. If you are not sure which direction to face, ask a grown-up or use a compass app. Getting it right is part of the preparation, and preparation is part of the prayer.

Step Five: Stand Up Straight

Feet about shoulder-width apart. Arms loose at your sides. Eyes looking gently at the spot on the ground just in front of you.

Still.

Breathing slowly.

You went from the tap to the prayer mat. Your body is clean, your space is clean, your direction is right. You did not rush. You remembered the du¿ ¾. You picked your spot with care.

This is it. You are ready to speak to Allah — and He is already listening.

CHAPTER IX

A Calm Body and a Clean Heart: Praying with Full Attention

You have done the washing. Your hands are clean, your face is fresh, and your feet are dry. Now comes the best part.

Salah is not just bowing and standing and sitting. It is a real conversation with Allah. Every single word you say — every Subhana Rabbiyal 'Adheem, every verse of Al-Fatiha — He is listening. Right now. To you.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us something wonderful about this. In a had Allah says that when His servant recites Al-Fatiha, He responds to every single line. You say Alhamdulillahi Rabbil 'Alamin — "All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds" — and Allah says, "My servant has praised Me." You keep going, and He keeps answering. (Sahih Muslim, no. 395)

That is not a speech. That is a conversation.

So when you step onto your prayer mat, try this one small thing first. Stop. Take one slow breath — in through your nose, out slowly. Let your shoulders drop. Let the busy thoughts settle just a little. This is called khushu' — a calm, present heart — and it is what every Muslim tries to bring to salah.

You do not need to be perfect at it. Nobody is. Even grown-ups sometimes think about dinner or a game they were playing. That is okay. The trick is not to stay with those thoughts. The trick is to gently come back.

Here is how. When your mind floats away — and it will sometimes — do not worry or feel bad. Just notice it, and bring your eyes and your heart back to where you are standing. You are in front of Allah. That is the only place that matters right now.

It also helps to think about what the words actually mean. Allahu Akbar means "Allah is the Greatest." Say it slowly. Mean it. Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim — "In the name of Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful." Those are real words, about a real God, who really loves you.

Sometimes children worry that their salah is not good enough because a word slipped away or their mind wandered. Here is the truth: Allah knows you are young. He knows you are trying. He loves that you are on that mat at all. The Prophet ﷺ told us that every deed is judged by the intent no. 1), and your intention — to pray for Allah — is already something beautiful.

A calm body helps a calm heart. Stand straight but not stiff. Hold your hands steady. Look at the spot on the ground where your forehead will rest. These small, still things tell your whole self: we are here now.

Salah is five times a day. Five chances, every single day, to talk with the One who made you, loves you, and is always, always listening.

CHAPTER X

Every Day, Little by Little: Building the Wudu and Salah Habit

You made it to the last page. That means something.

Think about everything you know now. You know what wudu is and why it matters. You know the six must-do steps. You know how to start from the niyyah in your heart and work your way all the way down to your feet. You know what breaks wudu, and you know that tayammum is there when water is nowhere to be found. You even know about ghusl.

You have learned a lot.

And now comes the most important part: doing it every day.

Small Steps, Big Habits

Here is a secret about habits. They don't start big. They start tiny. You didn't learn to brush your teeth in one morning. You did it once, then again, then again — until one day you just did it without anyone reminding you. Wudu and salah work exactly the same way.

Pick one prayer. Just one to begin with. Maybe Fajr with your family before school, or Maghrib when the sky turns orange. Make wudu slowly, the way this book showed you. Stand on a clean spot. Try.

That is enough. That one quiet try is enough.

The Prophet ﷺ said the deeds most beloved to Allah are the ones done regula al-Bukhari 6464; Sahih Muslim 783) Not the biggest deeds. Not the fastest. The ones you keep showing up for, day after day.

Allah Loves Your Effort

The Prophet ﷺ once asked his companions to picture a river flowing right out it five times every single day. Would any dirt be left on you? No, they said. He said: that is exactly what the five daily prayers do — they wash the heart clean, again and again. (Sahih Muslim 667)

Every time you make wudu and stand in salah, you are stepping into that river. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to show up.

A Little Checklist to Remember

- Ø=Ü§ Wudu starts with niyyah — the intention in your heart
- Ø=Ü§ Six faraid: face, arms, head, feet — all must be done
- Ø=Ü§ Right side first, three times each, say Bismillah
- Ø=Ü§ Stand on a clean spot, face the qiblah
- Ø=Ü§ Speak to Allah — He is always listening

This book has been your guide. But the real journey starts at the sink, at the prayer mat, in those quiet moments just before you say Allahu Akbar for the very first time on your own. Those moments belong to you and to Allah. Nobody else can pray your salah for you. That is the most beautiful thing about it.

A Du'a to Close This Book

After every wudu, say these words. The Prophet ýú promised something remar

Ashhadu an l il ha illall h, wahdahu l shar+ka lah, wa ashhadu anna Mu%am

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone, with no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger."

All eight gates of Jannah swing open for the person who says this after wudu. (Sahih Muslim) Eight gates. Just for those words, and a clean pair of hands.

You can do this. One wudu. One prayer. Every day, little by little.

Allah is with you.