

When Starting Ablution

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

Bis-mil-lāh

(In the Name of Allāh)¹

The text of the Hadeeth:

"There is no prayer (*Ṣalāh*) for one who does not perform ablution (*Wudoo'*); and there is no ablution (*Wudoo'*) for one who has not mentioned the Name of Allāh upon it (i.e., at the time of performing ablution)." ²

Explanation of the Hadeeth:

The saying of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam): **Bis-mil-lāh** (In the Name of Allāh) means: In the Name of Allāh *I perform Ablution*, in preparation to stand before Him in *worship*, i.e., for the prayer or for recitation of the Qur'ān, etc. Mentioning the Name of Allāh - at the time of doing any deed that is pleasing to Allāh - reminds the believer that all good is *from Him* and every success is *with His help*.

Allāh, the Most High, mentions the saying of the Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) to his people:

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

"...And my Tawfeeq (success, right guidance) cannot come except *from Allāh*, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent." (11:88)

¹ Fortress, no. 12.

² Reported by Abu Dāwood, no. 101; Ibn Mājah, no. 399 and others, from Abu Hurairah (may Allāh be pleased with him). Al-Albānee declared it to be 'Ḥasan' (Good, Acceptable Ḥadeeth) in *Irwā' al-Ghaleel* (1/122).

Allāh, the Most High, commands and reminds the Prophet Muḥammad (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam):

وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

"And endure patiently (O Muḥammad). And your patience is not but *from Allāh...*" (16:127)

Hence, the believer does every good deed "In the Name of Allāh."

This Ḥadeeth indicates that it is *legislated* in the Islamic Law to pronounce the *Tas-miyah* (i.e., saying: '**Bis-mil-lāh**') in the beginning of ablution. However, the Muslim scholars differ about its ruling as to whether it is commendable (*Mustaḥabb*) or obligatory (*Wājib*); and whether someone is excused if they did not say it due to *forgetfulness* or *ignorance* of its ruling.

Imām Abdul-'Aziz Bin Bāz (may Allāh have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling concerning a person who failed to pronounce the '*Tas-mi-yah*' (**Bis-mil-lāh**) for ablution due to *forgetfulness*. He replied:

*"The majority of the scholars hold the view that the ablution without mentioning the Name of Allāh (Tas-mi-yah) is still valid. Other scholars hold the view that mentioning the Name of Allāh is obligatory upon the one who **knows** its ruling and **remembers** to do so.*

This view (i.e., that it is obligatory) is due to the report from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) that he said: 'There is no ablution for one who has not mentioned the Name of Allāh upon it.'³

*However, for the one who fails to mention the Name of Allāh due to **forgetfulness** or **ignorance** (of its ruling), his ablution is **valid**, and he does not have to repeat the ablution, even if we say that the *Tas-mi-yah* is obligatory, since he is excused due to **ignorance** or **forgetfulness**. The proof of this is the saying of Allāh, the Most High:*

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

"...Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error..." (2:286)

And it has been authentically reported from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) that Allāh, the Most High, answered this supplication (concerning the one who forgets or falls into error

³ Reported by at-Tirmidhi and others from Sa'eed ibn Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him). Al-Albānee declared it to be authentic in *al-Mishkaat*, no. 402 and *Saḥeeḥ al-Jaami'*, no. 7573.

mistakenly).

*From this you come to know that if you forget to mention the Name of Allāh at the start of ablution, and then you remember while you are still performing it, then you should mention the Name of Allāh (at that time). You do not have to start over again, since you are excused due to forgetfulness."*⁴

[Taken from: '*Reflections Upon Selected Daily Supplications*' - Abu Muhammad]

⁴ Quoted from his collection of Legal Rulings: *Majmoo' Fatāwā Wa Maqālāt*, Vol. 7, page 100.