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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿كان النبي ﷺ فَمَسَحَ عَلَى خُفَيْهِ وَصَلَّى (صحيح البخارى)﴾

Is Masah (wiping over the socks) Permissible on Regular Socks?

الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، وهادياً للناس أجمعين.. صلاةً وسلاماً دائماً إلى يوم الدين، وآله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان، وسلم تسليماً كثيراً، أما بعد:

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur'an: 'O you who believe! When you rise for Salah (prayer), wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, make Masah (wiping with hands) of your heads, and (wash) your feet including the ankles'. (Al Maidah s5, v6)

In this verse of the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ commands us to wash our feet. Therefore to perform Masah of the feet should not be permissible in any situation, on any socks. However, the permissibility of performing Masah Alal Khuffain over leather socks is proven from the Hadith Mutawatir. (**Mutawatir** Hadith is one which is reported by such a large number of Sahabah ﷺ that this level of classification is second only to the Holy Qur'an. It is even more highly regarded than the Sahih Hadith). The enumerations of the narrations of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ who relate Hadith in this regard is found to be in excess of 80. From Amongst these Sahabah ﷺ, ten are found to be from the Asharah-e-Mubasharah and Khulafah Rashideen ﷺ. (Nawawi Sharah Muslim, vol 1, p132/ Ta'leequl-Sabeh, vol 1, p243/ Naylul Awtar, vol 1, p176)

Al Hasan Basri رحمه الله states: 'I met 70 Companions ﷺ who participated in the Battle of Badr, all of whom believed in Masah alal Khuffain.' (Fathul Bari, vol 1, p306/ Tahlkheesul-Habeer, vol 1, p158/ Bada'e us-Sana'e vol 1, p7)

Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik رحمه الله state: 'From the signs that distinguish the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat, there are 3 specific signs to mention. (1) To believe the Shaykain (Abu Bakr ﷺ & Umar ﷺ) to be the most virtuous of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. (2) To love the Khatnain (Uthman ﷺ & Ali ﷺ). (3) To regard the Masah upon leather socks as permissible and to act upon it. (Umdatul Qari, vol 3, p98/ Imdadul Bari, vol 6, p222)

Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله states: 'I did not declare the validity of performing Masah on leather socks until its evidence was as clear as daylight to me. Those who reject the performing of Masah on leather socks, I fear that they will step into Kufr (disbelief) due to the fact that it is proven from Mutawatir Hadith.' (Al Kawkabud Duri, vol 1, p60)

Washing the feet or performing of Masah on leather socks; which is preferred?

Allamah Ibn Mundhir رحمه الله states: 'The washing of the feet is the order and objective, performing Masah is likened to this. This is why there is more benefit in washing the feet, however, Masah is also acceptable upon leather socks.' The scholars of research state: 'There is no difference in the two, whichever you wish to act upon, you may do so.' (Fathul Bari, vol 1, p306/ Tahlkheesul-Habeer, vol 1, p158/ Umdatul Qari, vol 3, p98)

There are many narrations from the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ relating to the performing of Masah on leather socks. From all these narrations, the Muhadditheen have specifically taken the narration of Sayyidina Jarir bin Abdullah .his is due to the fact that Jarir bin Abdullah ﷺ accepted Islam after the revelation of Surah Maidah and a short time before the passing of the Prophet ﷺ. It is found in the narration;

“Sayyidina Jarir bin Abdullah ﷺ performed Wudhu and did Masah upon his leather socks. Somebody asked: 'Why do you do this (Masah)' He replied: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ do Masah upon his leather socks.' The questioner then asked again: 'Maybe this was before the revelation of Surah Maidah' (meaning it had been abrogated through the verse above stating, 'wash your feet'). Jarir ﷺ replied: 'I accepted Islam after the revelation of Surah Maidah.' (Sahih Muslim, vol 1, p132/ Sahih Bukhari #378/ Sunan Nasai #119/ Sunan Abu Dawood #153)

Sayyidina Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه narrates: 'The Prophet ﷺ went out to fulfill his natural need. I took a water jug and followed the Prophet ﷺ. When the Prophet ﷺ had fulfilled his need, I poured water for the ablution of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ completed his ablution and performed Masah upon his leather socks. (Sahih Bukhari #201/ Muwatta Imam Malik #42/ Sunan Abu Dawood #151/ Sunan Nasai #125)

Sayyidina Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه narrates: 'The Prophet ﷺ was on a journey with the Companions رضي الله عنهم. I stayed back behind the group of companions with the Prophet ﷺ (as he ﷺ wished to fulfill his natural need). After, Prophet ﷺ completed his ablution and performed Masah over his leather socks. When we caught up to the group again, we saw that Sayyidina Abdur Rahman bin Auf رضي الله عنه was leading the people in the morning prayer. When Sayyidina Abdur Rahman رضي الله عنه realised the Prophet ﷺ was present, he wished to move back. The Prophet ﷺ motioned to him to continue leading the prayer.' Sayyidina Mughirah رضي الله عنه narrated: 'The Prophet ﷺ and I then completed one unit of prayer behind Abdur Rahman bin Auf رضي الله عنه. When the Salam was read, we (the Prophet ﷺ and I) read the remaining one Rakat individually, and we did not add anything to it (meaning Sajda Sahw ect).' (Sunan Abu Dawood #152)

From this Hadith, there are 5 rulings that can be derived (1) an individual of greater virtue can perform Salah behind someone of a lesser rank (2) it is not required for the Masboq (one who misses Rakats) to make Sadja Sahw (3) it is permissible to perform Masah alal Khuffain (on leather socks) (4) leather is that material, upon which if water is poured it does not reach the foot (5) that the wearing of such socks should not hinder the manner in which one walks and the reasonable distance involved.

In regards to point 5 above, two main aspects can be derived 1) Abdur Rahman bin Auf رضي الله عنه led the Salah due to not finding Prophet ﷺ present within the gathering and thereafter he رضي الله عنه joined them in congregation. 2) Abdur Rahman bin Auf رضي الله عنه completing one Rakat of the morning prayer which is traditionally a long Rakat, from this it can be understood that he رضي الله عنه was some distance away from the group of companions رضي الله عنهم.

If the material of the non-leather socks is so thick that it is equal to or better than leather socks, the Fuqaha have stipulated the following conditions be met using the above mentioned Hadith as a basis: (a) water does not penetrate through them, (b) they do not have to be tied with something in order for them to stay upright, and (c) it is possible to walk a reasonable distance wearing them without hindrance. Even after these conditions are met it is still better to wipe over leather socks as this is an established practice from Mutawatir Hadith. (Al Khuthri Sharah Tirmidi vol 1, p200)

The performing of Masah upon leather socks is permissible only when the feet have been washed thoroughly once (during Wudhu), after this, whenever the Wudhu is broken, Masah can be performed on the leather socks instead of washing the feet every time.

Sayyidina Urwa bin Mughirah رضي الله عنه narrates from his Father: 'I was travelling with the Prophet ﷺ (in the battle of Tabuk), the Prophet ﷺ was performing Wudhu, I bent down to remove the socks of the Prophet ﷺ for him, he ﷺ said: 'leave them, I wore them whilst I was in the state of Wudhu,' the Prophet ﷺ then performed Masah on the leather socks. (Sahih Bukhari #204)

For a resident the time frame allowed for performing of Masah on leather socks is one day and one night (from the time the Wudhu first breaks) and for a traveler (performing a journey further than 48 miles 'one way') three days and three nights are permitted.

Sayyidina Shareh bin Hani رضي الله عنه asked Sayyidah Aisha رضي الله عنها about the time frame for wearing leather socks, Sayyidah Aisha رضي الله عنها stated: 'go to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه and ask him, for he knows more about this matter than me.' Amir ul Mumineen Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه narrated: 'the Prophet ﷺ stipulated three days and three nights for the traveler and one day and one night for a resident, for the performing of Masah on leather socks.' (Sunan Nasai #130, 131/ Sahih Muslim, vol 1, p135)

It is related from Sayyidina Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه: the Prophet ﷺ ordered us that the Masah upon leather socks is three days and three nights for the traveler and one day and one night for a resident, until such a time that the socks are not opened. (Sunan Bhaihaqi #1372/ Musanaf Ibn Abi Shayba #221)

From this Hadith it is understood that together with the time frame stipulated by the Prophet ﷺ, if a sock is ripped (by more than the size of two toes), then it is deemed to have 'opened' and for that reason the Fuqaha have ruled it impermissible to perform Masah on a torn sock.

*It must be noted that if an individual is required to perform a ritual bath of purification (Ghusl) then the socks must be removed, regardless of time frame, and the feet must be washed. * It is necessary to perform Masah on the upper part of the sock.

It is related from Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه: 'if the matter of Deen was established from logic, I would make it necessary to make Masah of the bottom of the leather sock, however, I saw the Prophet ﷺ make Masah on the upper part of the leather socks. (Sunan Abu Dawood #162)

The consensus is based on the certainty of the matter by Tawaatur (overwhelming number of authentic narrations from the Prophet ﷺ). Tawaatur has been established due to the fact that the Prophet ﷺ himself performed Masah over them, and he also gave permission to others to practice upon it, apart from leather socks, to perform Masah on other types of socks is not established by Mutawatir Hadith. The meaning of "KHUFF" in Arabic applies only to socks made out of leather. Socks made from cloth are not called 'KHUFF' in Arabic. The foundation for the performing of Masah specifically on leather socks is not based on the Arabic language but this was the very practice of the Prophet ﷺ proven from many 'Ahadith' as mentioned.

Socks are of three types: (1) KHUFFAIN (Leather socks), it is permissible to make Masah over them based on consensus supported by Mutawatir Hadith. (2) Thin socks, not made of leather nor having the qualities of leather, but are regular socks. There is no evidence in Hadith to make Masah on this type of sock. This practice has been fervently propagated by the Ghair Muqalideen (e.g Salafis) in this day and age. It is not permissible to make Masah on such socks leaving the order of washing the feet as mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ proven from Mutawatir Hadith. This act renders Wudhu incomplete and Salah null and void, the Prophet ﷺ stated: 'There is no Salah without purification'. (Jami Tirmidhi #1) The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'The key to Salah is purity' (Sunan Ibn Majah #275/ Jami Tirmidhi Vol I p6)

(3) Thick socks, not made from leather, but have the qualities of leather, (مجلدين، منعلين) according to Fuqaha (Jurists), it is permissible to make Masah over such socks, although it is still better to make Masah on KHUFFAIN (leather socks).

In conclusion, there is no difference of opinion between Jurists on the impermissibility of making Masah on socks not having the qualities of leather. The reason being that the Qur'anic command (washing of the feet) can't be left until the establishment of performing Masah is at the level of Tawaatur, as in the case of 'Masah alal Khuffain', therefore, the conditions that are mentioned by the Fuqaha (Jurists) are not their own made up specifications, but they have verified a level to meet or better the standard of leather socks.

Why Performing Masah on Regular Socks (Jowrab) is not Permissible

From all the collections of Ahaadith concerning wiping over socks (**Jowrab**), there are only three Hadith. One Hadith is narrated by Bilal رضي الله عنه, the second by Abu Musa Ash'ari رضي الله عنه, and the third by Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه.

The narration of Sayyidina Bilal رضي الله عنه has been recorded in M'ujam Sagheer Tabraani, and the narration of Abu Musa رضي الله عنه in Ibn Majah and Baihaqi. However, Hafiz Zayla'ee (a far renowned Muhadith) in his famous works, Nasbur-Raaya, vol. 1, pp. 183-184, has proven that both the Sanads (chain of narrators) are defective and weak. In regards to Abu Musa's رضي الله عنه narration, Imaam Abu Dawood Sajastaani رحمه الله, in his works of Abu Dawood, being one book from the Sihaah Sittah (six most authentic books of Ahaadith) has written: "It (the Hadith's sanad) is not continuous, nor is it reliable (strong)." (Sunan Abu Dawood, #159, Vol I, p22/ Bazhlul-Mujhood, Vol. 1, p.96)

The Sanad (chain of narration) of Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه is mentioned by Imaam Tirmidhi رحمه الله as being a good and sound Hadith. All eminent Muhadditheen have agreed that this narration is weak. This is due to the presence of Abu Qais and Huzail ibn Shurjeel, in the chain of narrators, who are known as defective narrators of Hadith. (Darse Tirmidhi vol 1, p336)

Imam Nasai رحمه الله states: 'I do not know of anybody who has accepted the narration of Abu Qais, the authentic narration from Sayyidina Mughirah ibn Shu'bah is that the Prophet ﷺ used to perform Masah 'Alal Khuffain.' (Sunan Nasai #126/ Nasbur-Raaya, vol I, p 183)

Sayyidina Mughirah bin Shu'bah رضي الله عنه has narrated 70 Ahadith in respect of Masah on leather socks (MASAH ALAL KHUFFAIN). However, none of the narrations mention the word JOWRABAIN (regular socks). Imaam Abu Dawood رحمه الله states: 'the authentic famous narration from Mughirah ibn Shu'bah is that the Prophet ﷺ used to perform Masah Alal khuffain.' (Sunan Abu Dawood, #159, Vol I, p22/ Bazhlul-Majhood, Vol. 1, p.96)

For this very reason, Imam Muslim bin Hajaaj, Imam Baihaqi, Imam Ahmed, Imam Yahya ibn Mu'een, Abdur Rahman bin Mahdi, Sufyan Thawri, Ali bin Madni رحمه الله etc; all of these great Muhadditheen have classified the narration of Imam Tirmidhi mentioning JOWRAB as DAEEF (weak). (Al Khuthri Sharah Tirmidhi vol 1, p201)

Therefore, it is clear from the Qur'an that the true objective in Wudhu is to wash the feet. The wiping (Masah) over leather socks is proven by Tawaatur Hadith. The narration of wiping over Jowrab, which the Salaf Us Saleheen have classified as impermissible, due to the fact that it is going against the order of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ is proven from Tawaatur Hadith.

Aside from this, the matter of Masah of the Jowrab (regular socks) is against the historical proofs that illustrate the practice wearing such socks (cotton, nylon etc) was unknown. The people of Arabia were known to wear leather socks for 3 reasons: (1) The leather sock prevents the heat and cold of the desert environment affecting the feet (2) In the rain, the effect of the water is not felt on the feet (3) The leather sock, due to being worn tight on the feet, will not hinder a person walking on the sandy ground.

Turning away from all these realities, the Ghair Muqalideen (e.g Salafis) use the statement: "The wiping over the socks, even if they are of thin material can be performed."

Imaam Abu Dawood رحمه الله has himself in his works, written in reference to the Hadith on Masah alal Jawrabain: "Its (the Hadith's) sanad is not continuous, nor is it strong." (Sunan Abu Dawood, #159, Vol I p22). Even so, Shaykh Albani رحمه الله has stated in his own two collections of Hadith, which he compiled on the Sahih and Daeef Hadith of Abu Dawood according to his classification, has included this Hadith in his Sahih collection contrary to the many A'immah Muhaditheen that have classified it as week. (Sahih Sunan Abu Dawood, #159, Vol 1, p52). This is one of the mistakes of Shaykh Albani رحمه الله in classifying Sahih and Daeef Hadith. There are many other instances in which the scholars of Hadith have highlighted the faults of Shaykh Albani in his classification of Hadith.

The Ghair Muqalideen also use the definition of Jowrab (جورب) from the literal dictionary meaning, referring to it as 'something that is wrapped around the feet.' There are no narrations proving that the Prophet ﷺ did Masah upon thin cloth wrapped on the feet, similar to the regular socks that we have today. To make something permissible, for which there is no shar'eh evidence, using only the dictionary meaning of a word to allow its permissibility is not correct according to the Shari'ah. Even if Timidhi's Hadith is considered on its own, it should be understood that Khabar Ahad can not quantify as a Muawatir Hadith and therefore any conditions attached in contrary to Qur'an is void. The order of the Qur'an is to wash the feet in Wudhu, and to perform Masah on leather socks or a sock (مجلدين، منعلين) similar/better to leather in its composition is proven from Mutawatir Hadith (Sunnah).

If the feet are uncovered or normal sandals are worn or regular socks are worn then washing the feet to the ankles is considered obligatory. As can be seen from the narration of Sayyidina Abdullah bin Amr رضي الله عنه: The Prophet ﷺ remained behind us on a journey. He joined us while we were performing ablution for the Asr prayer which was over-due and we were just performing Masah (wiping) over our feet so he ﷺ addressed us in a loud voice saying twice or thrice, 'Save your heels from the fire,'. (Sahih Bukhari #164)

The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'To completely perform Wudhu is a portion of Iman' (Sunan Ibn Majah #280)

The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'There is no Salah without purification'. (Jami Tirmidhi #1)

The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Perform your Wudhu completely' (Sunan Nasai #144)

For this reason, the Salaf us Saliheen, A'immah Mujtahideen and A'immah Muhaditheen have stated that it is not permissible to make Masah on regular socks. If someone does, their Wudhu will not be valid, according to Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi, Imam Ahmed ibn Hambal رحمه الله اجمعين etc...

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبيل الخير والسلام .

محمد يوسف دُنْكَا (عفى الله عنه)

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