141473 - Can We Pray with Folded Sleeves?

the question

I am reading Fatwa 11796 , regarding the sleeves and searched for this hadith but couldn’t find the relevant hadith. But as a contradiction, I found this hadith:

Volume 7, Book 72, Number 677: Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Book 72: Narrated Abu Juhaifa:

I saw Bilal bringing an Anza (a small spear) and fixing it in the ground, and then he proclaimed the Iqarna of the prayer, and I saw Allah's Apostle coming out, wearing a cloak with its sleeves rolled up. He then offered a two-Rakat prayer while facing the 'Anza, and I saw the people and animals passing in front of him beyond the 'Anza.

Please explain whether it is permissible to pray with your sleeves folded with evidence.

Summary of answer

The scholars unanimously agreed that it is not permissible to pray with one’s sleeves or garment rolled up and the like, or with one’s hair braided or with one’s hair wrapped up beneath the turban and so on. It is disliked in the sense of being discouraged and not proper. If a person prays like that, he has done something wrong but his prayer is valid.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Can we pray with folded sleeves?

Rolling or tucking up a garment – whether that means rolling up the sleeves and baring the arms or rolling or tucking up the hem and baring the lower legs — is all disliked according to the

majority of scholars.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The scholars unanimously agreed that it is not permissible to pray with one's sleeves or garment rolled up and the like, or with one's hair braided or with one's hair wrapped up beneath the turban and so on. All of that is not permissible according to the consensus of the scholars, and it is disliked in the sense of being discouraged and not proper. If a person prays like that, he has done something wrong but his prayer is valid.” (End quote from *Sharh Muslim*, 209)

In *Fat-h Al-Qadir* (1/418), which is a Hanafi book, it says:

It is also disliked to pray with the sleeves rolled up, baring the forearms. End quote.

In *Tuhfat Al-Muhtaj* (2/162), which is a Shaf `i book, it says:

“It is disliked to wrap or tie his hair or roll or tuck up his garment, such as rolling up his sleeves or tucking up his hem, even if he only did that in order to work, or he is offering the funeral prayer, because of the Hadith the soundness of which is agreed upon, “I have been commanded to prostrate on seven bones, and not to roll or tuck up my garment or hair.” The reason why that is not allowed when prostrating is that it is contrary to proper focus and humility.” (End quote)

In Kashshaf Al-Qina` (1/373), which is a Hanbali book, it says:

“It is disliked to roll or tuck up one’s garment. Some of the scholars mentioned the reason for this prohibition as being that the hair and so on prostrate with a person and it is disliked to roll up the sleeves. This was stated in Al-Ri`ayah, for the mentioned reason above. If he does that – i.e., tucks up the hair and rolls up his garment and so on, because of some work that he was doing before the prayer, it is disliked for him to leave them like that, because of what is stated above, and because of the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which he saw `Abdullah ibn Al-Harith praying with his hair braided at the back. He stood up and undid his braid. When `Abdullah had finished praying, he came to Ibn `Abbas and said: What have you to do with my head? He said: I heard the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “The

likeness of such a one is that of a person who prays when he is tied up." (Narrated by Muslim)

But the Malikis only regard that as disliked in the case of one who does that for the prayer. But if that is how he was before he prayed, or he did that for the purpose of work, then it is not disliked for him. The majority of scholars — as stated above — are of the view that it is disliked in all cases.

In *Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil by Al-Kharashi* (1/250), which is a Maliki book, it says:

"It is disliked for one who is praying to roll up his sleeves or wrap them around his arm (if they are wide), because that is a kind of distraction from proper focus (Khushu `). That applies if he did that in order to pray. But if that is how he dresses or it was for the purpose of work, then the time for prayer came and he prayed like that, then it is not disliked for him, as was stated by Ibn Yunus, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "I have been commanded to prostrate on seven parts and not to tuck up my hair or garment." And he said that the prohibition on that only applies if one does that deliberately before praying." (End quote from *Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah*, 12/34)

Examining the Hadith of Abu Juhayfah about rolling or tucking up one's garment

With regard to the Hadith mentioned in the question, which is the Hadith of Abu Juhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

I saw Bilal bring out an iron-tipped spear and set it up, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out wearing a suit that was rolled or tucked up. He prayed two Rak`ahs, facing the spear, and I saw people and animals passing in front of the spear. This is narrated by Al-Bukhari (5768) in a chapter entitled: Rolling or tucking up one's garment . He also narrated a longer version (376) and it was also narrated by Muslim (503).

Imam An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Rolled or tucked up means that it came to mid-calf or thereabouts, as he said in the previous report: It is as if I can see the whiteness of his

shins. (End quote from *Sharh Muslim*, 4/220-221)

This Hadith does not contradict what is mentioned above, and we can answer that in many ways, such as the following:

- It may be understood that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) tucked up his garment to show that it is permissible, and that does not contradict its being disliked, because it is possible that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did some things that are disliked in order to show that they do not reach the level of being prohibited; rather they are disliked only; therefore that action is not disliked in his case (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

- It may be that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out to his companions with his garment tucked up as it says in the Hadith, then when he wanted to pray, he let it down and got ready to pray, but the narrator did not mention that and did not mention anything to indicate that this was not so either.

- The rolling or tucking up mentioned here does not refer to the sleeves, and it does not refer to rolling up the sleeves, as is the view of the author, because rolling or tucking up does not apply only to the sleeves; rather it may also refer to tucking up the hem of the garment and so on. It says in *Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah* (12/32): "Rolling or tucking up may mean rolling or tucking up the Izar (lower garment or waist wrapper) or Thawb (garment)."
- And this is what is referred to here, i.e., tucking up the garment so that the calf or shin is uncovered. This is what is mentioned in the Hadiths, as in the report narrated by Al-Bukhari (3566): The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out and it is as if I [the narrator] can see the whiteness of his shins – i.e., because he tucked up his garment and they became visible. Hence when Al-Bukhari narrated the Hadith in a chapter entitled Rolling or tucking up the garment, Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said, commenting on the chapter heading: This means lifting up the lower part of the garment. Then he said: From this it may be understood that the prohibition on tucking up the garment when praying applies to something other than the hem of the garment. It is possible

that this happened coincidently or that it was during a journey, which is the situation in which the garment may be rolled up.” (End quote from *Fat-h Al-Bari*, 10/256)

There are other scholarly views, but perhaps what we have mentioned here is the strongest and most correct of these views.

And Allah knows best.