143663 - Ruling on wearing a leather belt whilst praying

the question

Is it permissible to wear a belt made of leather whilst praying?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

A belt that is made of leather is either made from the hide of an animal that was slaughtered in the prescribed manner, and there is nothing wrong with that because it is pure according to scholarly consensus.

Or it is made from the hide of an animal that was not slaughtered in the prescribed manner, but this animal was one that could have been eaten if it was slaughtered properly, such as camels, cattle and sheep. In this case, its hide becomes pure through tanning according to the correct scholarly view. This is the view of the Hanafis and Shafa`is, and is mentioned in one report of the Hanbalis.

Or it may have made from the hide of an animal that does not become permissible to eat by being slaughtered properly, such as dogs, pigs, tigers and other carnivores. There is a difference of scholarly opinion as to whether the hides of such animals become pure through tanning.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Chapter on the scholarly views regarding the hides of animals that were not slaughtered in the prescribed manner. There are seven views:

1. No hides of animals that were not slaughtered properly become pure through tanning, because of the report narrated from `Umar ibn al-Khattab, his son, and `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all). This is the more famous of the two views narrated from Ahmad, and is one view narrated from Malik.

2. The hides of animals that may be eaten become purified by tanning, to the exclusion of others. This is the view of al-Awza`i, Ibn al-Mubarak, Abu Thawr and Is-haq ibn Rahawayh.

- The hides of all dead animals [that were not slaughtered in the prescribed manner] become purified by tanning except for dogs, pigs and the offspring of both. This is our view; they narrated it from `Ali ibn Abi Talib and Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him).

1. All animal hides become purified by tanning except the hide of pigs. This is the view of Abu Hanifah.
2. All animal hides become purified by tanning, including those of dogs and pigs, but only the surface becomes pure, not the inside. Therefore they may be used when dry but not when wet, and one may pray on such a hide, but not when wearing it. This is the view of Malik according to what his companions narrated from him.
3. All animal hides become purified by tanning including those of dogs and pigs, both inside and out. This was stated by Dawud and the literalists, and al-Mawardi narrated it from Abu Yusuf.

- All hides of dead animals may be used without tanning, and it is permissible to use them whether they are wet or dry. They narrated this from az-Zuhri.

End quote from *Al-Majmu`*, 1/270. See also: *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 15/252.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) favoured the view that nothing can be purified except the hide of an animal that becomes permissible if it is slaughtered in the prescribed manner, meaning animals whose meat may be eaten.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The ruling according to this view is connected to whether the animal is pure when it is alive. If the animal is pure when it is alive, then it is permissible to use its hide if it was not slaughtered properly after tanning, but it does not become pure; it is only permissible to use it when it is dry. According to the other view, it becomes pure in all cases. According to the third view, it becomes pure if the dead animal was one of those which becomes permissible if it is slaughtered properly.

The more correct view is the third one, based on the fact that in some versions of the hadith it

says: “Its tanning is being slaughtered in the prescribed manner.” The phrase used refers to being slaughtered in the proper manner, and it is known that slaughtering in the proper manner can only purify that which it is permissible to eat. So if you were to slaughter a donkey, say Bismillah over it and let its blood flow, this cannot be called slaughter in the prescribed manner. Based on that, we say that the hide of that which is prohibited to eat, even if it is pure when it is alive, does not become pure by tanning. The reason for that is that the animal that is regarded as pure when it is alive is only regarded as pure because it is difficult to avoid coming into contact with them, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “They [cats] are among those that go around among you.” This reason ceases to apply when the animal dies, therefore it goes back to the original ruling, which is that it is impure, so it cannot become pure through tanning.

Thus the more correct view is that if an animal dies without being slaughtered in the prescribed manner and it is one of those that is permissible to eat, its hide may be purified by tanning. This is one of the two views of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. He has another view which is in accordance with the view of those who say that whatever was pure when it was alive, its hide becomes pure by tanning.(*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 1/91).

See also the answer to question no. 1695.

The hadith “Its tanning is being slaughtered in the prescribed manner” was narrated by Ahmad (19567) and an-Nasa’i (4243) from Salamah ibn al-Muhabbiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

Ibn Hajar said in *At-Talkhis al-Habir* (1/204): Its isnad is authentic. End quote.

Based on that, if the belt is made from the hide of an animal whose meat may be eaten, there is nothing wrong with wearing it and praying in it, because it is pure either in principle or after tanning.

But if it is made from the hide of an animal that was pure when it was alive, but it cannot be eaten, and it was not a dog or a pig, then the matter is more flexible than other scenarios, because there is a great difference of opinion regarding it, and many of the scholars favour the view that it becomes pure by tanning. However, the more prudent approach is to avoid it and keep away from

a matter that is uncertain, especially when praying.

See also the answer to question no. 13213.

But if it is not known what kind of animal the hide was taken from, then the basic principle is that it is pure and it is permissible to use it, unless it becomes clear or most likely that it is impure.

The Permanent Committee for Ifta' was asked:

What do you say – may Allah grant you a long life in the service of the faith – about belts, shoes and leather coats that are made in the West? Is it permissible for us to wear them or not, because we do not know whether they are pure, and whether they come from animals that were slaughtered in the prescribed manner or from pigs?

The scholars of the committee replied:

The basic principle is that things are assumed to be pure and permissible to wear, unless there is proven evidence which dictates that they must be deemed impure and prohibited to wear, such as if they are made from the hide of pigs or from animals that were not slaughtered in the prescribed manner and the hides were not tanned.(*Fatawa al-Lajnah*, 24/29).

And Allah knows best.