221418 - Ruling on wiping the left ear before the right ear when doing wudu

the question

A long time ago, maybe several months ago, when I was doing wudu, I wiped my left ear before the right ear, and I did not realise until today. What is the ruling on my prayer? Please note that I wash my right hand before my left hand, and my right foot before my left foot, but I was not paying attention and forgot that when washing my ears.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The authentic hadiths indicate that the way to wipe the ears when doing wudu is to wipe both of them at the same time. Abu Dawud, 135, narrated that a man came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, how should I purify myself? He called for water in a vessel, and washed his hands three times, then he washed his face three times, then he washed his forearms three times, then he wiped his head, and he put his index fingers into his ears and wiped the outside of his ears with his thumbs and wiped the inside of his ears with his index fingers, then he washed his feet three times each. Then he said: “This is how wudu is to be done, and whoever does more or less then this has done wrong.” Classed as sahih by Shaykh al-Albani in Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud.

Starting on the right when doing wudu applies to the hands and feet only; in the case of the ears, the Sunnah is to wipe them both at the same time.

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

Our companions said: He should wipe the ears at the same time, and not wipe the right ear first. However, if he is one-handed, he should wash the right ear first. Ar-Ruwayani narrated a different

view, which is that it is recommended to start with the right, but this is an odd and wrong view.

End quote from al-Majmu`, 1/444.

It says something similar in al-Fatawa al-Hindiyyah, 1/9.

But if the person who is doing wudu wipes one of his ears before the other, whether he starts with the right or the left, he has gone against the Sunnah and gone against what is better, but his wudu is valid.

Al-Bahuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: However he wipes his ears is valid, like the head, but what is prescribed in the Sunnah is to wipe them both by putting the index fingers in the ear and wiping the outside of the ear with the thumbs.

End quote from Kashshaf al-Qina`, 1/101.

We stated previously in the answer to question no. 115246 that if someone omits to wipe his ears when doing wudu, his wudu is valid. So if someone wipes his ears but he goes against the Sunnah in the manner in which he wipes them, it is more appropriate to say that his wudu is valid.

And Allah knows best.