



316320 - Is the view that the feet may be wiped in wudu instead of being washed valid?

the question

What is the ruling on one who follows `Ali ibn Abi Talib, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, Anas ibn Malik, al-Hasan al-Basri, `Ikrimah, ash-Sha`bi and Abul-`Aliyah with regard to the issue of wiping the feet in wudu' instead of washing them? What do you say about someone who issues fatwas to that effect? Is this difference of opinion regarding this issue acceptable and valid, or what?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What is required when doing wudu is to wash the feet, and it is not valid to only wipe them unless you are wiping over the khuffs.

That is because of the report narrated by al-Bukhari (163) and Muslim (241) from `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) fell behind us during a journey that we were undertaking, then he caught up with us when the time for `Asr was almost over, so we started to do wudu, wiping our feet and he called out at the top of his voice: "Woe to the heels from the Fire!" two or three times.

And Muslim (242) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw a man who had not washed his heels, so he said: "Woe to the heels from the Fire."

The heel is the rear part of the foot.

This is agreed upon, and no credible scholar whose view carries weight differs from it.



An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Al-Majmu`* (1/417): As for the ruling on this issue, the Muslim scholars are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to wash the feet, and no credible scholar disagreed concerning that. This was stated by Shaykh Abu Hamid and others.

The Shi`ah say that it is obligatory to wipe the feet, and our companions narrated from Muhammad ibn Jarir that he said that the individual has the choice between washing them and wiping them. Al-Khattabi narrated that from the Mu`tazili al-Jaba'i, and some of the literalists said that it is obligatory to both wash and wipe the feet.

The evidence for the Sunni view includes the following:

The numerous authentic hadiths describing the wudu of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), which say that he washed his feet. They include the hadiths of `Uthman, `Ali, Ibn `Abbas, Abu Hurayrah, `Abdullah ibn Zayd, ar-Rubayyi` bint Mu`awwidh, `Amr ibn `Absah and other well-known hadiths in *As-Sahihayn* (Bukhari and Muslim) and elsewhere. I [an-Nawawi] have compiled them all in *Jami` as-Sunan*.

What is proven in *As-Sahihayn* (Bukhari and Muslim) is that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw a group of people doing wudu, but some noticeably dry spots were left on their heels that had not been touched by water, so he said: "Woe to the heels from the Fire!" Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim from `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al-`As. They also narrated a similar report from Abu Hurayrah. This clearly indicates that washing the entire foot and making sure that the water reaches all parts of the foot is obligatory.

It was narrated from `Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that a man did wudu but he omitted a spot the size of a fingernail on his feet. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) noticed that, so he said: "Go back and do your wudu properly." Narrated by Muslim.

It was narrated from `Amr ibn Shu`ayb, from his father, from his grandfather, that a man came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, how can I purify myself? He called for water in a vessel, then he washed his hands three times - and he quoted the hadith until he said: Then he washed his feet three times each, then he said: "This is



how wudu is done. Whoever does more or less than this has done wrong.” This is an authentic hadith; it was narrated by Abu Dawud and others with sound chains of narration. This is some of the best evidence regarding this matter.

It was narrated from `Amr ibn `Absah, in his well-known lengthy hadith, that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no man among you who brings his wudu water, rinses out his mouth, and snuffs water up into his nose and blows it out, but the sins of his face, mouth and nostrils drop out with the water. ... Then when he wipes his head, the sins of his head drop out with the water from the ends of his hair. Then when he washes his feet up to the ankles, the sins of his feet drop out with the water from the ends of his toes.” End quote.

Secondly:

With regard to what is quoted as evidence from the reports of the Sahabah by those who favour the view that the feet are to be wiped, there are several responses to that, one of which is that these Sahabah later recanted that view, and it is proven that they followed the view that the feet are to be washed.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Those who favour the view that the feet are to be wiped quoted as evidence the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says: { and wipe over your heads and (wash) your feet [*arjulakum*] to the ankles} [al-Ma'idah 5:6], reciting the word *arjulakum* [accusative form, translated here as “your feet”] as *arjulikum* [genitive form], in accordance with one of two variations in one of the seven modes of recitation. VerThusse they regard the word *arjulikum* [your feet - genitive] as being connected to what is done to the head (namely wiping) – and thus they divide the four parts to be washed in wudu into two categories: two to be washed and two to be wiped.

It was narrated from Anas that he heard that al-Hajjaj had given a khutbah in which he said: Allah, may He be Exalted, enjoined us to wash our faces and arms and to wash our feet. Anas said: Allah spoke the truth but al-Hajjaj is lying. And he recited the verse pronouncing the word for feet as *arjulikum*, which gives the meaning that the feet are to be wiped.



And it was narrated from Ibn `Abbas [that he said]: They are two to be washed and two to be wiped. And it was narrated from him [that he said]: Allah enjoined wiping, but the people insist on washing. It was narrated from Rifa`ah in the hadith about the one who prayed badly that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "None of the prayers of one of you are valid unless he does wudu as Allah enjoined, may He be Exalted, washing his face and arms and wiping his head and feet."

It was narrated from `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that he did wudu, and he took a handful of water and sprinkled it on his right foot, on which was his sandal, then he rubbed it, then he did the same with his left foot.

Then he [an-Nawawi] mentioned the response to that, saying:

As for the response to their argument that is based on reading the word for feet as *arjulikum* [which gives the meaning that the feet are to be wiped]:

The word may be recited as *arjulakum* [accusative] or *arjulikum* [genitive]. If it is read as accusative, then it clearly indicates that the feet are to be washed, and it is included with the face and arms. As for reading it as genitive, our companions and others responded to that in several ways:

1. The most well-known response is that it appears as genitive due to coming straight after the word *ru'usikum* [your heads - which is genitive], even though in grammatical terms the word *arjulakum* (your feet) is accusative here. This is something that is well known in Arabic, and is frequently seen in poetry and also in prose. An example of that is the phrase "*Hadha juhru dabbin kharibin* (this is the ruined hole of a lizard), in which the word *kharib* (ruined) appears to be genitive because it follows the word *dabbin* (of a lizard - genitive), even though it is an adjective describing the word *juhru* [which is nominative].

Another example is seen in the Quran: {*Inni akhaafu `alaykum `adhaaba yawmin aleemin* [Indeed I fear for you the punishment of a painful day]}. The word *aleem* appears to be genitive because it follows the word *yawmin* [of a day - genitive], but in grammatical terms it is accusative, as it is an



adjective describing the punishment.

2. The second response is that both recitations [in the genitive and in the accusative] are equally possible, but the hadiths explained that what is meant by the verse is washing, so that is what must be followed.
3. The third response is that which was stated by a number of our companions, including Shaykh Abu Hamid, ad-Darimi, al-Mawardi, al-Qadi Abut-Tayyib, and others. Abu Hamid narrated it in the chapter on wiping over the khuffs from our companions. This response says that if we assume that it is genitive, it is to be understood as referring to wiping over the khuffs, and if we assume that it is accusative, it is to be understood as referring to washing the feet if one is not wearing khuffs.
4. The fourth response is that if it is proven that what is meant is wiping, wiping is to be understood as meaning washing, so as to reconcile between the evidence and the two modes of recitation, because in Arabic, wiping may refer to washing. This was stated by a number of leading scholars of Arabic language, including Abu Zayd al-Ansari, Ibn Qutaybah, and others. Abu 'Ali al-Farisi said: The Arabs refer to washing lightly as wiping. Al-Bayhaqi narrated with his isnad from al-A`mash, who said: They used to recite this but they still used to wash their feet.

As for the response to their argument quoting the words of Anas as evidence, this may also be responded to in several ways:

1. The most well-known response, according to our companions, is that Anas denounced al-Hajjaj for interpreting the verse as meaning that washing the feet is the only option, as he [Anas] believed that it is only known that washing the feet is obligatory from the Sunnah [not from the Quran]. So he agreed with al-Hajjaj about washing the feet, but he disagreed with him regarding the evidence given for that.
2. The second response was mentioned by al-Bayhaqi and others: that he did not object to washing the feet; rather he objected to the mode of recitation on which al-Hajjaj based his argument, because it is possible that Anas was not aware of the mode of recitation in which



the word arjul (feet) is read as accusative, and that is not far-fetched.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that Anas narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that which indicates that washing is what must be done, and Anas used to wash his feet (when doing wudu).

3. The third response is that even if we assume that we cannot interpret the words of Anas in a way other than what is indicated by the apparent meaning, what we have quoted above about the actions and words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the actions and words of the Sahabah take precedence over that.

As for the view of Ibn `Abbas, there are two responses to it:

The better of the two is the fact that it is not soundly narrated from him and is not known to be narrated from him. Even though Ibn Jarir narrated it with his isnad in his book *Ikhtilaf al-'Ulama'*, its isnad is weak (da`if). Rather what is soundly narrated from Ibn `Abbas is that he used to recite it as "*arjulakum*" [accusative], and he said: It is connected to what is to be washed. This is how the leading scholars of hadith narrated it from him, including Abu `Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Salam, a number of Quran reciters, al-Bayhaqi and others, with their isnads.

It is soundly narrated in *Sahih al-Bukhari* from Ibn `Abbas that he did wudu and washed his feet, and said: This is how I saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) do wudu.

The second response is similar to the response to the words of Anas.

As for the hadith of Rifa`ah, he was speaking about how to pronounce the verse, so the same may be said about this hadith as was said concerning the verse.

As for the hadith of `Ali, it may be responded to in several ways:

1. The best response is that the hadith is weak (da`if); it was classed as weak by al-Bukhari and other hadith scholars, so it cannot be quoted as evidence, even if there is no other evidence



to contradict it. So how about when it contradicts so many hadiths that support one another and so much clear evidence?

2. The second response is: even if the report from `Ali was soundly narrated, washing would still be given precedence, because it is proven that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did that.
3. The third response is the response of al-Bayhaqi and his companions: the hadith may be interpreted as meaning that he washed his feet with sandals on. It is proven from `Ali via many isnads that he washed his feet, therefore the ambiguous report narrated from him should be interpreted in accordance with the sound, clear reports that were narrated from him.

End quote from *Al-Majmu`*, 1/419.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There are mass-narrated (mutawatir) reports from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which describe how he did wudu and say that he washed his feet. This clearly explains the command of Allah, and there is no sound proof from any of the Sahabah to indicate that they did anything different from that, except for reports from `Ali, Ibn `Abbas and Anas, but it is soundly narrated from them that they recanted that view. `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Layla said: The companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) are unanimously agreed that the feet should be washed. This was narrated by Sa`id ibn Mansur.

End quote from *Fat-h al-Bari*, 1/320.

Thus it becomes clear that there is no valid proof for those who say that the feet should be wiped, and the consensus of the scholars settled on the view that when doing wudu, the feet are to be washed if they are bare. Therefore any view that differs from that is to be regarded as odd and contrary to scholarly consensus; no fatwas should be issued on that basis and the one who says that is to be denounced.

And Allah knows best.