346701 - Is it acceptable to clean oneself with pebbles after relieving oneself if what came out goes beyond the exit point?

the question

Is it one of the conditions of it being acceptable to clean oneself with pebbles after relieving oneself that the impurity should not go beyond the exit point? In other words, if that happens, is it not acceptable to clean oneself with pebbles and must one use water? What is the evidence for that? Is there scholarly consensus on that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The view of the majority of scholars is that cleaning oneself with pebbles is a concession regarding the exit point, which includes a small area directly around the exit point. But they differed regarding the extent of that small area. However, if the impurity covers a large area, then it must be washed, and it is not sufficient to clean oneself with pebbles.

The evidence they cite for their view that cleaning oneself with pebbles is a concession which applies to the exit point of urine and faeces is the fact that this is a problem that everyone faces and it is difficult to avoid. But anything beyond the exit point comes under the original principle, which is that it must be washed.

It says in *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah* (4/121):

The four madhhabs are agreed that if what comes out goes beyond the exit point and covers a wide area, then cleaning it with pebbles is not sufficient; rather it must be washed.

The reason for that is that cleaning oneself with pebbles is a concession that is granted because it is a problem that everyone deals with, so it is limited to what no one can avoid. But anything that

spreads beyond that remains under the general principle, which is that impurity is to be removed by washing. End quote.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Regarding anything beyond the exit point, nothing is sufficient [for purifying it] except water.

This is the view of ash-Shafa`i, Is-haq and Ibn al-Mundhir. What is meant is that if it goes beyond the place more than what is usual, such as if the faeces reaches the buttocks and tip of the penis; in these cases nothing is sufficient except water, because cleaning oneself with pebbles is a concession which applies only to the usual place, because of the difficulty in washing it due to repeated contamination with impurity. But in the case of areas which the impurity does not usually reach, nothing is sufficient except washing, such as the shin and thigh.

(End quote from *Al-Mughni*, 1/217).

This issue is not a matter of consensus; rather some of the scholars differed and thought that cleaning oneself with pebbles is sufficient, regardless of where the impurity reached beyond the exit point, because the texts that mention cleaning oneself with pebbles are general in meaning, and do not mention any limits to it. Moreover, whatever traces may be left after wiping are slight traces that are usually overlooked, just as the sole of the shoe may be purified by rubbing it on the ground, and if any impurity gets onto the hem of a woman’s garment, it may be purified by dragging it along the ground.

This has been discussed previously in the answer to question no. 145695.

Based on that, what matters is removing the substance of the impurity by whatever means.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Cleaning oneself with pebbles is sufficient, even if the impurity goes beyond the exit point to the buttocks and tip of the penis, and so on, because of the general meaning of the evidence that cleaning oneself with pebbles is permissible. There is no report from the Prophet (blessings and

peace of Allah be upon him) to suggest a limit in that regard.

(End quote from *Al-Ikhtiyarat al-'Ilmiyyah*, p. 17)

This view is valid to some extent, and is based on a good argument, but it is more prudent to avoid this matter which is subject to a difference of scholarly opinion, by using water if the impurity goes beyond the area that it usually reaches, so that the Muslim will have purified his body in accordance with the consensus of all scholars.

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

The scholars are agreed that it is encouraged to avoid matters concerning which there is a difference of scholarly opinion, provided that that does not lead to undermining some Sunnah practice or falling into another area of scholarly difference of opinion.

(End quote from *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 2/23)

And Allah knows best.