41731 - Prohibition on stepping over people who are sitting in the mosque on Friday

the question

I hope that you can tell us the ruling on stepping over people who are sitting in the mosque on Friday – is it haram or not?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Abu Dawood (1118) and Ibn Maajah (1115) narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn Busr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man came and started stepping over the people one Friday when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was delivering the khutbah, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: “Sit down, for you have annoyed (people).” Classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

In this hadith there is a prohibition on stepping over people when coming to Jumu’ah (Friday) prayer.

The scholars differed concerning this matter and there are two views.

1 – That it is makrooh. This was narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir from the majority. Ibn Hajar said: The majority are of the view that it is makrooh in the sense that it is better not to do it. This is the well-known view of the Shaafa’is and is the view of the Hanbalis.

See: Fath al-Bari, 2/392; Kashshaaf al-Qinaa’, 2/44; al-Majmoo’, 4/466

Malik and al-Awzaa’i limited its being makrooh to when the khateeb is on the minbar, It says in al-Mudawwanah (1/159): Malik said: Rather it is makrooh to step over people when the imam has

come out and has sat on the minbar. Whoever steps over people then is the one of whom the hadith speaks. But before that there is nothing wrong with it if there is a gap in front of him, but he should be polite in doing that. End quote.

2 – That stepping over others is haram in all cases, on Fridays and at other times, because of the hadith of ‘Abd-Allah ibn Busr (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said: A man came and started stepping over the people one Friday when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was delivering the khutbah, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: “Sit down, for you have annoyed (people).”

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 1118; Ibn Maajah, 1115; classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Al-Tirmidhi said: This is what is to be followed according to the scholars. They regarded it as makrooh for a man to step over people on Friday, and they were very strict with regard to that. End quote.

This is what a number of scholars regarded as more likely to be correct, such as Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, al-Nawawi, and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, as stated in al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah, p. 81, and others. Among contemporary scholars who held this view is Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen.

Ibn al-Mundhir said, explaining the reason why he said it is haram: That is because causing annoyance is haram, whether it is a little or a lot, and this is causing annoyance, as it says in the saheeh hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to one whom he saw stepping over people: “Sit down, for you are causing annoyance.” Al-Majmoo’, 4/467.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said in al-Tamheed (1/316): The words of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the one who was stepping over people on a Friday, “You are causing annoyance,” indicate that stepping over people is an annoyance, and it is not permissible to annoy a Muslim under any circumstances, on Friday or at any other time.

Al-Nawawi said in Rawdat al-Taalibeen (11/224): The favoured view is that stepping over people is haram, because of the ahadith on this topic.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said: Stepping over people is haram during the khutbah and at other times, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to a man whom he saw stepping over people: “Sit down, for you are causing annoyance.” That is even more forbidden if it happens during the khutbah, because it is causing annoyance to people and distracting them from listening to the khutbah, even if he is moving towards a gap."(Fatawa wa Rasaa’il al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 16/147).