45788 - If he wipes over his socks then takes them off, is his wudu invalidated thereby?

the question

If a person who has wudu wipes over his socks, then takes them off, is his wudu invalidated thereby?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars differed concerning the ruling on one who does wudu and wipes over his socks, then takes them off.

Some scholars say that it is sufficient for him to wash his feet, and his wudu is completed thereby.

This is a weak view, because wudu requires continuity, i.e., there should not be a long time between the washing of the various parts, rather they should be washed one after another, in a continuous sequence.

Hence Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated in al-Mughni (1/367) that this view is based on the idea that there is no need for continuity in wudu, and this is weak.

Others said that the person’s wudu is invalidated thereby, and if he wants to pray he has to repeat his wudu. They quoted as evidence the fact that wiping takes the place of washing, and if the socks are removed the purity of the feet is no longer valid, because now they are unwashed and unwiped. If the purity of the feet is invalidated then the entire wudu is invalidated because it cannot be divided up. This view was favoured by Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him), as is stated in his Majmoo’ al-Fatawa, 10/113.

Yet others said that his wudu is not invalidated thereby unless he breaks his wudu in some other way (by breaking wind etc). This was the view of a number of the salaf, including Qataadah, al-Hasan al-Basri and Ibn Abi Layla. It was supported by Ibn Hazm in al-Muhalla (1/105), and was the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn al-Mundhir. Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo' (1/557): this is the strongest view.

They quoted a number of things as evidence for that:

1 – That purity is not invalidated except by hadath (breaking one's wudu by breaking wind etc.) and taking off the socks is not hadath.

2 – The purity of one who wipes over his socks is established by shar'i evidence, and it cannot be ruled to be invalid except by further shar'i evidence, and there is no evidence to indicate that purity is invalidated by taking off the socks.

3 – The analogy with shaving the hair after doing wudu. If a person does wudu and wipes over his hair, then shaves his head, he remains in a state of purity and it is not invalidated by that. The same applies to one who wipes over his socks then takes them off.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said:

If a person takes off his socks after wiping over them, his wudu is not invalidated thereby, and he may pray as he likes until he breaks his wudu (hadath), according to the correct view.

End quote, from Majmoo' Fatawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 11/193.

See also: al-Mughni, 1/366-386; al-Muhalla, 1/105; al-Ikhtiyaaraat, p. 15; al-Sharh al-Mumti', 1/180.