996 - Can You Wipe Over Socks Without Prior Wudu?

the question

Is it permissible to do masah(wiping) on the socks even if one did not have wudu prior to putting on his socks. Example: It is hard to wash one's feet at their business, because people think we are making a mess.

Summary of answer

The Islamic ruling clearly states that you must be in a state of Wudu before putting on socks if you wish to wipe over them later.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Importance of Upholding Islamic Practices with Confidence

A Muslim must be proud of his religion and not feel ashamed of its rites and rituals being performed in front of others, or of what Shari`ah imposes upon him. If he fears that seeing the implementation of a religious practice or ruling may cause the unbelievers to have an aversion to the religion, then he wisely conceals, aiming at presenting Islam gradually and in an appropriate way. This doesn’t mean to be ashamed or weak or feeling disgrace from the implementation of some religious rituals.

I suspect you fear their disapproval because of their misunderstanding, inverted senses, and spoiled opinions, ideas, and inclinations. How could the removal of one’s socks and the washing of one’s feet be considered filthy or disgusting, when the fact is that it affects cleanliness and the removal of sweat and unpleasant odor from the feet?

Can You Wipe Over Socks Without Prior Wudu?

It is not permissible for the person to pass wet hands over the socks unless he put them on in a state of purity. You can find the evidence in the following Hadith narrated by Al-Mughirah Ibn-Shu`bah (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said:

"I was traveling with our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Prophet asked me, "Have you got any water?" I said, "Yes" … and poured out water so that the Prophet washed his face and hands… and his arms then wiped his head. Then I bent over to pull off his Khuff (a type of leather or thick sock) but the Prophet said "Leave them for I put on my Khuff in a state of purification" then he wiped over them. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and *Fat-h Al-Bari*, 5353)

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted the following in his explanation of the portion of this Hadith in which the Prophet's said "I put them on a state of purification":

Al-Hamidi narrated in his *Musnad* that the Prophet was asked whether one could pass wet hands over the Khuff, the Prophet answered saying: "Yes if the person puts them on in a state of purification." (End quote)

Ibn Khuzaymah (may Allah have mercy on him) said that according to a Hadith narrated by Safwan Ibn Assal, "the Prophet ordered us to wipe over Khuff if we put them on in a state of purification, for 3 days during traveling and for one day and night in residency".

Safwan's Hadith, although it is authentic, does not meet the conditions defined by Al-Bukhari. But Al-Mughirah's Hadith is in agreement with it in its indication of the stipulation of being in a pure state before putting on the socks.

How to Manage Wudu and Wiping Over Socks at Work

It is in fact easy to solve your problem; all you need to do is perform the complete ablution at home before going to work, wash your feet, then put on your socks. Then, if you want to perform ablution again at work, you can pass your wet fingertips over the back (i.e., top) of each foot.

And Allah Knows Best