260015 - Prohibition on cleaning oneself after relieving oneself with charcoal, and what is meant by it being provision for the jinn

the question

My doubt is in relation to the hadith 39 book 1 in Abu Dawud. Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: A deputation of the jinn came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Muhammad, forbid your community to cleans themselves with a bone or dung or charcoal, for in them Allah has provided sustenance for us. So the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade them to do so. Reference : Sunan Abi Dawud 39In-book reference : Book 1, Hadith 39English translation : Book 1, Hadith 39 The word حمم is translated as charcoal in all English versions of this hadith whereas the real Arabic word says it is LAVA, so a derivative from Volcano. My question is that the Prophet peace be upon him forbade mankind to'clean' oneself with Dung Bone and the coal or lava.. These days, a lot of products trend in the market under the name "Cleansers"..like Activated charcoal toothpaste and Facial and Body scrubs. The same is with Volcanic Ash products too. both (volcanic Ash products and coal products) are ingested as Detox also. Though in modern days we do not use bone dung or coal for cleaning oneself these products are sold under the broad category called CLEANSERS in the markets. What is the permissibility of using them in modern ways like mentioned above.. Please advise.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Abu Dawud (39) narrated that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A delegation of the jinn came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Muhammad, tell your ummah not to clean themselves after relieving themselves with any bone, dung or charcoal, for Allah, may He be Exalted, has made provision in them for us. So the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told them not to do that.

This hadith was classed as authentic, by al-Albani in *Sahih Abi Dawud*.

The word *humam*, translated here as charcoal, may refer to anything charred or carbonized; ashes, cinder; lava. [Hans Wehr]

Al-Khattabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Humam, translated here as charcoal, refers to whatever is burned of wood, bones and the like. Cleaning oneself with it after relieving oneself is not allowed, because it has been made provision for the jinn, hence it is not permissible to spoil it for them. Moreover, if the coal touches that place (the anus) and the slightest pressure is applied to it, it will crumble because it is soft, and some of it will stick to the anus with whatever impurity is stuck to it. Something similar happens if dust, soil and the like is used for cleaning oneself after relieving oneself.(*Ma`alim as-Sunan*, 1/27).

Al-`Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The word *humamah* (charcoal) refers to coal and whatever is burned of wood, bones and the like.

What is meant by “in them” [as in: provision for the jinn has been put in them] refers to bones, dung and charcoal. The apparent meaning of the hadith is that their provision is from these things, so for that reason the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not allow cleaning oneself after relieving oneself with them, and because dung is impure and coal is friable, so it will crumble when touched.(*Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud*, 1/133).

Al-Mulla `Ali al-Qari (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Sharh as-Sunnah*: Charcoal is coal and whatever is burned of wood or bones and the like, and using it to clean oneself after relieving oneself is not allowed, because it has been made provision for the jinn. Therefore it is not permissible to spoil it. This is how at-Tibi narrated it.

The words “provision for the jinn” mean that it is something that they use for cooking, heat and light.

End quote from *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, 1/34 9. Thus it becomes clear that charcoal is coal, and whatever is burned of wood, bones and the like, and that it is prohibited to use it to clean oneself after relieving oneself, because the jinn make use of it for cooking, heating and light. Therefore it is not permissible to spoil it for them. Moreover, it crumbles easily and contaminates the anus.

As for bones, if they are pure, meaning that they are taken from animals that can be slaughtered in the prescribed manner, then they will be something like meat for the jinn, and if they are impure, they are not fit to be used for cleaning oneself after relieving oneself and purifying oneself.

As for dung, if it is pure, then it is food for the mounts of the jinn, and if it is impure, it is not fit to be used for purifying oneself with.

Muslim (450) narrated from Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

“Someone from the jinn came to call me, and I went with him and recited the Quran to them.” Then he set off with us and showed us their tracks and the traces of their fires. They asked him for provision and he said: “You may have every bone on which the name of Allah has been mentioned; when it falls into your hands it will have plenty of meat on it, and all dung is food for your mounts.” The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not clean yourselves with them (after relieving yourselves), for they are the food of your brothers.”

From that, the jurists concluded that it is not permissible to clean oneself after relieving oneself with food or crops, because if we are not allowed to spoil the food of the mounts of the jinn, then it is more appropriate that we are not allowed to spoil our provision and that of our mounts.

It says in *Manar as-Sabil* (1/17): It is prohibited to use dung and bones because of the hadith of Salman quoted above.

And it is prohibited to use food, even if it is for animals, because of the hadith of Ibn Mas`ud, according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not clean yourselves after relieving yourselves with dung or bones, for they are the provision of your brothers among the jinn.” Narrated by Muslim. He gave as the reason for the prohibition the fact that they are provision for the jinn, so it is more appropriate that our provision and the provision of our mounts should be respected. End quote.

It is clear that it is permissible for us to make use of bones and dung, to extract gelatin (from the former) and use (the latter) as fertiliser, and so on. Similarly, it is permissible to make use of food and crops, and to make use of coal or charcoal for cooking and heating, in industry, and for other purposes, such as toothpaste, detergents and all other uses. Rather it is not allowed to contaminate these things by using them to clean ourselves after relieving ourselves, and thus spoiling them for those who could make use of them.

And Allah knows best.