264397 - Ruling on doing tayammum using a smooth rock on which there is no dust

the question

Is it permissible to do tayammum using a rock which has become smooth due to many people doing tayammum using it, as if it has been smeared with oil? Please note that the Malikis gave us a fatwa saying that it is permissible to do tayammum using a rock.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is valid to do tayammum using anything that appears on the surface of the earth, such as dust, clay, rocks and sand, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [tayammum]} [an-Nisa' 4:43]. What is meant by "earth" is what is on the face of the earth, and what is meant by "clean" is what is pure.

So it is permissible to do tayammum using anything that is part of the earth's surface. This is the view of Abu Hanifah and Malik. Therefore, in their view, it is valid to do tayammum using dust, rocks, sand and pebbles.

Al-Kasani said in *Bada'i` as-Sana'i`* (1/53): With regard to what may be used to do tayammum, there was a difference of scholarly opinion:

Abu Hanifah and Muhammad said: It is permissible to do tayammum using anything that is part of the earth's surface.

Two views were narrated from Abu Yusuf: according to one report, dust and sand may be used, and according to another report, it is only permissible to use dust in particular…

Moreover, it is essential to know what is meant by anything that is part of the earth's surface. As for that may be burned with fire and turned into ashes, such as wood, grass and the like; or that may be modified and become soft, such as iron, brass, copper, glass, gold, silver and so on, they are not things that are regarded as being part of the earth's surface. And anything from the earth other than that, is part of the earth's surface.

But Abu Hanifah and Muhammad differed between themselves. Abu Hanifah said: It is permissible to do tayammum using anything that is part of the earth's surface, whether it sticks to the hand or not.

Muhammad said: It is not permissible to use anything unless particles of it stick to the hand, because the basic principle in his view is that it is essential to use something that is part of the earth's surface, and that cannot be anything but that which can stick to the hands.

According to Abu Hanifah, this is not a condition. Rather the condition that is stipulated is touching the surface of the earth with one's hands, then passing the hands over the two parts that are to be wiped when doing tayammum.

Once this is understood, then according to the view of Abu Hanifah it is permissible to do tayammum using plaster, lime, red clay, black clay, white clay, kohl, smooth rocks, mud walls, plastered walls, mountain salt – but not sea salt –, baked bricks, earthenware made of pure clay, rubies, emeralds, wet earth and wet clay…

According to Muhammad: If something from the earth sticks to the hands as there is dust on it, or it is ground into small particles, that is valid, otherwise it is not valid. The basis for his view is that what is enjoined is to use clean earth, meaning that something should stick to the hands. As for striking the hands on something that is solid and smooth without using anything from it, that is a kind of foolishness.

According to Abu Hanifah: what is enjoined is to do tayammum without qualification, without any stipulation that some of it should stick to the hands, and it is not permissible to limit that which is general in meaning except on the basis of evidence.

His saying that part of it should be used is not valid… That is why there is the instruction to tap the hands together. Rather the stipulated condition is that the individual should touch the ground with his hands, then touch his face and hands as an act of worship without knowing any rational reason for doing that, based on wisdom the knowledge of which Allah has kept to Himself. End quote.

Ad-Dardir said in *Ash-Sharh as-Saghir ma`a as-Sawi* (1/196): And sand, stones and gypsum, provided that it has not been cooked. That is, it is permissible to do tayammum using any of the things mentioned. Gypsum is a type of rock that is burned with fire and then ground; it is used to build bridges, mosques and large houses. If it has been burned – which is what is meant by cooked – then it is not permissible to use it for tayammum, because by being processed it can no longer be described as earth. End quote.

In *At-Taj wal-Iklil* (1/517), it says: In *Al-Mudawwanah*, it says that there is nothing wrong with doing tayammum using smooth rocks or salt flats. `Iyad said: The smooth rock is that on which there is no dust, and the salt flat is salty ground. End quote.

Thus it is known that it is permissible to do tayammum using a smooth rock on which there is no dust, according to the madhhabs of the Hanafis and Malikis.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The correct view is that everything that is on the surface of the earth, such as dust, sand, rocks whether they have been burned or not, wet clay and dry clay may be used for tayammum.(*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`* 1/393).

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about a sick person who cannot find dust; can he do tayammum using the wall or the furniture, or not?

He replied: The wall comes under the heading of clean earth. So if the wall is built of earth, whether it is rock or bricks of clay, then it is permissible to use it for tayammum.

But if the wall is covered with something such as wood or paint, then if there is dust on it, he may use it for tayammum and there is nothing wrong with that, for he will be like one who did tayammum using the ground, as dust is a substance that comes from the earth. But if there was

no dust on it, then it does not come under the heading of earth at all, so he cannot do tayammum using it. As for the furniture, we say that if there is dust on it, he may use it for tayammum, otherwise he cannot use it for tayammum, because it does not come under the heading of earth.(*Fatawa Ibn `Uthaymin* 11/240).

Undoubtedly you should be prudent and take a cautious approach with regard to acts of worship, especially when there is such a great difference of scholarly opinion regarding the matter. If you find dust, then you should not turn away from it to something else from the earth, because using it for tayammum is valid and acceptable according to scholarly consensus, whereas doing tayammum using something else is a matter concerning which the scholars differed. Avoiding a matter concerning which the scholars differed in such cases is what is recommended and is important whenever possible. But if you cannot find dust, the best is to do tayammum using something that is part of the earth's surface. This is the apparent meaning of the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, who regarded it as permissible to do tayammum using things other than dust that are part of the earth's surface, if one cannot find dust. This view is also mentioned in one report from Ahmad.

See: *Al-Ikhtiyarat al-Fiqhiyyah*, 20; *Al-Insaf* by al-Mardawi, 2/216.

And Allah knows best.