273379 - The ruling on the use of shoes and bags manufactured from the leather and fats of carrion

the question

Is it permissible to wear shoes containing adhesive materials that use stearic acid derived from animal fats (including pigs, cattle, and sheep)? Given that these fats undergo chemical transformation to become stearic acid, does this chemical process render the stearic acid ritually pure?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is permissible to use shoes and bags that are made from the hides of cattle and animals that may be eaten, whether they were slaughtered in the prescribed manner or died a natural death, if the hides have been tanned.

Muslim (366) narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “If the hide is tanned it has become pure.”

And Muslim (363) narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A sheep was given in charity to a freed slave woman of Maymunah, but it died. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed by it and said: “Why don’t you take its hide and tan it, and make use of it?” They said: It is dead, O Messenger of Allah [i.e., it died of natural causes and was not slaughtered properly]. He said: “It is only haram to eat it.”

It was narrated that Maymunah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: Some men of Quraysh

passed by the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), dragging a sheep of theirs like a donkey. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to them: “Why don’t you make use of its hide?” They said: It is dead [i.e., died of natural causes]. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “It may be purified by water and leaves of qaraz [a tree whose leaves were used in tanning – mimosa flava or acacia nilotica].”

Narrated by Abu Dawud, 4126; and an-Nasa’i, 4248. Classed as authentic by al-Albani in *As-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, no. 2163.

Tanning is achieved by using anything that will dry up dirt on the hide, make it good and prevent it from disintegrating. Such things include leaves of qaraz [a tree whose leaves were used in tanning – mimosa flava or acacia nilotica], pomegranate skins, and other pure materials.

See: *Subul as-Salam*, 1/107.

The scholars differed regarding what can purify the hides of animals that died without being slaughtered in the prescribed manner. Some of them say that this only applies to dead animals whose meat could be eaten if slaughtered in the prescribed manner; others say that it only applies to animals that were pure (tahir) when they were alive; some of them think that the hides of all dead animals can be purified by tanning; and some of them exclude from that the hides of dogs and pigs.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) thought it most likely that the hide of any animal that could be eaten if slaughtered in the prescribed manner becomes purified by tanning.(*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 1/75).

He quoted as evidence for that what it says in some versions of the hadith: “Being tanned is its purification.” Narrated by Ahmad and an-Nasa’i; classed as authentic by Ibn Hajar in *At-Talkhis al-Habir*, 1/49.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is known that slaughter does not make any animal pure except those which are permissible to eat. If you were to slaughter a

donkey, say Bismillah over it and let the blood flow, that cannot be called purification.

Based on that, we say: the hide of any animal that is prohibited to eat, even if it was pure when it was alive (like cats), does not become pure by tanning. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about wearing leather coats made from pig skin. He replied:

Undoubtedly the tanned hides of animals which died of natural causes, and would be permissible to eat if they had been slaughtered in the prescribed manner – such as camels, cattle, and sheep – are pure, and it is permissible to use them in all ways, according to the most sound scholarly view.

As for the hides of pigs and dogs, and other animals that cannot become permissible to eat by being slaughtered in the prescribed manner, there is a difference of scholarly opinion as to whether tanning them makes them pure. The more prudent approach is not to use them, acting in accordance with the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): “Whoever avoids dubious matters will have taken precautions to protect his faith and dignity,” and his words: “Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.”(*Fatawa Ibn Baz*, 6/354).

Secondly:

There is nothing wrong with using these manufactured items, even if they contain adhesives that were made from prohibited animal sources, such as fat from an animal that was not slaughtered in the prescribed manner or a pig, so long as it was treated with chemicals and turned into another substance with different characteristics, because transformation (istihalah) purifies things, as we have explained in several answers. See, for example, the answer to question no. 97541.

However, the Muslim should not make things difficult for himself, because that could lead to him falling prey to intrusive thoughts (waswasah) and becoming suspicious of everything. Rather he should proceed on the basis of the principle, which is that things are halal, permissible and pure. He should not ask too many questions and try to find things out except with regard to matters

concerning which he has strong doubts and thinks it most likely that they are not allowed according to Islamic teachings, and there is no possibility that they may be allowed, and no valid argument or reliable scholarly view to that effect.

Other than that, he should regard it as most likely to be fine, and he should ignore the intrusive thoughts, otherwise he will make things hard for himself or be too strict with himself, and thus cause trouble for himself.

And Allah knows best.