42582 - Ruling on cauterizing, and reconciling ahaadeeth on this topic which appear to contradict one another

the question

It is narrated in a saheeh report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade cauterizing, but it is also narrated that he did it. What is the correct ruling on cauterizing and how can we reconcile the ahaadeeth which appear to contradict one another?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Many ahaadeeth have been narrated on the topic of cauterizing, which the scholars divided into four categories.

1 – Those which indicate that it is permissible, such as the hadeeth of Jaabir who said: Ubayy was struck by an arrow in his medial arm vein on the day of al-Ahzaab, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) cauterized it. Narrated by Muslim, 2207.

2 – Those which indicate that he did not like it, such as the hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: “If there is anything good in your medicine it is in the instrument of the cupper or drinking honey or cauterizing with fire that suits the ailment, but I would not like to be cauterized.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5683; Muslim, 2205.

3 – Those which praise those who do not do that, such as the hadeeth of ‘Imraan ibn Husayn concerning the seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without being brought to account: “… those who did not use cauterization.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6541, and Muslim, 218.

In the hadeeth of ‘Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) it says that the angels would greet him because he did not use cauterization. When he used it, they stopped greeting

him, then when he stopped using it, they started to greet him again. Narrated by Muslim, 1226.

4 – Those which indicate that cauterization is makrooh, such as the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah have mercy on him) who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Healing is to be found in three things: the instrument of the cupper, drinking honey and cauterization with fire, but I forbid my ummah to use cauterization.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5681.

This is how the reports may be reconciled. Forbidding here means that it is makrooh, and the ahaadeeth which say that he did it indicate that it is permissible when there is a need for it.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said: I do not know of any scholarly difference of opinion, for they did not see anything wrong with cauterization if there was a need for it.

The reason why it is makrooh is because it causes suffering and pain.