616041 - Can one who is partially paralyzed do tayammum if it is too difficult for his helper to wash him?

the question

I am ill and paralyzed; I cannot move my arms or legs, and my wife is the one who takes care of me when I need to relieve myself or have a bath or shower.

My question is:

Is it sufficient for me to do tayammum instead of ghusl for janabah, because ghusl is very difficult for my wife to help me with, as she needs to lift me to carry me from the bed to the bathroom, then bring me back to the bed?

Summary of answer

If it is too difficult for one who is paralysed and cannot move to do ghusl, then he may move to the option of tayammum, and that will be sufficient in his case.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

Religious obligations are to be carried out according to what one is able to do, so if it is extremely hard, more than is usual, for a person to do some acts of worship, he may take the easier option that he is able to do, if there is an alternative, otherwise it is waived.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{[Allah] has not imposed any hardship on you in religion, the religion of your father Ibrahim } [Al-

Hajj 22:78]

{ Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship } [Al-Baqarah 2:185]

{ Allah does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear } [Al-Baqarah 2:286].

And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If I forbid you to do something, then refrain from it, and if I command you to do something, then do as much of it as you can.” Narrated by Muslim, 1337.

II.

The sick person must seek help from someone who can help him to purify himself, according to the majority of scholars, whether it is someone who helps him for free or he hires someone to help him in return for the usual fee, if he can afford that.

If he cannot afford to hire someone, and he cannot find anyone to help him for free, then he may choose the option that he is able to do.

As-Sarkhasi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If he will not be harmed by using water, but he is unable to move to do wudu, then what appears to be the view of the madhhab is that if he can find someone to help him do wudu, it is not permissible for him to do tayammum.

But if he cannot find someone to help him to do wudu, in that case he may do tayammum, because he is unable to do wudu.

It was narrated that Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If he cannot find a servant to help him do wudu, he has no right to resort to tayammum if he is in a city, unless his hands have been cut off, the reason being that the usual situation is that the person who is in a city will be able to find someone to help him, whether he is a relative or otherwise. In the case of one who is unable to do wudu for a temporary reason that will soon disappear, if he cannot find someone to help him do wudu, it is permissible for him to do tayammum for that reason, then he may offer as

many prayers as he wishes with that tayammum, so long as he has not invalidated that purification or the reason why he did tayammum ceases to apply.

End quote from *Al-Mabsut* by as-Sarkhasi, 1/112.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In the case of the one whose hand has been cut off or the one who is sick, if he has no fear of harm as a result of using water, if he finds water but is not able to use it – as we have noted above in the chapter on how to do wudu – he must find someone to help him do wudu, in return for payment or otherwise.

If he cannot find anyone to help him, and he is able to do tayammum, then he must do tayammum and pray.

End quote from *Al-Majmu`, Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 2/287.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If both of his hands have been cut off, and he can find someone to help him to do wudu voluntarily, then he must do that, because he is able to do it.

If he cannot find someone to help him to do wudu except in return for payment that he can afford, then he must do that also, just as he must buy water if necessary.

Ibn `Aqil said: It may be that he is not obliged to do that, just as if he is unable to stand to pray, he does not have to hire someone to help him stand or on whom he can lean.

If he cannot afford to pay someone, or he cannot find someone to hire, he should pray as he is, as is the ruling on one who cannot find water or dust [with which to purify himself by wudu or tayammum respectively].

If he can find someone to help him to do tayammum but not wudu, then he must do tayammum, as in the case of one who cannot find water, if he can find dust.

This is the view of ash-Shafa`i, and I do not know of any difference of opinion concerning it.

End quote from *Al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudamah, 1/174.

Based on that:

If your wife cannot help you to do ghusl and purify yourself except with extreme hardship that she cannot bear, then you should move to the option of tayammum. Acts of worship are required of a man when he is able to do them without extreme hardship that is beyond what is usual, so it is more appropriate that they should not be required of the one who is helping him, if it is too difficult for him and more than he can or ordinarily bear.

If it is not possible for your wife to move you with a wheelchair, and your condition means that it is not possible in your situation, and she cannot carry you to the bathroom to do ghusl, then what appears to be the case – and Allah knows best – is that there is no blame on you if you do tayammum to purify yourself from janabah.

For more information, please see the answers to the following questions: 379113, 115747, 105356.

And Allah knows best.