

Wiping Over Slippers And Socks

The Muslim jurisprudents disagreed upon wiping over slippers and socks so widely that we couldn't discuss all the details in this short chapter. Generally the research concerned its permissibility or impermissibility, specifying its position, time, conditions and contradictions.

As for its permissibility, there were three sayings:

First: it was permissible at all whether in travel or residence.

Second: it was permissible only in travel and not in residence.

Third: it was impermissible at all because it had not been confirmed by the laws of the religion.

These three sayings were narrated from the first age (of Islam) and from Malik. [1](#)

As for specifying its position (on the feet), it was disagreed upon it. Some said that what was obligatory was wiping the upper side of the slipper and that wiping its lower side was mustahab. [2](#) Some said it was obligatory to wipe the upper side and the lower side of the slipper. [3](#) Some said it was obligatory to wipe the upper side only and wiping the lower side was neither obligatory nor mustahab. [4](#) Some might say that it was optional to choose between wiping the upper side and the lower side. Which of them was wiped would be obligatory. [5](#)

As for the position of wiping, those who believed in wiping over the slippers disagreed upon wiping over the socks; some permitted it and others prohibited it. [6](#)

As for the kind of the slipper, they disagreed upon wiping over the torn slipper; some said it was permissible as long as it was called a slipper even if it was so badly torn; [7](#) some prohibited it if there was a tear in the front of the slipper that something of the foot might appear even if it was so little [8](#) and some permitted it if the tear was small. [9](#)

As for the time of wiping, they disagreed upon it too. Some said it was not timed and that the wearer of the slippers could wipe over them as long as he didn't take them off or he didn't become impure. [10](#)

Some said it was timed with a certain time for the resident and another time for the traveler. [11](#) They disagreed upon the kind of travel and its distance.

As for the conditions of wiping over the slippers; the feet must be pure (by wudu') when wearing the slippers. Most of them decided this condition but it was mentioned that Malik had considered it as not necessary. [12](#) They disagreed in this concern about one, who washed his feet and put on his slippers and then completed his wudu' that if he would be satisfied with washing his feet or he had to wipe over the slippers. There were two different sayings. [13](#)

Among the contradictions of wiping over the slippers was taking off the slippers. Some said that one would remain pure if he took his slippers off until he committed something invalidating his wudu' and he didn't have to wash his feet. [14](#) Some said that one's purity would be invalidated as soon as he took his slippers off. [15](#) Others said that one would remain pure if he washed his feet after taking off the slippers but if he offered the prayer without washing his feet he would have to offer the prayer again after washing his feet [16](#) besides other different sayings and beliefs concerning wiping over the slipper, which we didn't want to detail them in this chapter.

The Shia believed, according to their infallible imams (s), that wiping over the slippers was impermissible whether in travel or in residence. Our evidence for that was the saying of Allah the Almighty: (*...and wipe your heads and your feet to the (two) ankles*). Allah had ordered to wipe the feet themselves so who had decided to wipe over the slippers? Was this Quranic verse annulled? Was it allegorical? Certainly not! It was one of the decisive verses of the Quran according to the consensus of the umma. The interpreters agreed upon that no verse of sura of al-Ma'ida, which included this verse of wudu', was annulled except one verse (*O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allah...*) [17](#) 5:2.

The traditions talking about wiping over the slippers were not evidenced by the Shia according to the conditions determining the rightfulness of traditions besides other things that showed the weakness of those traditions:

First: those traditions contradicted the Quran and the true traditions of the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) said: "If someone narrates a tradition to you pretending that I have said it, you are to compare it to the Quran. If it complies with the Quran, then you are to accept it but if not then you are to deny it." [18](#)

Second: those traditions contradicted themselves and contradicted each other; therefore much disagreement happened between those, who acted according to them and tried to justify them in a way or another. Their sayings were contradictory because the traditions themselves were contradictory. [19](#)

Third: the infallible imams (Ali and his progeny) agreed upon the impermissibility of wiping over any obstacle (other than the bare foot) whether it was slippers, socks, shoes or anything else. [20](#) The traditions narrated by them contradicted clearly that ones narrated by the Sunni that permitted wiping over slippers.

The basic rule in dealing with the contradictory traditions was to depend upon what complied with the holy Quran. This would be if the traditions were equal in the reliability of the series of the narrators and the subject of the traditions. But would anyone be equal to the Prophet's progeny; the infallible imams, who were as equal as the Quran?

Fourth: if those traditions were true, they were recurrent in every age and in every country because knowing the purity of the feet in wudu'—as we said before—was necessary for all the men and the women of the umma. It was necessary in every day and every night whether in residence or travel. If it was other than the wiping mentioned in the Quranic verse, it would be known by the Muslims at the age of the Prophet (s) and after that and it would be famous among all the Muslims throughout the ages especially when it was abnormal and odd! But as it was not so, the weakness of those traditions appeared clearly and made them be brushed aside.

Fifth: if it was supposed that those traditions were true, then they would be annulled by the sura of al-Ma'ida because it was the last sura of the Quran that nothing was revealed after it, with which Allah (had perfected the religion, completed the favor and chosen Islam as a religion) so its obligations were obligatory until the Day of Resurrection and its haram was haram until the Day of Resurrection as Aa'isha had said to Jubayr bin Nufayr, who had visited her after performing hajj: "O Jubayr, did you recite al-Ma'ida?" He said: "Yes, I did." She said: "It was the last sura of the Quran that was revealed. Whatever permissible thing it has (it orders to be followed), you are to do it and whatever impermissible thing it has (it forbids from) you are to avoid it."[21](#)

In spite of that the Sunni clung to the act of wiping over the slippers even after the revelation of al-Ma'ida. They depended upon a tradition narrated by Jareer. Once he made water and then he performed wudu' and wiped over his slippers. He was asked: "Why did you do so?" he said: "I saw the Prophet (s) do so. He made water and then he performed wudu' and wiped over his slippers."

Muslim mentioned this tradition and said that it was admired by them and he justified that by saying that Jareer became a Muslim after the revelation of al-Ma'ida.[22](#)

Jareer became a Muslim before the revelation of al-Ma'ida because he was present with the Prophet (s) during the last (farewell) hajj of the Prophet (s). He was ordered, at that day, to ask the people to be silent—as it was mentioned in *al-Issaba*.

So definitely he became a Muslim before that hajj and definitely al-Ma'ida was not revealed before that hajj.[23](#)

At-Tabarani mentioned a tradition that Jareer had said: "The Prophet (s) said: Your brother an-Najashi died..." The death of an-Najashi was before the revelation of al-Ma'ida. There was no doubt that he had died before the tenth year of hijra.

Al-Qastalani had another odd saying about wiping over the slippers. He said: "Wiping was not annulled

because the tradition narrated by al-Mugheera showed clearly that the Prophet (s) had wiped over his slippers during the battle of Tabook, which was the last battle of the Prophet (s), and al-Ma'ida was revealed during the battle of al-Muraysee'..."

The battle of al-Muraysee' was the battle of bani al-Mustalaq itself. It was in the fifth—and it was said in the fourth or in the sixth—[24](#) year of hijra. After this battle many suras were revealed besides al-Ma'ida. What was revealed during this battle was the verse of tayammum, which was a part of sura of an-Nisa':

(...and if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands; surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving) 4:43.

The true saying about that was narrated by Aa'isha and mentioned by al-Wahidy in his book *Asbab an-Nuzool*. Refer to it to be sure that al-Qastalani was confused between the verse of wudu' and the verse of tayammum.

In fact al-Mugheera and Jareer were among those, whom we couldn't trust or rely upon. Soon you shall see the history of al-Mugheera that makes us not trust in him.

Jareer had a situation towards Imam Ali that made us not trust in him too.

Sixth: Aa'isha, the Prophet's wife, who was so clever and aware of the Sunna and who lived in the house, where the Quran was revealed, denied wiping over the slippers very strongly. Ibn Abbas, who was the scholar of the umma and the vessel of the Book and the Sunna, also denied wiping over the slippers so insistingly. They both denied this matter to a degree that Aa'isha said: "To cut my feet is much more desirable to me than to wipe over the slippers" and ibn Abbas said: "To wipe over a donkey's skin is much more desirable to me than to wipe over the slippers."[25](#)

Would this kind of denying comply with those traditions?

Certainly not! If these sayings were said by these persons, who lived with the revelation of the Quran and knew every corner of it, then would we brush them aside to rely upon sayings said by persons coming centuries after the revelation of the Quran?

Whoever pondered impartially on the denying of the Prophet's wife, the Prophet's cousin and the Prophet's pure progeny, definitely would suspect those false traditions.

Then you would know well that saying that those traditions were recurrent was just a lie. Were they so recurrent whereas those close persons to the Prophet (s) ignored them or pretended to ignore them? Glory be to Allah! This was but a great fabrication!

In fact if those traditions were recurrent, they wouldn't be denied by Abdullah bin Omar,[26](#) Imam Malik[27](#) and many other Muslims.

He, who said: “I am afraid that whoever doesn’t believe in wiping over the slippers will be unbeliever”²⁸ had done wrong so badly.

It was mentioned that wiping over the slipper was neither of the bases of the religion nor of the necessities of its branches nor was determined by the Quran or the Sunna nor was agreed upon by the consensus of the umma. It was just a concession among a group of the Muslims away from the others. Would it be a sin if a Muslim gave it up in order to be according to the clear Quranic verse of wudu’, which all the Muslims agreed unanimously upon the validity of acting according to the verdicts mentioned in? They agreed upon that unanimously unlike wiping over the slipper, which was a point of dispute and disagreement among the Muslims and which would never lead to remove any impurity from the feet and so the validity of the prayer would be uncertain.

Then would he, who followed the orders of the Quran and performed his obligations with precaution, be considered as unbeliever? O you Muslims! What would you say about Aa’isha, Ali, ibn Abbas and the rest of the Prophet’s progeny, who denied wiping over the slippers?

Wiping over the turban

The Shia ulema thought that wiping over the turban was impermissible. This was the belief of ash-Shafi’iy, Abu Haneefa and Malik.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abu Thour, al-Qassim bin Salam, al-Awza’iy and ath-Thawri²⁹ contradicted that and said that it was permissible according to their analogy in applying wiping over the slippers to the turban and depending upon a tradition narrated by al-Mugheera bin Shu’ba that the Prophet (s) had wiped over his forelock and over his turban. In some ways of his tradition he said that the Prophet (s) had wiped over the turban and he didn’t mention the forelock.

The Quran sufficed us when saying: (... **and wipe your heads...**) and the Sunna proved that the Prophet (s) used to wipe his forelock and this was confirmed unanimously and didn’t need any explanation.

Their excuse by applying analogy to the divine verdicts was not acceptable because the religion of Allah was not to be taken by analogy.

Wiping over the slippers was denied as you already knew. The tradition of al-Mugheera was null even if it was mentioned by Muslim in his *Sahih*. Abu Omar bin Abdul Birr said about this tradition: “It is a suspicious tradition.”³⁰ Perhaps Abu Haneefa, ash-Shafi’iy and Malik didn’t care for this tradition because it was suspicious for them too.

Al-Mugheera had a biography full of cunning, deception, changeableness, trickery, immersing in sins, plunging into lusts and exceeding in perfidy. He exceeded all the limits in supporting the enemies of the Prophet’s progeny and in opposing the loyal believers.

He became a Muslim in order to spare his blood from bani³¹ Malik. Once he went with some notable men of bani Malik to visit al-Muqawqas in Alexandria. The people of bani Malik won the prize of the king but al-Mugheera didn't. Greediness led him to betray them. He invited them to drink while they entrusted in his companionship. He made them drink until they became drunken. Then he killed them one after the other and seized their monies.

Since he couldn't find any shelter to resort to in order to be safe from being revenged on except to join Islam, he went to the Prophet (s) in Medina and said the shahada. The Prophet (s) accepted his shahada as he used to do with everyone saying the shahada. When al-Mugheera offered to give the monies to the Prophet (s), the Prophet (s) with his holy soul disdained to accept them because they were seized by betraying.³² In this way al-Mugheera became a Muslim.

Abu Bakra, who was one of the great prophet's companions, and his companions witnessed that al-Mugheera had committed adultery, which would have led him to be punished by being stoned until death according to the Islamic laws. This was very famous case among the events of the year seventeen A.H.³³ O you people! How could we then deny the holy Quran and depend upon a tradition narrated by such a man?!!

Does wiping the head have a limit?

The Shia ulema thought that there was no limit in wiping the head whether for the wiping organ (the hand) or for the wiped organ (the head). It was enough for the Shia to wipe the least part of the head as possible.³⁴ This was the belief of ash-Shafi'iy too. Imam Malik, Imam Ahmad and others thought that it was obligatory to wipe all the head. Abu Haneefa thought that it was obligatory to wipe a quarter of the head with three fingers and less than that would not suffice.

Our evidence (the Shia's evidence) was the Quranic verse (... **and wipe your heads...**).³⁵ The real meaning of the verse referred to the general wiping of the head. Since wiping the head was achieved by wiping all the head or a quarter of it, also it would be achieved by wiping less than that even by passing one finger or a part of a finger over a part of the head. There was no any evidence confirming what they said in this concern. If Allah wanted all the head to be wiped, he would say: (wipe your heads-without using the preposition) as He had said: (wash your faces) and if the required thing to be wiped was certain, Allah would specify it with some kind of definition as He had said when talking about washing the hands (... *and wash... your hands to the elbows*) and when talking about the feet He said: (... *to the ankles*).

¹. Refer to Bidayatul Mujtahid and Nihayatul Muqtasid by ibn Rushd, vol.1 p.14.

². This was the belief of ash-Shafi'iy.

³. This was the belief of ibn Nafi'.

⁴. This was the belief of Abu Haneefa, Dawood, Sufyan and many others.

⁵. This was the belief of Ashhab.

⁶. Sufyan ath-Thawri, Abu Yousuf and Muhammad bin al-Hasan ash-Shaybani permitted it whereas Abu Haneefa, ash-

Shafi'iyy and others prohibited it.

[7.](#) It was mentioned that Sufyan had said so.

[8.](#) This was one of two sayings of ash-Shafi'iyy about the subject.

[9.](#) It was mentioned that this was the belief of Malik and his companions. Abu Haneefa specified the tear by being less than an area of three fingers gathered together.

[10.](#) This was said by Malik.

[11.](#) This was the belief of Abu Haneefa and ash-Shafi'iyy.

[12.](#) Mentioned by ibn Lubana in his Muntakhab.

[13.](#) Abu Haneefa said it was sufficient but ash-Shafi'iyy said it was not.

[14.](#) Dawood and ibn Layla thought so.

[15.](#) This was the belief of al-Hasan bin Hay.

[16.](#) Ash-Shafi'iyy said so. Each one of these three sayings was adopted by a group of the successors.

[17.](#) Refer to at-Tafseer al-Kabeer by al-Fakhr ar-Razi, vol.3 p.371.

[18.](#) Ar-Razi's Tafseer vol.3 p.371.

[19.](#) Ibn Rushd in his book al-Bidayah wen-Nihaya, vol.1 p.15 acknowledged this contradiction concerning the position of wiping over the slippers. In p.16 he mentioned their disagreement about the time of wiping. He said: "The reason behind their disagreement was because the traditions were different in talking about the subject. Three different traditions were narrated in this concern." He mentioned the three traditions; one of them showed that the time was three days and three nights for the traveler and one day and one night for the resident. The second showed that it was permissible to wipe over the slipper according to one's option without timing whether in residence or in travel whereas the third one contradicted the two previous sayings. Refer to (Jurisprudence according to the four sects) established by the ministry of religious affairs in Egypt by the order of King Fu'ad the first to see full details about the subject.

[20.](#) Many scholars mentioned the identical belief of all of the infallible imams (s). Refer to al-Burhan al-Qati' by Sayyid Ali at-Tabataba'iyy. All the Shia looked forward to be near to Allah by worshipping Him according to the doctrine of the pure imams of the Prophet's progeny since their days until now because they were the best ones, who knew well the real religious verdicts and the true Islamic jurisprudence.

[21.](#) Al-Hakim's Mustadrak, vol.2 p.314.

[22.](#) An-Nawawi said when commenting on this saying: "Allah said in al-Ma'ida: (wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows and wipe your heads and your feet to the (two) ankles). If Jareer became a Muslim before the revelation of al-Ma'ida, it would be possible that his tradition was annulled by the verse mentioned in al-Ma'ida but since he became a Muslim after the revelation of the sura, then his tradition would be valid..." How could we decide that he became a Muslim after the revelation of al-Ma'ida whereas we showed that al-Ma'ida was revealed lastly?

[23.](#) Al-Bukhari mentioned that some of the verses of al-Ma'ida were revealed to the Prophet (s) while he was on his sumpter during the farewell hajj.

[24.](#) As it was mentioned by al-Bukhari in his Sahih. So was said by an-Nawawi in his ar-Rawdha.

[25.](#) Refer to Ar-Razi's Tafseer vol.3 p.371 to see the sayings of Aa'isha and ibn Abbas.

[26.](#) Atta' said, as it was mentioned by ar-Razi in his Tafseer vol.3 p.372: "Ibn Omar objected to the people about wiping over the slippers but he didn't die until he agreed with them." But his objection to Sa'd when he saw him wipe over the slippers was fixed in al-Bukhari's Sahih.

[27.](#) Refer to ar-Razi's Tafseer vol.3 p.372 and the other books of jurisprudence.

[28.](#) Al-Karkhi had said that as it was mentioned by al-Qastalani in his Irshad as-Sari vol.2 p.4.

[29.](#) Mentioned in al-Bidaya wen Nihaya by ibn Rushd and at-Tafseer al-Kabeer by ar-Razi.

[30.](#) Al-Bidaya wen Nihaya by ibn Rushd vol.1 p.10.

[31.](#) Bani means "the tribe of" or "the family of".

[32.](#) Refer to ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat vol.4 p.25.

[33.](#) To see the details, refer to Wafiyyat al-A'yan by ibn Khillikan and all the books of the historians, who wrote about the events of the year seventeen A.H.

[34.](#) Since the Prophet (s) used to wipe his forelock so the Shia were satisfied with wiping this part of the head as possible

but one could wipe more area of the head as he liked.

[35.](#) In the Arabic text of the verse there is a preposition before the phrase (your heads). It has a sense of partialness.

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