

Cultivating young Hearts on the Fertile soils of Islam

فِقْهُ الطَّهَارَةِ

The Fiqh of Tahaarah

Lesson 7

المَسْحُ عَلَى الخُفَّيْنِ أَوْ الجُورَبَيْنِ

(Wiping over the leather or Cotton Socks)

This lesson will cover the proofs and conditions for **المَسْحُ عَلَى الخُفَّيْنِ** wiping over socks and how to perform the act correctly according to the Sunnah.

The Arabic word **مَسَحَ** means 'to stroke with the hand' or 'to wipe off/away/over'. This is what it means in **اللُّغَةُ العَرَبِيَّةُ** (the Arabic Language).

The phrase **المَسْحُ عَلَى الخُفَّيْنِ**, according to the scholars of Fiqh, is defined as

إِمْرَارُ بَاطِنِ اليَدَيْنِ عَلَى الخُفَّيْنِ فِي وَفْتٍ مُحَدَّدٍ شَرْعًا بَدَلِ غَسْلِ الرَّجْلَيْنِ فِي الوُضُوءِ

¹ Compiled by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

Passing the palms of the two hands over the two socks during times specified by the Shari'ah as an alternative to washing the feet during wudhu.

This definition teaches us that **الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ** is something particular to **الْوَضُوءِ** and that it should not be done during **الغُسلِ**.

The legality of wiping over the socks in Islam (مَشْرُوعِيَّةُ الْمَسْحِ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ)

The scholars of Islam are unanimously agreed (إِجْمَاعُ الْعُلَمَاءِ) that the person who completes his purification and then puts on his socks but then afterwards breaks his wudhu, he can now just wipe over his socks when he performs wudhu. This unanimous agreement has been established in the Sunnah of our Prophet (ﷺ) through various narrations. We will mention a few here:

الْحَدِيثُ الْأَوَّلُ (the first narration):

Hammaam said,

بَالَ جَرِيرٌ ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ وَمَسَحَ عَلَى خُفَّيْهِ فَقِيلَ تَفْعَلُ هَذَا . فَقَالَ نَعَمْ رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَالَ ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ وَمَسَحَ عَلَى خُفَّيْهِ

Jarir urinated and then performed ablution and wiped over the socks. It was said to him, "Do you do like this?" He said: "Yes, I saw that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) urinate, then perform ablution and then wipe over his socks."

الْحَدِيثُ الثَّانِي (the second narration):

'Urwa bin Al-Mugheera said

كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ فَأَهْوَيْتُ لِأَنْزِعَ خُفَّيْهِ فَقَالَ " دَعُهُمَا فَإِنِّي أَدْخَلْتُهُمَا طَاهِرَتَيْنِ " .
فَمَسَحَ عَلَيْهِمَا

Once I was in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey and I bent down to remove his khuffs (socks made from thick fabric or leather). He

said, “Leave them for I put them on after performing wudhu.” So he passed wet hands over them.

The Great scholar of Islam, Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal said about **المَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ** that no doubt whatsoever exists in my heart regarding the legality of wiping and that there are forty narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions.

Now that we have learnt that **المَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ** is an established practice of our Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, we can now move on to learn the conditions (**الشُّرُوطُ**) we need to apply before wiping over our socks.

There are four conditions for the validity of **المَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ**:

الشَّرْطُ الْأَوَّلُ (The first condition) is that they should have been put on when one was in a state of purity, (i.e., when one has wudu’). The evidence for that is what the Prophet (ﷺ) said to al-Mugheera ibn Shu’bah: “**Leave them for I put them on after performing wudhu.**”

الشَّرْطُ الثَّانِي (The second condition) is that the khufuof (leather slippers which cover the ankle) or socks should be pure (**طَاهِرٌ**). If they are impure (**نَجَسٌ**) then it is not permissible to wipe over them. The evidence for this is that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) led his Companions in prayer one day wearing shoes, which he took off whilst he was praying. He said that Jibreel had told him that there was something filthy on them.

الشَّرْطُ الثَّلَاثُ (The third condition) is that they may be wiped over when one is purifying oneself from minor impurity (**الطَّهَارَةُ الصُّغْرَى**), and not when one is in a state of janaabah (major impurity following sexual relations) or when *ghusl* is required. The evidence for that is the hadeeth of Safwaan ibn ‘Assaal (رضي الله عنه) who said,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَأْمُرُنَا إِذَا كُنَّا سَفْرًا أَنْ لَا نَنْزِعَ خِفَافَنَا ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ وَلِيَالِيَهُنَّ، إِلَّا مِنْ جَنَابَةٍ

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) commanded us, when we were travelling, not to remove our *khuf* for three days and three nights, except in the case of *janaabah*.

الشَّرْطُ الرَّابِعُ (The fourth condition) is that the wiping may be done within the time specified by shari'ah, which is one day and one night in the case of one who is not travelling, and three days and three nights in the case of one who is travelling. The evidence for this is the hadith of Ali ibn Abi Taalib, who said,

جَعَلَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ وَلَيَالِيَهُنَّ لِلْمُسَافِرِ، وَيَوْمًا وَلَيْلَةً لِلْمُقِيمِ.

The Prophet (ﷺ) fixed the period of wiping over the socks for three days and nights for a traveller and one day and a night for the resident person.

This period starts from the first time one wipes over the socks when doing wudhu' after some minor impurity, and it ends twenty-four hours later for the one who is not travelling and seventy-two hours later for the one who is travelling. Let us take an example so that we are very clear on this twenty-four hour period:

So let's imagine that a person purifies himself for Fajr prayer on Tuesday and remains in a state of ritual purity until 'Isha prayer on Tuesday evening, then he sleeps and wakes up to pray Fajr on Wednesday, and he wipes his socks at five o'clock in the morning, then the period begins from 5 a.m. on Wednesday and lasts until 5 a.m. on Thursday.

How to wipe over the khuffs or socks (صِفَةُ الْمَسْحِ عَلَى الْخُفِّ أَوِ الْجُورِبِ)

The great scholar, Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Uthaymeen has provided us with a description of how to wipe over the socks. He says,

This means that what should be wiped is the top of the sock, passing one's [wet] fingers from the toes to the shin only, and one should wipe with both hands over both feet together, i.e., the right hand should wipe the right foot and the left hand should wipe the left foot

at the same time, just as one wipes the ears, because this is the apparent meaning of the Sunnah, as al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah said, 'Then he wiped them both.' He did not say that he started with the right, rather that he 'wiped them both'. So this is the apparent meaning of the Sunnah.

Someone one might feel to ask this question: "Why do we wipe on top of the socks when the real dirty part is the bottom? Why don't we wipe on the bottom?" Shaykh Uthaymeen answers the question:

Someone may say that it is the bottom of the slipper or sock that should be wiped, because this is what is in contact with dust and dirt. But if we think about it, we will see that wiping the top of the sock is what makes sense, because this wiping is not for the purpose of cleaning, rather it is an act of worship. If we were to wipe the bottom of the sock then that would make it dirtier.

Analysing a scholarly difference of opinion

We will end this lesson by looking at an issue related to **المَسْحُ عَلَى الْحُفَّيْنِ** that the scholars differ over. Let's present the issue in a form of a question:

"If a person who has wudu' wipes over his socks, then takes them off, is his wudoo' invalidated by removing them?"

There are three different ways the scholars have answered this question:

1. This opinion states that it is enough for him just to wash his feet and his wudhu' becomes complete. However, this is a weak opinion because the act of wudhu requires continuity. So what do the scholars mean by 'continuity'? This means that when we perform wudhu, we should wash each part one after the other in a continuous sequence. This means that we should not wash our faces then go off and do something and then come back to complete our wudhu.

2. This opinion states that when a person removes his socks, after wiping over them, then this invalids his wudhu. So if he wishes to pray, he has to redo wudhu. These scholars argue that wiping takes the place of washing, and if the socks are removed, the purity of the feet is no longer valid because now they are **unwashed** and **unwiped**.

3. This opinion states that wudhu is not invalidated by removing the socks; it is only invalidated if he breaks his wudhu (e.g., going to the toilet). This view seems to be the strongest view because of the supporting evidence:
 - a) That a state of ritual purity is not invalidated except by *hadath* (breaking one's wudu' by breaking wind etc.) and taking off the socks is not hadath.

 - b) The purity of one who wipes over his socks is established by shar'iah evidence, and it cannot be ruled to be invalid except by further shar'iah evidence, and there is no evidence to indicate that purity is invalidated by taking off the socks.

 - c) The analogy with shaving the hair after doing wudoo'. If a person does wudhu and wipes over his hair and then shaves his head, he remains in a state of purity and it is not invalidated by shaving his hair. The same applies to one who wipes over his socks then takes them off.

Shaykh Uthaymeen, who favours the third opinion, said, "If a person takes off his socks after wiping over them, his wudhu is not invalidated thereby, and he may pray as he likes until he breaks his wudoo', according to the correct opinion."

Questions on الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ

Answer the following questions by reading the text of the lesson carefully:

1. Write the Arabic for 'wiping over the [leather] socks'.
2. What does the word مَسْح mean?
3. How do the scholars of Fiqh define the phrase الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ?
4. What does the above definition teach us?
5. What does the Arabic phrase إِجْمَاعُ الْعُلَمَاءِ mean in English?
6. Provide one hadith (in Arabic and English) for the legality of الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ
7. Which great scholar of Islam said that there are forty narrations on الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ from the Prophet and his Companions?
8. How many conditions are there for الْمَسْحُ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ?
9. Summarise each condition in your own words.
10. What is the correct way to wipe over the socks?
11. In your own words, explain why we wipe on top of the socks and not on the bottom.
12. How many opinions are there surrounding the issue of **removing socks and the state of one's wudhu**?
13. What do the scholars mean by '**there must be continuity**' when performing wudhu?
14. Which opinion is the strongest opinion and in your own words explain why?

