

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

103738 - Does nail polish invalidate wudoo' and do the prayers have to be repeated?

the question

A woman was away from the city, and did not know that the nail polish must be removed to make wudu' and pray. When she knew she must remove it, she tried to find a nail varnish remover to use but she could not find it. She could not go to the city to buy it either. She was making ablution and praying with it on for one week. What is the ruling on this?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allaah.

One of the conditions of tahaarah (purification) being valid is that the water must touch the skin. If there is any barrier such as grease, paint, wax or glue that prevents water reaching the skin, then the tahaarah is not valid and prayers offered in that case are not valid.

The evidence for that is the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to Abu Dharr (may Allaah be pleased with him): "If you find water, then let it touch your skin, for that is good." Narrated by Abu Dawood (332); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Imam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

If there is on him any mastic or anything thick that will prevent the water from reaching the skin, his washing of that part for wudoo' is not valid, unless he removes it or removes enough so that he knows that there is no barrier to the water touching the skin. End quote.

Al-Umm (1/44).

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

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If there is wax, dough, henna and the like on one of his limbs, which prevents water from reaching any part of it, then his tahaarah is not valid, whether the amount is large or small. If there are traces of henna and its colour left on the hand, without there being any solid material left, or elsewhere, or traces of liquid grease whereby water flows over the limb but does not stay there, his tahaarah is valid. End quote.

Al-Majmoo' (1/529).

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (5/218):

If the colour is impermeable, then wudoo' is not valid unless it is removed before doing wudoo'. If it is not impermeable, then wudoo' is valid, as is the case with henna. End quote.

Hence this woman should have tried to find something to remove this nail polish, even if she had to go far away to find a place that sold it. She could also have removed it by using a strong kitchen cleaning agent or by rubbing it with a cloth dampened with liquid fuel, and so on.

We do not think that this woman has any excuse for praying with wudoo' that was invalid because of this nail polish. Ignorance may mean that she is free of sin but it does not make the prayer valid.

She has to repeat the prayers that she offered with wudoo' that was invalid because of this nail polish.

We ask Allaah to forgive us and her.

And Allaah knows best.