

161045 - If water is changed by adding chlorine, is it no longer a means of purification?

the question

My question has to do with what it said in a fatwa from one of the shaykhs, that the water that comes from the taps we have in our house and all other houses is pure, but it is not a means of purification. In other words, it is not permissible to do wudu' with it, because things are added to it which make it no longer fit to be used for purification (wudu' and ghusl), such as chlorine and so on. I hope that you can tell me whether what he says is true.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The basic principle regarding water is that it is pure and is a means of purification, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{and We send down from the sky pure water}

[al-Furqan 25:48].

And an-Nasa'i (326) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Water is a means of purification and nothing makes it impure." Classed as authentic by al-Albani in *Sahih al-Jami'*, no. 1025.

But if its smell, taste or colour is altered by some impure substance, then it becomes impure according to the consensus of the Muslims.

See: *al-Majmu` Sharh al-Muhadhdhab* by an-Nawawi, 1/160.

Secondly:

If the colour, taste or smell of the water is changed by some pure substance, such as chlorine or dough or other pure things, and it is still cold water, then it is pure and is a means of purification

according to the correct scholarly view, because the name of water is still applied to it.

It was narrated from Umm Hani' that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did ghusl, him and Maymunah, from a single vessel in a large bowl in which there were traces of dough. Narrated by Ahmad (25660) and an-Nasa'i (240); classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albani.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: As for the issue of a small or large amount of water being changed by adding pure substances, such as potash, soap, lotus leaves, marsh-mallow (*Althaea officinalis*), dust, dough and other things that may change the water, such as vessels in which there are traces of lotus leaves or marsh-mallow, and water is put in the vessel then is changed by those traces, if it is still called water, then there are two well-known scholarly views concerning that:

The first view is that it is not permissible to purify oneself with that water, as is the view of Malik and ash-Shafa'i, and is one of the two views narrated from Ahmad.

The second view is that there is no difference between water that was originally different (from regular water) and water that has been changed by something that is difficult to avoid or something that is not difficult to avoid, as long as it is still called water and the substance of the other thing has not overwhelmed it; it is still a means of purification, as is the view of Abu Hanifah and of Ahmad, according to the other view that was narrated from him. This is the view that is mentioned in most of his answers, and this view is the correct one.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 21/24.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: In our country, drinking water is often mixed with chlorine to purify it, and this substance changes the colour and taste of the water. Does this affect its use for purifying oneself by doing wudu'?

He replied: If water is changed by the addition of pure substances and medicines that are added to it to prevent things that could harm people, but it is still called water, then this does not matter, even if some changes result from that, such as if it is changed by algae that grow in it, or

by tree leaves or dust that fall into it and the like. None of that affects it, so it remains a means of purification and that does not matter unless it is altered by something that means that it can no longer be called water and it becomes something else, such as if yoghurt is added to water until it changes it and it becomes yoghurt, or it becomes tea, or it becomes broth and is no longer called water. It is not valid to use such things to do wudu', because they are no longer called water and they are called something else.

But so long as it is still called water, and all that has happened is that some pure thing has fallen into it, such as dust or straw and other things that do not lead to it no longer being called water, that does not matter. As for impure substances, they spoil it if they change its taste or colour or smell; or if the water is a small amount and the impurity will affect it, even if it does not appear clearly in it, then it is spoiled by that and it is not permissible to use it.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fataawa*, 10/19.

And Allah knows best.