228222 - Is Wiping Over Thin Socks Permissible?

the question

I heard in a lecture that the scholars permitted wiping over socks through which the skin cannot be seen, but I have read that it is permissible to wipe over socks even if they are thin. Which of the two opinions is more correct?

Summary of answer

The view of the majority of scholars is that it is not allowed to wipe over thin socks, and that the permissibility of wiping over socks is limited to thick socks.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Wiping over the Khuff is sunnah

It is established in the Prophet's Sunnah that one may wipe over the khuff (a kind of leather socks that covers the ankle). The majority of scholars include socks under this ruling .

What is meant by socks, as was stated by Al-Khalil Al-Farahidi (may Allah have mercy on him), is a covering for the feet. (See Al-'Ayn, 6/113)

In Mawahib Al-Jalil (1/318) it says: "Socks are a kind of footwear in the shape of the Khuff, made of linen, cotton or other fabric."

The difference between socks and Khuff is that the Khuff are made of leather, whereas socks are not made of leather; rather they are made of wool, linen, cotton or other fabrics.

At the present time, socks are also made of nylon (or synthetic fabrics).

Is there any Hadith about wiping over socks?

There is no authentic report from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about wiping over socks .

With regard to the Hadith narrated by At-Tirmidhi (99) via Abu Qays from Huzayl ibn Shurahbil from Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did Wudu' and wiped over his socks and sandals – it is an inauthentic and odd Hadith.

Abu Dawud (may Allah have mercy on him) said in As-Sunan (159):

"`Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi did not narrate this Hadith, because what is well known from Al-Mughirah is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) wiped over the Khuff."

`Ali ibn Al-Madini (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The Hadith of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah (about wiping over the Khuff) was narrated from Al-Mughirah by the people of Madinah, the people of Kufah, and the people of Basra. It was narrated by Huzayl ibn Shurahbil from Al-Mughirah, but he said: And he wiped over his socks – and he (Huzayl) differed from other narrators." (As-Sunan Al-Kubra by Al-Bayhaqi, 1/284)

Al-Mufaddal ibn Ghassan (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "I asked Yahya ibn Ma`in about this Hadith and he said: All the narrators narrated it in reference to the Khuff , apart from Abu Qays." (As-Sunan Al-Kubra by Al-Bayhaqi, 1/284)

Among those who also classed it as inauthentic were Sufyan Ath-Thawri, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Ma`in, Muslim, An-Nasa'i, Al-`Uqayli, Ad-Daraqutni and Al-Bayhaqi (may Allah have mercy on them).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "These are the leading scholars of Hadith. Although At-Tirmidhi said it was a sound Hadith, these scholars take precedence over him; in fact if any one of them was the only one to hold that view, he would still take precedence over At-Tirmidhi, according to the consensus of the people of knowledge." (Al-Majmu` Sharh Al-

Muhadhdhab, 1/500)

Is wiping over socks reported from the Companions?

There are authentic reports about wiping over the socks from the Companions.

Ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The permissibility of wiping over the socks was narrated from nine of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him: ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu Mas`ud, Anas ibn Malik, Ibn `Umar, Al-Bara’ ibn `Azib, Bilal, Abu Umamah and Sahl ibn Sa`d.” (Al-Awsat, 1/462)

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Abu Dawud added Abu Umamah, `Amr ibn Hurayth, `Umar and Ibn `Abbas. Thus there were thirteen Companions (who held this view).

So the view that wiping over socks is permissible is based on these Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), not the Hadith of Abu Qays.

Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that it is permissible to wipe over the socks, and he said that the report of Ibn Qays was flawed.

That stems from his fair-mindedness and justice, may Allah have mercy on him. Rather he based it on the view of these Companions, and by clear analogy, because there is no clear difference between socks and Khuff that would make the ruling different.” (Tahdhib As-Sunan, 1/187)

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) wiped over the socks, and there was no one who disagreed with them during their own time, therefore it is consensus.” (Al-Mughni, 1/215)

Similarly, there is no difference between the Khuff and sock, if you think about it.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The difference between socks and the Khuff is that the former are made of wool and the latter are made of leather.

It is known that such differences do not have any impact on Shar‘i rulings. It makes no difference whether it is made of leather, cotton, linen or wool.

By the same token, it makes no difference whether garments worn in ihram are black or white. … The most that can be said is that leather is longer lasting than wool, but this does not affect the ruling, just as it is not affected if the leather is durable.

Moreover, it is well-known that the need to wipe over one is the same as the need to wipe over the other. As they are same in terms of the reason and need for wiping, differentiating between them would be differentiating between two similar things, which is contrary to the fairness and common sense that are promoted by the Quran and Sunnah, and that with which Allah sent down His Books and sent His Messengers.

Those who differentiate between them on the grounds that one is permeable and the other is not has mentioned a difference that does not affect anything.” (Majmu` Al-Fatawa, 21/214)

Can you wipe over thin socks?

The majority of those scholars who regard it is permissible to wipe over the socks stipulated that in order for it to be permissible to wipe over them, they should be thick and it should be possible to walk in them. See: Al-Mabsut (1/102); Al-Majmu` (1/483); Al-Insaf (1/170)

That is because the ruling on socks is the same as the ruling on the Khuff, and the Khuff can only be thick, so socks cannot take the place of the Khuff unless they are like them.

Al-Kasani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “If (the socks) are thin and let water through , then it is not permissible to wipe over them, according to scholarly consensus.” (Bada’i` As-Sana’i`, 1/10)

Ibn Al-Qattan Al-Fasi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “All scholars unanimously agreed that if

the socks are not thick, it is not permissible to wipe over them." (Al-Iqna` fi Masa'il Al-Ijma`, no. 351)

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is it permissible to wipe over socks, like the khuff, or not?

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Yes, it is permissible to wipe over the socks if one can walk in them, whether they are made of leather or not." (Majmu` Al-Fatawa, 21/213)

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "If they are thin, they cannot be wiped over, because usually one cannot walk in such socks and there is no need to wipe over them." (Sharh 'Umdat Al-Fiqh, 1/251)

In Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah (5/267) it says: "The socks must be thick, and what is beneath them should not be visible."

And they said: "It is permissible to wipe over anything that covers the feet and is worn on them, such as the Khuff and thick socks." (Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah, 4/101)

Similarly, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "It is permissible to wipe over socks and the like, whether they are made of wool, camel hair, goat hair, cotton or other materials, if they are thick and cover the place that it is obligatory to wash, and they fulfil all the necessary conditions." (Fatawa wa Rasa'il Ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 2/66)

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "But if the sock is thin and shows the skin, then it cannot be wiped over." (Fatawa Ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 2/68)

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "One of the conditions (for it to be permissible to wipe over the socks) is that the socks should be thick and covering. If they are thin, it is not permissible to wipe over them, because in that case the foot is as if it is uncovered." (Fatawa Ash-Shaykh Ibn Baz, 10/110)

Some of the scholars regarded it as permissible to wipe over the socks in all cases.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Our companions narrated from `Umar and `Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) that it is permissible to wipe over the socks, even if they are thin. They also narrated that from Abu Yusuf, Muhammad, Ishaq and Dawud.” (Al-Majmu` Sharh Al-Muhadhdhab, 1/500)

This is the view that was regarded as more likely to be correct by Shaykh Al-Albani and Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on them)

But what we have mentioned above is the view of the majority of scholars, and it is the more correct view, because the basis for regarding it as permissible is an analogy with the Khuff, and thin socks are not like the Khuff, so no analogy can be made with them.

The socks that the Companions used to wipe over were thick, because thin socks were not known until recently.

Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “It is not acceptable to wipe over the socks unless they are thick socks. … The people only used to wipe over socks because for them they were equivalent to the Khuff, so they took the place of the Khuff on a man’s feet, and a man used to come and go wearing them.” (Al-Mughni by Ibn Qudamah, 1/216)

If it is asked: why did the scholars stipulate these conditions with regard to socks?

Al-Mubarakfuri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The basic rule is that the feet are to be washed , as is the apparent meaning of the Quran, and turning to alternatives is not permissible except on the basis of authentic Hadiths, the soundness of which is agreed upon among the leading scholars of Hadith, such as the Hadiths which speak of wiping over the Khuff. So it is permissible to turn from washing the feet to wiping over the Khuff, and there is no difference of scholarly opinion on that point.

But with regard to the Hadiths which speak of wiping over the socks, there is some difference of opinion among the leading scholars in the field concerning their soundness. So how can it be permissible to turn from washing the feet to wiping over the socks in all cases?

Because of that, they stipulated these restrictions on the permissibility of wiping over the socks, so that the socks in question would come under the same heading as the Khuff and thus be included in the Hadiths that speak of the Khuff.

If the socks are thick and can be kept on the feet without being tied, and it is possible to walk in them, then undoubtedly there is no significant difference between this type of socks and the Khuff, because they are like the Khuff. But if they are thin and cannot be kept on the feet without being tied, and it is not possible to walk far in them, then they are not like the Khuff, and undoubtedly there is a significant difference between them and the Khuff.

Do you not see that the Khuff is like sandals, and if sandals are not available, a man can come and go wearing the Khuff, and walk wherever he wants? So wearing the Khuff does not require him to take them off when walking, so he does not have to take them off by day or by night; rather he can wear them for several days and nights, and it would be difficult for him to take them off every time he does Wudu' .

In contrast, for the one who wears thin socks, every time he wants to walk he has to take them off several times during the day and night, and in this case it is not difficult for him to take them off every time he does Wudu'. This difference dictates that the concession should be granted to the one who wears Khuff but not to the one who wears thin socks. Making an analogy in this case would be making an analogy despite the difference." (Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi, 1/285)

In conclusion, the view of the majority of scholars is that it is not allowed to wipe over thin socks, and that the permissibility (of wiping over socks) is limited to thick socks.

And Allah knows best.