

Masah

on

Socks

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Views of leading *Ulama*

The following are excerpts of the views of several leading *Ulama* regarding the original Arabic treatise:

Shaikh Moulana Ni`matullah A`zami (*daamat barakaatuhum*) – *Ustaaz of Hadeeth, Darul Uloom Deoband*

I have studied this treatise titled “Al-Mashu `alal-Jowrabain” which has been compiled by Shaikh Moulana Zakariyya (Makda) of South Africa. The author has presented the proofs of the legalisers of making *masah* on all types of socks followed with a detailed scrutiny of their proofs. In the like manner he has produced the various views of the majority of the former and latter *Ulama* together with their concrete proofs. He has also explained the reasons of preference for their view (the majority of the *Ulama*).

I congratulate the author over his notable work and I pray to Allah Ta`ala to make this work a means of guidance for the Muslim *ummah*.

Moulana Fadhl-ur-Rahman A`zami (*daamat barakaatuhum*) – *Shaikh-ul-Hadeeth, Darul Uloom Azaadville*

I have studied this brief *kitaab* titled “Al-Mashu a`lal-Jowrabain” with great scrutiny. I have found it to be extremely beneficial. After studying this book I have concluded that the author Moulana Zakariyya Makda had paged through many books with a deep sense of understanding regarding this topic and had worked tirelessly to compile this work.

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This compilation entails a topic of great importance regarding which no aalim in my knowledge from the *Hanafi mazhab* has ever written on, neither in Arabic nor in Urdu.

Mufti Khursheed Anwar Alkyawee (*daamat barakaatuhum*) – Ustaaz, Darul Uloom Deoband

This book which you hold in your hands is a comprehensive and valuable book discussing the topic of *masah* on *jowrabain*. The author, Moulana Zakariyya Makda, after presenting the proofs of the legalisers of *masah* on *jowrabain* has very beautifully proven that the *mazhab* of the *Fuqahaa* is correct and rightly guided and supported by the Qur'aan and *Hadeeth* of Rasulullah ﷺ.

I have studied and perused through the entire treatise. I found that the author has undertaken a thorough critical analysis of the proofs of the opposing group and it is filled with the various basis of preference for the correct view.

Mufti Abul Qasim Banarasi (*daamat barakaatuhum*)

In the recent past under the banner of research some free thinkers have created a new mindset and understanding of *Deen*. Through this, making *masah* upon ordinary socks was likened to *masah* on *khuffain* and thus it was regarded as a substitute for washing the feet in *wudhu*.

This *mas'alah* which until recently was only regarded as an unpractised view which was held by certain scholars, has gained more popularity and support after several prominent scholars attempted to prove its permissibility through the

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Qur'aan and *Hadeeth*. This has now become a common practice among the Salafis.

Many followers of the *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* (the four great *imaams* of *fiqh*) have fallen prey to this practice of the Salafis.

It was upon the instruction of Hazrat Mufti Ebrahim Salejee Saheb, rector of Madrasah Taleemuddeen, Isipingo Beach, Durban, that the author decided to compile a treatise on this topic.

This *kitaab* has efficiently covered every aspect of this topic from all angles. May Allah Ta`ala accept the effort of the author and grant him the ability to progress further in the line of academic research and studies.

Introduction

After *Imaan*, *Salaah* enjoys the most elevated status of all the actions of *Deen*. It is obligatory on every adult male and female to perform the five daily *Salaah*. *Salaah* will be the first act which a person will be questioned about on the Day of *Qiyaamah*. Thus Nabi ﷺ described *Salaah* as the key to *Jannah*.¹

While *Salaah* is the “key to *Jannah*”, *Wudhu* is the “key to *Salaah*”.² Without *Wudhu* a person cannot fulfil this great obligation. Allah Ta`ala has clearly declared in the Qur’aan Shareef: “O you who believe! When you stand towards *Salaah*, wash your faces, your hands up to your elbows, make *masah* of your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles.”³

Thus the obligation of performing *Wudhu* for *Salaah* is derived directly from the Qur’aan Shareef. The four obligatory acts of *Wudhu* - washing the face, washing the hands up to the elbows, making *masah* of the head and washing the feet are clearly explained in the above verse. Hence all the four great *Imaams* of *Fiqh* and the entire *Ummah* are unanimous upon these four acts being compulsory in *Wudhu*.

While it is unanimously accepted that the feet have to be washed in *Wudhu* when not covered by any footwear, will the

¹ Musnad Ahmad, 11/509

² Tirmizi, 1/3

³ Surah Maa'idah, *ayaah* 6

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same law apply in the case where the feet are covered by some form of footwear or will *masah* upon such footwear suffice?

The *A'imma-h-e-Arba`ah* (four *Imaams* of *Fiqh*) and generally all the *Fuqahaa* are of the view that *masah* is only permissible upon leather socks or socks of a similar nature (details of which will follow later). Contrary to this view, a small group of scholars have declared it permissible to make *masah* upon ordinary socks made of cotton, nylon and the like. This treatise is an attempt to thoroughly examine the latter view and ascertain whether it is based on acceptable proofs which render the said practice permissible or not. May Allah Ta`ala accept this humble effort and make it a means of benefit for the *Ummah*, *Aameen*.

Hereunder follows a summary of the actual treatise (that starts on page 26) which will prove beneficial *insha-Allah*, for those who are unable to avail themselves to study the in-depth treatise.

Is it permissible to make *Masah* upon ordinary socks?

The verse of the Qur'aan clearly instructs one to wash the feet in *wudhu*. Allah Ta`ala states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

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“Wash your faces and your hands till your elbows, perform masah of your head and wash your feet up to your ankles.”

However, when one studies the *Hadeeth* he comes across the *Hadeeth* of Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رضي الله عنه which implies the permissibility of making *masah* on one’s socks.

The *Hadeeth* reported by Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رضي الله عنه reads as follows:

عن سفیان عن أبي قيس عن هنزيل بن شرحبيل عن المغيرة بن شعبة قال : توضأ النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ومسح على الجوربين والتعلين

Sufyaan Thauri reports from Abu Qais Al-Awdi, who reports from Huzail bin Shurahbeel who reports from Mugheerah bin Shu`bah that Nabi ﷺ performed Wudhu and made masah on his jowrabain (socks) and shoes.

Some people in an effort to reconcile between the Qur’aan and *Hadeeth* opine that the purport of the Qur’aanic verse refers to the time when one is not wearing socks and the purport of the *Hadeeth* refers to the time when one is wearing socks. Hence, in this way there no longer exists any contradiction between the Qur’aan and *Hadeeth*. However, this reconciliation based on pure logic and reasoning is unacceptable due to the following two reasons:

1. This *Hadeeth* is ruled as weak according the experts of *Hadeeth*.
2. The purport of this *Hadeeth* opposes the command of the Qur’aan.

Statements of the experts of *Hadeeth* regarding the weakness of this *Hadeeth*

1. Imaam Baihaqi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has classified this *Hadeeth* as weak. He states: “This is a weak narration (منكر). The likes of Imaam Sufyaan Thauri, Imaam `Abdur Rahmaan bin Mahdi, Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رَحْمَتُهُمُ اللَّهُ and an entire group of leading expert *Muhadditheen* have all unanimously rejected the authenticity of this *Hadeeth*.”⁴

2. Similarly, Imaam Nawawi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states: “Each luminary from amongst these luminaries of *Ahaadeeth* (all those who had classified this *Hadeeth* as weak) if weighed or measured individually, (let alone being weighed collectively) will undoubtedly outweigh Imaam Tirmizi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ who rules this *Hadeeth* as authentic.”⁵

3. Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states that Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ brought the *Hadeeth* of making *masah* on leather socks and omitted the *Hadeeth* that permits making *masah* upon ordinary socks on account of the weakness in the chain of narrators.⁶

This *Hadeeth* opposes the command of the Qur’aan

Acting upon the *Hadeeth* opposes the generality of the verse of the Qur’aan. The verse explicitly commands that the feet be

⁴ Hidaayat-ur-Ruwaat 1/264

⁵ Al-Binaayah, 1/427

⁶ This could be understood from Ibnu Hajar’s statement in An-Nukat-uz-Ziraaf. (Tuhfat-ul-Ashraaf, 8/493)

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washed under all circumstances, whether one is wearing socks or not. By acting upon the *Hadeeth* one will necessarily leave out practising upon the Qur'aan. Hence, we understand that acting upon any one of the both (Qur'aan and *Hadeeth*) will necessitate leaving out the other.

In view of the above, the great scholar, Abu Bakr Al-Jassas رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is reported to have said, "We cannot practise upon the *Ahaadeeth* which establish the permissibility of making *masah* upon general socks independently since it is opposing the verse of the Qur'aan." ⁷

Imaam Muslim رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is reported to have said: "We are not prepared to forsake the Qur'aan on account of the weak *Hadeeth* of Abu Qais and Huzail (who narrate the *Hadeeth* of *masah* on socks)." ⁸

Note: Besides the abovementioned *Hadeeth* (which proves *masah* on ordinary socks), all the *Marfoo` Ahaadeeth* in the chapter of *masah* upon socks have been ruled as weak on account of the same two reasons:

1. Due to the narrators of these *Ahaadeeth* being criticised.
2. These *Ahaadeeth* oppose the command of the Qur'aan.

⁷ Ahkaam-ul-Qur'aan, 2/440

⁸ As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

Why is it then permissible to make *masah* upon *khuffain*?

From the above we conclude that the *Ahaadeeth* which permit *masah* upon the *jowrabain* are weak and cannot form a basis for establishing the validity of *masah* upon the general socks. As far as the *Ahaadeeth* that prove permissibility of *masah* on *khuffain* are concerned, then they have reached the rank of *tawaatur*.

Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states in Fath-ul-Baari (1/366): “The experts of *Hadeeth* have confirmed that the narrations which establish the permissibility of *masah* on the *khuffain* have reached the level of *tawaatur*.” Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ further explains that some *Muhadditheen* (experts in *Hadeeth*) listed eighty Sahaabah ﷺ who transmitted *Ahaadeeth* in connection with *masah* of the *khuffain*. Included among these eighty Sahaabah ﷺ were the *Asharah Mubashsharah* ⁹ as well.

The son of Imaam Abu Haatim رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explained that there are forty one *Ahaadeeth* reported in support of the *khuffain*.

Hafiz Ibnu `Abdil Barr رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has documented in his famous book *Al-Istizkaar* that approximately forty Sahaabah ﷺ reported *Ahaadeeth* with regards to *masah* on the *khuffain*.

Allaamah Ibnul Munzir رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ quotes Imaam Hasan Basri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ as having said: “Seventy companions of Rasulullah ﷺ

⁹ *Asharah Mubashsharah* were those ten selected Sahaabah ﷺ who were collectively granted the glad tidings of their entry into paradise by Rasulullah ﷺ in one gathering.

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personally narrated to me that Rasulullah ﷺ performed *masah* upon his *khuffain*.”¹⁰

Imaam Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is reported to have said: “I did not hasten in passing a judgement that *masah* on the *khuffain* is permissible (due to it outwardly opposing the Qur’aanic injunction) until the overwhelming narrations proving its validity became manifest to me like daylight.” He also said: “I fear that the one who rejects the permissibility of *masah* on the *khuffain* could be out of the fold of Islaam.” (Due to the numerous *Ahaadeeth* which establish its permissibility having reached the level of *tawaatur*)¹¹

The authority, Imaam Jassaas رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ encapsulates this discussion in Ahkaam-ul-Qur’aan. He writes: “The actual basis is that the injunction in the *Aayah* of *wudhu* is of washing the feet. This is proven (by *Nass-e-Qat’ee*).¹² If it were not for the *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah* (overwhelming authentic narrations) narrated from Rasulullah ﷺ regarding *masah`alal khuffain*, we would not have permitted it. Since authentic *Ahaadeeth* (of *mutawaatir* category) have been narrated in this regard, we used it as a proof to establish the permissibility of *masah* on *khuffain*. As for the *Ahaadeeth* pertaining to *masah* on the *jowrabain* (ordinary socks), we abandoned them due to (it opposing) the injunction of the verse of the Qur’aan (which commands the washing of the feet), since these *Ahaadeeth* did

¹⁰ Talkhees-ul-Habeer, 1/158

¹¹ Al-Bahr-ur-Raiiq, 1/288

¹² *Nass-e-Qat’ee* is an explicit textual proof established from a Qur’aanic verse or a *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*.

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not reach the rank of *mutawaatir*. Thus, the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet was upheld and *masah* on *jowrabain* (socks) was not permitted." ¹³

The *Mazhab* of the four *Imaams*

As we have understood from the above that since *masah* upon the *khuffain* is established through *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah*, it will be equal in status to the verse of the Qur'aan (and its injunction). Hence, the *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* in order to reconcile between the Qur'aan Shareef and the *Sunnah*, regarded the enactment of the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet as obligatory in the condition where the feet are not covered by any footwear. As for the condition where the feet are covered by the *kuffain*, they declared performing *masah* upon the *khuffain* as permissible, acting upon the dictates of the *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah* which establish permissibility of *masah* upon the *khuffain*. However, due to the *Ahaadeeth* of *jowrabain* (socks) not reaching the level of *tawaatur*, they are unable to establish independent validity and permission. If *masah* on *jowrabain* (socks) is regarded as permissible despite the *Ahaadeeth* not reaching the level of *tawaatur*, it will result in us abandoning the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet. Nevertheless, the *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* did not entirely disregard the *Ahaadeeth* of *jowrabain* (socks), as is the misconception of the *Ahle-Hadeeth*. Instead, they practised upon it with certain conditions.

¹³ Ahkaam-ul-Qur'aan, 2/440

The conditions of the four *Imaams* for the validity of *masah* upon socks

The Hanafi *Mazhab*

According to Imaam Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and his illustrious students Imaam Abu Yusuf رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and Imaam Muhammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, *masah* is only permissible on non-leather socks if they are *thakheen* (thick/durable). This is the gist of the Hanafi *Mazhab*.¹⁴

What is meant by *Thakheen* (durable)?

Thakheen are such thick socks which have all the attributes of leather. (They are not the normal processed and refined socks such as nylon and cotton socks available nowadays.) The validity of *masah* on *thakheen* is dependent on the following conditions:

1. It is possible to walk in such socks for more than three miles without them tearing. (N.B. The walking is without wearing shoes.)
2. They must be of a non-porous nature.
3. They must remain firm on the foreleg without being tied with laces, elastic, etc. (They should not slip down as ordinary socks do.)¹⁵

¹⁴ Sharhu Ma`aanil-Aathaar, 1/77, Hidaayah, 1/61

¹⁵ Ghunyat-ul-Mustamli – (Kabeeri), p. 118 - 119, Haashiyat-ut-Tahtaawi `ala Maraaqil-Falaah, p. 129, Radd-ul-Muhtaar, 1/439 - 440

The Shafi`ee Mazhab

According to Imaam Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, it is necessary that non-leather socks must fulfil the following conditions for *masah* to be permissible:

1. They must be strong (thick) and durable.
2. Continuous walking is possible in them without it tearing.
3. They must be of a non-porous nature.¹⁶

The Maaliki Mazhab

The *jowrab* has to be covered by leather in order for *masah* to be valid on it.¹⁷

The great scholar Ibnu `Abdil Barr رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states in his monumental work Al-Istizkaar: “*Masah* is only permissible on the *jowrab* (sock) which is *mujallad* (covered with leather) according to Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and Imaam Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, and this conforms to one of the two views of Imaam Maalik رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. The other view of Imaam Maalik رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is that *masah* is impermissible on the socks despite them being *mujallad* (covered by leather).”

The Hambali Mazhab

Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states regarding *masah* on such socks which do not have a (leather) sole: “If a person is able to walk in them and they remain firm on the feet (without anything to fasten them), then in this case performing *masah* upon them will be permissible.” On another occasion, Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ stated: “It is permissible to make *masah* on socks

¹⁶ Mughnil-Muhtaaj, 1/109, Tuhfat-ul-Muhtaaj, 1/298, Nihaayat-ul-Muhtaaj, 1/204

¹⁷ Haashiyat-ud-Dusooqi `ala Ash-Sharh-il-Kabeer, 1/232, Jawaahir-ul-Ikleeel, 1/24

provided it remains firmly attached to the feet.” In yet another place he (Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) states: “If a person walks with socks without it slipping off the foreleg and falling to the ankles, then it is permissible to make *masah* on them, because if they are not firmly attached to the feet and continuously fall, the place of *Wudhu* will become exposed (rendering the *masah* invalid).”

Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ does not consider it necessary for the socks to be *mujallad* (entirely covered in leather). However, he does deem it imperative that the socks be of a tough and durable nature where one can continuously walk in them.

Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was once asked regarding the one who performs *masah* on a sock made from pieces of thin cloth. He (Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) did not approve of it. He once said: “*Masah* is impermissible on the socks unless it is thick (tough) and stands upright on the feet without falling, as is the case with the *khuff* (leather sock). The Sahaabah ﷺ only made *masah* on the socks due to it resembling the *khuff* in this way that a person would be able to continuously walk in them (without them tearing). And it is impermissible to make *masah* on pieces of thin cloth.” This has been clearly recorded from Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.¹⁸

Views of Other Scholars

Apart from the four *Imaams* of *Fiqh*, other great scholars were also of the view that *masah* cannot be performed on ordinary socks. Ibnu Qudaamah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states: “Abu Hanifah, Maalik,

¹⁸ Al-Mughni, 1/331-334

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Auzaa`ee, Mujaahid, `Amar bin Deenaar, Hasan bin Muslim and Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللهِ are all of the view that *masah* upon socks is impermissible except if it (socks) is *muna`al* (has a leather sole), due to the fact that in the case where the socks are not *muna`al*, continuous walking in them is impossible. Therefore, *masah* is impermissible as is the case with thin socks.”

Why did the *A`immah-e-Arba`ah* restrict the permissibility of *masah* upon socks with certain conditions?

The *A`immah-e-Arba`ah* exercised extreme precaution in this regard in order to ensure that none of the limits of Shari`ah are transgressed, nor any injunction of *Deen* (i.e. the laws of the Qur`aan Shareef or the *Sunnah*) be violated. (Had they – *A`immah-e-Arba`ah* – given general permission for making *masah* upon socks based on the few weak *Ahaadeeth*, they would have opposed the Qur`aan.) As a result of this precaution, they had restricted the validity of *masah* upon socks with certain conditions. Once these conditions are met, it will qualify the socks to enter within the purview of the *khuffain*. And since permission is granted for the *khuffain*, permission will also be granted for these socks which resemble the *khuffain*. In this manner, independent permission is not granted for making *masah* on the socks. This was considered necessary in order to avoid any contradiction with the injunction of the Qur`aan Shareef in relation to washing the feet and at the same time not abandoning the *Ahaadeeth* of

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Rasulullah ﷺ which are reported regarding *masah* upon *jowrabain* (socks).

List of Sahaabah ﷺ who performed *masah* upon their socks:

It is authentically proven that Sahaabah ﷺ used to make *masah* upon their socks. Shaikh Jamaal-ud-Deen Al-Qaasimi listed sixteen Sahaabah ﷺ who used to perform *masah* upon their socks. Allaamah Ibnul Munzir رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentioned the names of nine Sahaabah ﷺ who are known to have performed *masah* on their socks.

They were:

1. Hazrat Abu Mas`ood Al-Ansaari ﷺ
2. Hazrat `Ali ﷺ
3. Hazrat Anas ﷺ
4. Hazrat Baraa bin `Aazib ﷺ
5. Hazrat `Uqbah bin `Amr ﷺ
6. Hazrat Ibnu Mas`ood ﷺ
7. Hazrat Ibnu `Umar ﷺ
8. Hazrat `Ammar ﷺ
9. Hazrat Bilaal ﷺ

We do not doubt or dispute the authority of the aforementioned Sahaabah ﷺ, for most certainly we believe that every Sahaabi was a beacon of guidance for the entire *ummah* of Rasulullah ﷺ. Moreover, apart from these few *Aathaar* (reports), other reports are also recorded in the books of

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Hadeeth, some of which are classified authentic and some unauthentic according to the terminology of the *Muhadditheen*. However, it is vitally important for us to comprehend that the mere mention of any Sahaabi's performing *masah* on his socks will not afford us the permission nor warrant us the license to execute that action until it is absolutely certain that our action is in total compliance and conformity with what they did in reality.

The verdict of the renowned *Ahle-Hadeeth* Allaamah Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi

The reality is that various types of socks existed during the era of the Sahaabah ﷺ. Furthermore, the exact and complete description of the socks upon which they used to perform *masah* has not been reported in any narration. Thus, for one to deduce permissibility from such reports is indeed incorrect. The renowned *Ahle-Hadeeth* Allaamah Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi states: "There are many types of socks (available nowadays). Some types are produced from hides of animals, some from the wool of sheep and similarly some are made from cotton. Moreover, the connotation of the word "socks" equally holds true on each type of socks present today. We are all well aware that the concession of performing *masah* (upon the socks) can only be extended to all these various types of socks after authentically establishing that the *jowrabain* present today resembles the *jowrabain* upon which Rasulullah ﷺ or the

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Sahaabah ﷺ performed *masah*." (But since this cannot be proven, how can general concession ever be issued?)

Upon which socks did the Sahaabah ﷺ make *masah* on?

The *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* – the four *Imaams* of *fiqh* (may Allah Ta`ala reward them on behalf of the *ummah*) lived in the era closest to Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahaabah ﷺ. They had either met the illustrious Sahaabah ﷺ or the students of the Sahaabah ﷺ. They did not examine the *Ahaadeeth* (the *Sunnah*) of Rasulullah ﷺ by merely studying the words of the *Hadeeth*. Rather, they witnessed the practical demonstration and the implementation of the *Sunnah* in the company of the Sahaabah ﷺ and the students of the Sahaabah ﷺ. For this very reason, we find that Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ ruled that the *jowrabain* (socks) must be of such durable material that one is able to continuously walk in them (without wearing shoes). Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ further explained that it is upon this type of *jowrabain* (which conformed to the above mentioned conditions) that the Sahaabah ﷺ performed *masah* upon, as it closely resembled the *khuffain*.

After studying this example of *masah* on *jowrabain* (socks), one will undoubtedly realise that deducing *Ahkaam* from the Qur'aan and *Hadeeth* is no simple task. It is extremely challenging and poses a lot of dangers for the one who is incapable but still adopts this path. Thus, the safest path for one to adopt would be to ascribe to the verdicts of one of the

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four *Imaams* since they were the ones who were divinely endowed with the capability of undertaking such a daunting task.

Conclusion

While *Salaah* is the “key to *Jannah*”, *wudhu* is the “key to *Salaah*”. Without *wudhu* a person cannot fulfil this great obligation. Allah Ta`ala has clearly declared in the Qur’aan Shareef: “*O you who believe! When you stand towards Salaah, wash your faces and your hands up to your elbows, make masah of your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles.*” From this verse we understand that washing the feet is among the four *faraa’idh*. The one who does not wash his feet has omitted a *Fardh* of *wudhu*. Hence, there is no *wudhu* for such a person.

How unfortunate will it be for a person who continuously performed *wudhu* and made *masah* upon his ordinary socks and performed *Salaah* throughout his life? What will he do when he appears before Allah Ta`ala on the Day of Judgement and does not find any *Salaah* in his book of deeds on account of his *wudhu* (which is the condition for the acceptance of his *Salaah*) being incomplete.

The overwhelming majority of scholars in every era, including the four great *Imaams* of *fiqh*, Imaam Bukhaari, Imaam Muslim, numerous other expert *Muhadditheen* as well as the likes of Allaamah Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi and Shaikh ‘Abdur-Rahman Mubaarakpuri (two of the most senior *Ahle-Hadeeth*

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scholars of the last century) have all clearly prohibited *masah* on ordinary socks such as cotton etc.

For thirteen hundred years the entire *ummah* was unanimous upon the impermissibility of *masah* upon non-leather socks. It was only in the fourteenth century that this new trend was introduced.

Salaah - The greatest `Ibadah

After *Imaan*, the greatest *`Ibadah* (act of worship) is *Salaah*. It will also be the first aspect which one will be questioned about on the Day of *Qiyaamah*. However, no *Salaah* is valid without first performing *Wudhu*. The compulsion of *Wudhu*, which includes the washing of the feet, is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'aan Shareef. Thus apparently there should be no option besides washing the feet, as enjoined upon us in the Qur'aan. Why have the jurists then opined that in some specific instances (when leather socks are worn) washing the feet will not be necessary? Rather *masah* will suffice. This is a fundamental question which requires a somewhat detailed explanation.

Principles of *Shari`ah*

In order to understand the answer to the above question, a brief discussion of some principles of *Shari`ah* is necessary.

The Qur'aan Shareef is the first source of *Shari`ah*. Any explicit injunction of the Qur'aan must be implemented accordingly. If any *Hadeeth* apparently contradicts the explicit injunction of the Qur'aan and both cannot be reconciled, the injunction of the Qur'aan will be acted upon.

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The only exception to the above rule is a *Hadeeth-e-Mutawaatir*¹⁹. The injunction of the Qur'aan may be qualified with the *Mutawaatir Hadeeth* or preference could be given to the *Mutawaatir Hadeeth* subject to various conditions being fulfilled.

Masah on the Khuffain

Khuffain are leather socks. Leather socks were commonly worn in the time of Sahaabah ﷺ and are worn to this day. The *Fuqahaa* (jurists) are unanimous that *masah* on the *khuffain* is permissible since the *Ahaadeeth* that permit it have reached the rank of *tawaatur*.

The views of the *Fuqahaa*

The views of some of the eminent *Fuqahaa* of the *Ummah* clearly elucidate the position of *masah* on *khuffain*.

Imaam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ is reported to have said: "I did not hasten in passing a judgment that *masah* on the *khuffain* is permissible (due to it outwardly opposing the Qur'aanic

¹⁹ *Mutawaatir Hadeeth* in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen* is that *Hadeeth* which is transmitted with an unbroken chain by such a large number of people in every era, that it is considered impossible and totally unimaginable that such a large group throughout the centuries of *Islam* could have colluded and connived in fabricating such a *Hadeeth*. (There are certain requirements that must be met in order for a *Hadeeth* to qualify as a *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*. These requirements are known to the *Ulama*. When a *Hadeeth* is clarified as *Mutawaatir*, it is parallel to any verse of the Qur'aan in its authenticity and strength).

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injunction) until the overwhelming narrations proving its validity became manifest to me like daylight." He also said: "I fear that the one who rejects the permissibility of *masah* on the *khuffain* could be out of the fold of *Islam*." (Due to the numerous *Ahaadeeth* which establish its permissibility having reached the level of *tawaatur*)²⁰

Imaam Abu Yusuf رحمته الله عليه is reported to have said: "It is permissible to abrogate the Qur'aanic injunction through a *Hadeeth* of Rasulullah ﷺ provided it (the *Hadeeth*) reaches the level of *tawaatur* as is seen in the case of the *khuffain*." (i.e. Due to it fulfilling the mentioned requirements it will qualify to abrogate the law of the Qur'aan)²¹

Imaam Shafi'ee رحمته الله عليه has explained this in some detail. He states that Allah Ta'ala declares in the Qur'aan Shareef: "*Wash your faces and your hands till your elbows, perform masah of your heads, and wash your feet up to your ankles.*"

In this verse the injunction regarding "washing the feet in *Wudhu*" suggests either one of two meanings:

The first meaning is that in all situations it is incumbent upon you to wash your feet, irrespective of whether the feet are covered by some form of footwear or not.

The second meaning is that it is only compulsory upon you to wash your feet in the situation where the feet are not covered by any form of footwear. However, if the feet are covered by some form of footwear such as the *khuffain* or that which

²⁰ Al-Bahr-ur-Raiiq, 1/288

²¹ Ahkaam-ul-Qur'aan, 2/437

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resembles the *khuffain*, then *masah* (upon the *khuffain*) will suffice and washing of the feet will not remain compulsory.

Imaam Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ further contends that the latter meaning is preferred as it is supported by numerous *Ahaadeeth* (which reach the rank of *tawaatur*) which prove that Rasulullah ﷺ performed *masah* upon his *khuffain*. Hence, in order to reconcile between the Qur'aan and *Sunnah*, the verse of the Qur'aan Shareef in relation to washing the feet will necessarily apply to the one whose feet are not covered by the *khuffain*.²²

The view of Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ also concurs with the above mentioned view. He states: "There are forty *Ahaadeeth* narrated by the Sahaabah ؓ in relation to *masah* on the *khuffain*. The *Ahaadeeth* are both *Marfoo`*²³ as well as *Mouqoof*²⁴." ²⁵ (Hence it clearly establishes the permissibility of making *masah* on the *khuffain*.)

Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states in *Fath-ul-Baari*²⁶: "The experts of *Hadeeth* have confirmed that the narrations which establish the permissibility of *masah* on the *khuffain* have reached the category of *tawaatur*." Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ further explains that some *Muhadditheen* (experts in *Hadeeth*) listed eighty Sahaabah ؓ who transmitted *Ahaadeeth* in connection with

²² Kitaab-ul-Umm, 1/32

²³ A *Marfoo` Hadeeth* in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen* is that *Hadeeth* which conveys a statement or practice of Rasulullah ﷺ.

²⁴ A *Mouqoof Hadeeth* in the terminology of the *Muhadditheen* is that *Hadeeth* which conveys a statement or practice of a Sahaabi ؓ.

²⁵ Talkhees-ul-Habeer, 1/158

²⁶ *Fath-ul-Baari*, 1/366

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masah of the *khuffain*. Included among these eighty Sahaabah ﷺ were the *`Asharah Mubashsharah*²⁷ as well.

The son of Imaam Abu Haatim رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ explained that there are forty one *Ahaadeeth* reported in support of the *khuffain*.

Hafiz Ibnu `Abdil Barr رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has documented in his famous book *Al-Istizkaar* that approximately forty Sahaabah ﷺ reported *Ahaadeeth* with regards to *masah* on the *khuffain*.

Allaamah Ibnul Munzir رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ quotes Imaam Hasan Basri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ as having said: "Seventy companions of Rasulullah ﷺ personally narrated to me that Rasulullah ﷺ performed *masah* upon his *khuffain*."²⁸

The views of the *Fuqahaa* mentioned above leave no doubt that they established the permissibility of *masah* on *khuffain* on no less than a *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*, the strength and authenticity of which is parallel to the Qur'aan. Thus, they applied the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet in *Wudhu* to the instance when the feet are bare. However, if *khuffain* are worn, *masah* will be permissible thereon on the basis of the *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*.

²⁷ *`Asharah Mubashsharah* were those ten selected Sahaabah ﷺ who were collectively granted the glad tidings of their entry into paradise by Rasulullah ﷺ in one gathering.

²⁸ *Talkhees-ul-Habeer*, 1/158

Masah on Non-Leather Socks

Masah upon non-leather socks, which includes cotton, nylon and socks of similar materials has recently become a very contentious issue. Hence, a brief discussion of the historical background to the prevalence of this practice is appropriate.

In 1332 A.H. Shaikh Jamaal-ud-Deen Al-Qaasimi received a question from several universities in the Arab lands pertaining to the validity of *masah* upon ordinary socks. The question cited difficulties experienced by students in winter in washing their feet due to extreme cold. As a result many students delayed their *Salaah* and performed it much later as *Qadha*, while many others omitted their *Salaah* completely. In answer to this question Shaikh Jamaal-ud-Deen wrote a treatise in favour of the validity of *masah* upon ordinary socks. The *Fatwa* of the Shaikh in this treatise was based upon several *Ahaadeeth* which apparently permit the performance of *masah* upon ordinary socks. This *Fatwa* was largely responsible for this practice becoming widespread, though many others issued similar verdicts later on.

Thus it is barely more than a century that the practice of performing *masah* on ordinary socks became prevalent. Prior to the said *Fatwa* being issued, only a handful of scholars were of this view. Among them were Ibnu Hazam Zaahiri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ (d. 426 A.H.) and Allaamah Shaukani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ (d. 1250 A.H). These two scholars did not subscribe to any *Mazhab*. However, two notable and high ranking *Ahle-Hadeeth* scholars, Allaamah Mubarakpuri and Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi, have flatly rejected the permissibility of *masah* upon ordinary socks

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declaring this practice as having no basis in the Qur'aan and *Sunnah*.

Hafiz Ibnu Taymiyyah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ (d. 728 A.H.) and his student Hafiz Ibnul Qayyim رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ (d. 751 A.H.) also held the view of *masah* being permissible on ordinary socks. While both these scholars belonged to the Hambali *Mazhab*, their view contradicted the view of all former scholars of the Hambali *Mazhab* who believed that *masah* on ordinary socks is not permissible. Apart from the above-mentioned scholars, even after an extensive search nothing could be found about any other notable *Muhaddith* or *Faqeeh* having declared the practice of making *masah* upon ordinary socks as permissible.

***Mazaahib* of the *Ulama* who restricted the validity of *masah* on socks with certain conditions:**

The Hanafi *Mazhab*

According to Imaam Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and his illustrious students Imaam Abu Yusuf رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and Imaam Muhammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, *masah* is only permissible on non-leather socks if they are *Thakheen* (thick/durable). This is the gist of the Hanafi *Mazhab*.²⁹

What is meant by *Thakheen* (durable)?

Thakheen are such thick socks which have all the attributes of leather. (They are not the normal processed and refined socks such as nylon and cotton socks available nowadays.) The

²⁹ See Sharhu Ma`aanil-Aathaar, 1/77, Hidaayah, 1/61.

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validity of *masah* on *thakheen* is dependent on the following conditions:

1. It is possible to walk in such socks for more than three miles without them tearing. (N.B. The walking is without wearing shoes.)
2. They must be of a non-porous nature.
3. They must remain firm on the foreleg without being tied with laces, elastic, etc. (They should not slip down as ordinary socks do.)³⁰

The Shafi`ee *Mazhab*

According to Imaam Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, it is necessary that non-leather socks must fulfil the following conditions for *masah* to be permissible:

1. They must be strong (thick) and durable.
2. Continuous walking is possible in them without it tearing.
3. They must be of a non-porous nature.³¹

The Maaliki *Mazhab*

The *jowrab* has to be covered by leather in order for *masah* to be valid on it.³²

The great scholar Ibnu `Abdil Barr رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states in his monumental work *Al Istizkaar*: “*Masah* is only permissible on the *jowrab* (sock) which is *mujallad* (covered with leather) according to Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and Imaam Shafi`ee رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, and this conforms to one of the two views of Imaam Maalik رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.

³⁰ Ghunyat-ul-Mustamli – (Kabeeri), p. 118-9, Haashiyat-ut-Tahtaawi `ala Maraaqil Falaah, p. 129, Radd-ul-Muhtaar, 1/439-440

³¹ Mughnil-Muhtaaaj, 1/109, Tuhfat-ul-Muhtaaaj, 1/298, Nihaayat-ul-Muhtaaaj, 1/204

³² Haashiyat-ud-Dusooqi `ala Ash-Sharh-il-Kabeer, 1/232, Jawaahir-ul-Ikleeel, 1/24

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The other view of Imaam Maalik رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is that *masah* is impermissible on the socks despite them being *mujallad* (covered by leather).³³

The Hambali *Mazhab*

Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states regarding *masah* on such socks which do not have a (leather) sole: “If a person is able to walk in them and they remain firm on the feet (without anything to fasten them), then in this case performing *masah* upon them will be permissible.” On another occasion Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ stated: “It is permissible to make *masah* on socks provided it remains firmly attached to the feet.” In yet another place he (Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) states: “If a person walks with socks, without it slipping off the foreleg and falling to the ankles, then it is permissible to make *masah* on them, because if they are not firmly attached to the feet and continuously fall, the place of *Wudhu* will become exposed (rendering the *masah* invalid).”

Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ does not consider it necessary for the socks to be *mujallad* (i.e. entirely covered in leather). However, he does deem it imperative that the socks be of a tough and durable nature where one can continuously walk in them.

Imaam Ahmad was once asked regarding the one who performs *masah* on a sock made from pieces of thin cloth. He (Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) did not approve of it. He once said: “*Masah* is impermissible on the socks unless it is thick (tough) and stands upright on the feet without falling, as is the case with the *khuff* (leather sock). The Sahaabah ﷺ only made *masah*

³³ Al-Istizkaar, 2/253

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on the socks due to it resembling the *khuff* in this way that a person would be able to continuously walk in them (without them tearing). And it is impermissible to make *masah* on pieces of thin cloth.” This has been clearly recorded from Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.³⁴

Views of Other Scholars

Apart from the four *Imaams* of *Fiqh*, other great scholars were also of the view that *masah* cannot be performed on ordinary socks. Ibnu Qudaamah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states: “Abu Hanifah, Maalik³⁵, Auzaa`ee, Mujaahid, `Amar bin Deenaar, Hasan bin Muslim and Shafi`ee رَحْمَتُهُمُ اللَّهُ are all of the view that *masah* upon socks is impermissible except if it (socks) is *muna`al* (has a leather sole), due to the fact that in the case where the socks are not *muna`al*, continuous walking in them is impossible. Therefore, *masah* is impermissible as is the case with thin socks.”³⁶

Proofs of the *Mazaahib*

It would have already been ascertained from the discussion thus far that overall there are three views with regards to *masah* on *jowrabain* (non-leather socks).

³⁴ Al-Mughni, 1/331-334

³⁵ N.B. This is not the preferred opinion of the Maaliki *Mazhab*. The details regarding the Maaliki view has already past.

³⁶ Al-Mughni, 1/332

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Ibnul `Arabi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has explained the different views and their proofs in detail. He writes: The *Ulama* have differed regarding *masah* on (ordinary) socks. There are three opinions:

1. The first opinion is that one can make *masah* on it provided they have leather covering up to the ankles.
2. The second opinion is that if it is of thick material together with being *muna`al* (leather sole), then *masah* upon it is permissible (even though it may not be *mujallad* [covered by leather all around]).
3. The third opinion is that it is permissible to make *masah* even though it is not *mujallad* or *muna`al* nor is it thick material.

Those *Fuqahaa* who have adopted the first opinion base their view on the fact that all the *Ahaadeeth* which establish the validity of *masah* upon socks are weak. However, in the case where the socks are *mujallad*, due to them resembling leather socks, they will also be included under the purport of the *Ahaadeeth* of the *khuff*. (Hence, *masah* upon them will be permissible considering them as *khuffain*.)

The proof for the second view is that such socks are worn on the feet, and cover them up to the ankles. Furthermore, continuous walking is possible in them (due to them being *muna`al* (leather sole) and of a durable and thick nature). Hence, *masah* upon such socks is permissible.

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The proof of the third view is the apparent meaning of some *Ahaadeeth*.³⁷

Ahaadeeth which apparently permit *masah* on *jowrabain* (non-leather socks)

Those who are of the view that *masah* on ordinary socks is permissible present four *Ahaadeeth* as proof. A detailed discussion of these four *Ahaadeeth* is necessary since it is the cornerstone of the proponents of this view.

The narration of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ:

The first *Hadeeth* presented in this regard is the narration of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ:

عن سفیان عن أبي قيس عن هزيل بن شرحبيل عن المغيرة بن شعبة ؓ قال : توضأ النبي ﷺ ومسح على الجوربين والتعلين.

*Sufyaan Thauri reports from Abu Qais Al-Awadi, who reports from Huzail bin Shurahbeel who reports from Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ that Nabi ﷺ performed Wudhu and made *masah* on his *jowrabain* (socks) and shoes.*

This *Hadeeth* is recorded in Jaami`-ut-Tirmizi (1/5) and many other books.³⁸

³⁷ The details of these *Ahaadeeth* will follow.

³⁸ 1) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra-Nasai, 1/92

2) Sunan Abu Dawood, 1/24

3) Sunan Ibnu Maajah, 1/42

4) Musnad Ahmad, 14/103, Hadeeth No. 18122

5) Saheeh Ibnu Hibbaan (Al-Ihsaan bi Tarteebi Ibni Hibbaan), 2/314

Though many books of *Hadeeth* record the *Hadeeth* of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رضي الله عنه, the narrators of this *Hadeeth* have been severely criticised by the *Muhadditheen*. Foremost among them is Imaam Muslim رحمة الله عليه. He says: “We are most certainly not prepared to forsake and abandon the Qur’aanic injunction on account of the weak narration of Abu Qais and Huzail. Moreover, they have also opposed the rest of the expert *Muhadditheen* who narrate this *Hadeeth* in regard to the *khuffain* (and not *jowrabain*, as narrated by Abu Qais and Huzail). Hence, this *Hadeeth* is deemed weak.”³⁹

The crux of this statement is that Abu Qais and Huzail have erred in the narration of this *Hadeeth* and have mistakenly mentioned *jowrabain* instead of *khuffain*, as has been narrated by many high ranking *Muhadditheen*.

Imaam Baihaqi رحمة الله عليه has also classified this *Hadeeth* as weak. He states: “This is a weak narration (منكر). The likes of Imaam Sufyaan Thauri, Imaam `Abdur Rahmaan bin Mahdi, Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رحمهم الله⁴⁰ and an entire group of leading

6) Saheeh Ibnu Khuzaimah, 1/99

7) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

8) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/171, Hadeeth No. 1973

9) Sharhu Ma`aanil-Aathaar, 1/76-77

10) Mawaarid-uz-Zam`aan, p. 71

³⁹ As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

⁴⁰ Similarly, Imaam Nawawi رحمة الله عليه states: “Each luminary from amongst these luminaries of *Ahaadeeth* (all those who had classified this *Hadeeth* as weak) if weighed or measured individually, (let alone being weighed collectively) will undoubtedly outweigh Imaam Tirmizi رحمة الله عليه. Apart from this it is a well accepted principle amongst the scholars of *Hadeeth* that in the situation where some scholars have criticised a narrator and others have declared him as reliable, the opinion of those discrediting his credibility and position will be regarded as the final verdict. (Al-Binaayah, 1/427)

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expert *Muhadditheen* have all unanimously rejected the authenticity of this *Hadeeth*.⁴¹

Another great luminary and expert on *Hadeeth*, Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, has also highlighted the error of Abu Qais in the above narration. He writes: "All the narrators of this *Hadeeth* report this narration regarding the *khuffain*. We only find Abu Qais reporting this narration in regard to the *jowrabain*."⁴² (Hence Abu Qais has contradicted the rest of the narrators).⁴³

With regards to the narration of Abu Qais, perhaps the most notable statement is that of Hafiz Ibnul Qayyim رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Though he held the view that *masah* on *jowrabain* (socks) is valid, he nevertheless states: "We do not regard the *Hadeeth* of Abu Qais as authentic."⁴⁴

To sum up the view of the scholars of *Hadeeth* with regard to the narration of Abu Qais, the words of Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

N.B. This is not a general principle. There are exceptions to this. However, in the above mentioned situation where we find the majority of the scholars hold to one opinion and Imaam Tirmizi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ holds to another, this principle will most certainly be accepted.

⁴¹ Hidaayat-ur-Ruwaat, 1/264

⁴² As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

⁴³ The verdict of Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ with regard to the error of Abu Qais in this narration is very significant. Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een has elsewhere declared Abu Qais as a reliable narrator. This general declaration is misconstrued by the Ahle-Hadeeth group as an authentication of the *Hadeeth* of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, as reported by Abu Qais. However, this is incorrect. Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een's declaration of Abu Qais as reliable is a general, overall judgement on him as a narrator of *Hadeeth*. This does not preclude him from ever making a mistake. Hence, despite having declared him as reliable, the Imaam has highlighted Abu Qais's error in the said *Hadeeth*.

⁴⁴ Tahzeeb-us-Sunan (Mukhtasar Sunan Abu Dawood), 1/95

will suffice. He says: “This *Hadeeth* has been authenticated by Imaam Tirmizi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. However, Imaam Abu Dawood رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ reports that the great expert of *Hadeeth*, Imaam `Abdur Rahman bin Mahdi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had condemned the reporting of such a weak narration. Furthermore, Imaam Baihaqi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had confirmed that this *Hadeeth* was adjudged as weak in the view of Imaam Sufyaan Thauri, Imaam `Abdur Rahman bin Mahdi, Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رَحْمَتُهُمُ اللَّهُ and a large group of expert *Muhadditheen*.”^{45,46}

Ulama who authenticated the *Hadeeth* of Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ﷺ

While the overwhelming majority of *Muhadditheen* have discredited the *Hadeeth* of Abu Qais, some scholars have nevertheless declared it as authentic. It is therefore necessary to closely examine the declaration of these scholars.

Foremost among them is Imaam Tirmizi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. After reporting the *Hadeeth* of Abu Qais, he has declared the narration as “*Hasan, Saheeh*” (authentic). Imaam Ibnu Hibbaan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has also recorded this narration in his “*Saheeh Ibnu Hibbaan*”. Since he had undertaken to record only *Saheeh Ahaadeeth* in his book, it follows that according to him this *Hadeeth* is *Saheeh* (authentic); hence, he has included it in his book.

As for the narrators Abu Qais and Huzail who narrate the said *Hadeeth*, several *Muhadditheen* have declared them as reliable.

⁴⁵ Hidaayat-ur-Ruwaat, 1/264

⁴⁶ Other scholars of *Hadeeth* who concurred that the *Hadeeth* of Abu Qais is not authentic are: Imaam Ali bin Madeeni, Imaam `Uqaili, Imaam Nasai, Imaam Abu Dawood.

Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ affirmed his reliability.⁴⁷ Imaam `Ijli رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ also declared Abu Qais as well as Huzail as being authentic narrators.^{48,49}

Furthermore, Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has narrated a few Ahaadeeth in Saheeh Bukhari which have been transmitted by Abu Qais and Huzail. This confirms that Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ regarded them as reliable and authentic. Hafiz Badr-ud-Deen Al-`Aini رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has also confirmed this. He writes: "Abu Qais and Huzail both have been ruled by Imaam `Ijli رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ as well as Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ as reliable narrators. Furthermore, Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had accepted their narrations."

Answers to those who regard the *Hadeeth* of Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as authentic

A fundamental principle which is unanimously accepted by the *Muhadditheen* must be clearly understood in order to understand the matter in its proper perspective. The scholars have all affirmed that the reliability of all the narrators of a *Hadeeth* is not the only criterion for the *Hadeeth* to be regarded as authentic. Instead, together with establishing the reliability of the narrators, several other aspects are also closely examined.

Among these aspects is that the *Hadeeth*, though transmitted by reliable narrators, must not contradict any explicit Qur'aanic injunction. Furthermore, the narration must not

⁴⁷ Tahzeeb-ut-Tahzeeb, 6/139

⁴⁸ Tahzeeb-ut-Tahzeeb, 6/139

⁴⁹ Tahzeeb-ut-Tahzeeb, 11/30

contradict what has been narrated by the majority of other expert narrators of *Hadeeth*.⁵⁰

While the *Hadeeth* of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ is examined in the light of the above principle, it falls short of both requirements. Firstly, it contradicts the clear injunction of the Qur'aan with regard to washing the feet.

Secondly, Abu Qais and Huzail, who narrate the *Hadeeth* from Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ have indeed been declared as reliable narrators by several *Muhadditheen*, contrary to other *Muhadditheen* who have criticised them.

Nevertheless, despite their reliability as narrators according to some *Muhadditheen*, they are the only narrators who report the narration of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah ؓ with regard to *masah* on *jowrabain*. In doing so, they have contradicted the overwhelming majority of expert *Muhadditheen* who narrate the same *Hadeeth*, but with regard to *masah* on *khuffain*, not *jowrabain*. Thus, due to this contradiction, this specific *Hadeeth* which they have narrated will be declared as weak according to the principle unanimously accepted by all the *Muhadditheen*.

Therefore, contradicting the narration of the majority of expert *Muhadditheen* itself weakens the narration of Abu Qais and Huzail. The contradiction of the injunction of the Qur'aan compounds the weakness. It is for this very reason that Imaam Muslim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ clearly stated: "We are not prepared to forsake and abandon the Qur'aan Shareef because of the weak narration of Abu Qais and Huzail."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Sharhu Nukhbatil Fikar, p. 71

⁵¹ As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

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Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states that Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ agreed that the *Hadeeth* of *jowrabain* is weak, though he has regarded Abu Qais as reliable. He explains that Imaam Bukhari related the *Hadeeth* of Hazrat Mugheerah bin Shu`bah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ regarding the *khuffain*. He did not relate the *Hadeeth* of *jowrabain* nor did he title any chapter in his book on this issue. In short, Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ did not relate anything to establish the validity of *masah* on *jowrabain* (socks). When one considers this in the light of Imaam Bukhari's unique method of relating *Ahaadeeth*, this clearly indicates that Imaam Bukhari رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ concurred with the overwhelming majority of *Muhadditheen* that the *Hadeeth* of *jowrabain* is weak.⁵²

It is interesting to note that those who have rejected *taqleed* (following one of the four *Mazhabs*) and earnestly wish to establish the permissibility of *masah* on ordinary socks cite the authentication of the aforementioned four *Muhadditheen* as proof for their view. However, though these *Muhadditheen* have authenticated the *Hadeeth* of *jowrabain*, none of them is of the view that *masah* on *jowrabain* is permissible!!!

The narration of Hazrat Abu Musa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ:

The second proof of the *Ahle-Hadeeth* is the narration of Abu Musa Ash`ari رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ:

عن أبي موسى الأشعري رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أن رسول الله ﷺ توضأ ومسح على الجوربين والنعلين

⁵² This could be understood from Ibnu Hajar's statement in *An-Nukat-uz-Ziraaf*. (*Tuhfat-ul-Ashraaf*, 8/493)

Masah on socks

“It is reported on the authority of Hazrat Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari رضي الله عنه that Nabi ﷺ made Wudhu and performed masah on his socks and sandals/shoes.”⁵³

The authenticity of this narration

The *Muhadditheen* have generally declared this *Hadeeth* as weak, thus rendering it incapable of being used as proof to establish any law. The weakness of the narration stems from two aspects. `Eesa bin Sinaan, one of the narrators, has been declared weak by many expert *Muhadditheen*. Some of the *Muhadditheen* who have discredited him are Imaam Nasai⁵⁴, Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal, Imaam Yahya bin Ma`een, Imaam Abu Haatim⁵⁵, Imaam Abu Dawood⁵⁶ and Imaam Baihaqi⁵⁷ رحمهم الله.

Another serious deficiency in this narration is that the chain of narrators has a missing link (i.e. one of the narrators is unnamed). Such a narration cannot be used to deduce any injunction according to all the scholars of *Hadeeth*.

Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رحمته الله عليه has summed up the discussion on this *Hadeeth*. He says: “The *Hadeeth* of Abu Musa رضي الله عنه which Imaam Abu Dawood رحمته الله عليه indicated towards is documented in Ibnu Maajah. However, the *Hadeeth* is classified as weak apart from

⁵³ 1) Sunan Ibnu Maajah, 1/41

2) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284-285

3) Sharhu Ma`aanil-Aathaar, 1/76

⁵⁴ Tahzeeb-ul-Kamaal, 14/544

⁵⁵ Meezaan-ul-Itidaal, 5/377

⁵⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood, 1/24

⁵⁷ As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/285

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the fact that there is also a missing link in the chain of narrators."⁵⁸

The narration of Hazrat Bilaal ؓ

The third proof of the *Ahle-Hadeeth* is the *Hadeeth* of Hazrat Bilaal ؓ:

عن بلال ؓ قال : كان رسول الله ﷺ يمسح على الخفين والجوربين

It is reported on the authority of Hazrat Bilaal ؓ that Nabi ﷺ used to make masah upon his leather (socks) as well as his ordinary socks.

This *Hadeeth* has been transmitted through two separate chains, both of which have been documented in *Al-Mu`jam-ul-Kabeer* of Tabraani.⁵⁹ However, the majority of the *Muhadditheen* have denied the authenticity of both the chains in view of various discrepancies therein.

The authenticity of the first chain

In the first chain the narrator A`mash is seen to be reporting this *Hadeeth* in an unclear and incoherent pretext by using the method of عن (`an) which conceals the defect of the narrator not hearing the *Hadeeth* personally from the one who he is reporting from.

The experts of *Hadeeth* have unanimously affirmed the esteemed position of Imaam A`mash رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and bore testimony to his expertise in the field of *Hadeeth*. However, together with all praise being accorded to his credit, the *Muhadditheen* have also admitted that Imaam A`mash was discredited on account

⁵⁸ Ad-Diraayah, (Hidaayah, 1/60)

⁵⁹ Al-Mu`jam-ul-Kabeer - Tabraani, 1/351

of his *Tadlees* i.e. he used to narrate certain *Ahaadeeth* from such personalities regarding whom he either never met, or though he met them, but never heard those *Ahaadeeth* from them.⁶⁰

Since the *Hadeeth* under discussion fits the above mentioned description, it will enter under the purview of criticism of the *Muhadditheen*, thereby rating it as inefficient and incapable of being presented as an argument.

The authenticity of the second chain

In the second chain, two narrators Yazeed bin Ziyaad and Ibnu Abi Layla, have been criticised by the *Muhadditheen*. Allaamah Zayla`ee رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states that Yazeed bin Ziyaad and Ibnu Abi Layla are regarded as weak despite being attributed with truthfulness.⁶¹ Allaamah Mubarakpuri has also declared Yazeed bin Ziyaad as one who is deemed “weak”.⁶²

Hafiz Ibnu Hajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ described Yazeed bin Ziyaad in the following words: “He is a weak narrator. After he attained old age, his memory began to wane. Hence he had to be continuously reminded and corrected. Together with this, he was also a *Shi`ah*.”⁶³

Therefore, from the above mentioned declarations of the *Muhadditheen* we conclude that the *Hadeeth* of Bilaal ؓ is classified as weak according to the experts of *Hadeeth*.

⁶⁰ Meezaan-ul-Itidaal, 3/316, / Tahzeeb-ut-Tahzeeb, 4/203

⁶¹ Nasb-ur-Raayah, 1/186

⁶² Tuhfat-ul-Ahwazi, 1/281

⁶³ Taqreeb-ut-Tahzeeb, 2/365

The narration of Hazrat Thowbaan ؓ

The fourth proof of the *Ahle-Hadeeth* is the *Hadeeth* of Thowbaan ؓ which is reported in Sunan Abu Dawood, Musnad Ahmad and Mustadrak Haakim.

عن ثوبان ؓ قال : بعث رسول الله ﷺ سرية فأصابهم البرد فلما قدموا على رسول الله ﷺ أمرهم أن يمسخوا على العصائب والتساخين

It has been reported on the authority of Hazrat Thowbaan ؓ that once Rasulullah ﷺ dispatched a group of Sahaabah in Jihaad. During the journey, these Sahaabah experienced extreme difficulty due to the cold weather conditions. When they returned to Madeenah Munawwarah, they related their hardships to Rasulullah ﷺ. Rasulullah ﷺ permitted them (in such circumstances) to perform masah upon their turbans and tasakheen.⁶⁴

The authenticity of this narration

This *Hadeeth* has been authenticated by Imaam Haakim رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ based on the fact that it complies with the conditions of acceptance laid down by Imaam Muslim. The authentication of Imaam Haakim has been further corroborated by Imaam Zahabi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. The *Ahle-Hadeeth* define the word *tasakheen* in this *Hadeeth* to mean socks. They attribute this definition to Imaam Ibnul Atheer رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, the author of the famous *kitaab* *An-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb-il-Hadeeth wal Athar*.

Our response to the *Hadeeth* of Thowbaan ؓ is that we do not deny its authenticity in any way. However, an in-depth study

⁶⁴ 1) Sunan Abu Dawood, 1/21

2) Musnad Ahmad, 16/291, Hadeeth No. 22283

3) Mustadrak Haakim, 1/275, Hadeeth No. 602

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of the word *tasakheen* in the Arabic lexicons will reveal a degree of injustice perpetrated by the *Ahle-Hadeeth* in this matter.

The Arabic lexicons are explicit that the word *tasakheen* means *khuffain* and not *jowrabain*. Even the author of *Nihaayah*, Allaamah Ibnul Atheer, to whom the incorrect meaning of *tasakheen* is wrongly attributed, has confirmed that the intended meaning of “*tasakheen*” is *khuffain*.

The following Arabic lexicons clearly establish that *tasakheen* means *khuffain*:

An-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb-il-Hadeeth wal Athar (by Ibnul Atheer), Majma`u Bihaar-il-Anwaar fi Gharaaib-it-Tanzeel wa Lataaif-il- Akhbaar (by Muhammad Taahir Al-Patni), Al-Faa'iq fi Ghareeb-il- Hadeeth (by Zamakhsharee), Ghareeb-ul-Hadeeth (by Abu `Ubaid Qaasim bin Sallaam Al-Harawi), Taaj-ul-`Aroos (by Murtadha Zabeedee), Lisaan-ul-`Arab (by Ibnu Manzoor Ifreeqi)

Conclusion

Each of these lexicons proves that the correct meaning of *tasakheen* is *khuffain* and not *jowrabain* (socks). Similarly, all these lexicons also quote the verdict of the author of *An-Nihaayah* which clearly reveals that according to Imaam Ibnul Atheer also, the meaning of *tasakheen* is *khuffain*.

The different kinds of *Jawaarib* (non leather socks)

There are two types of *Jawaarib* (socks) made of material other than leather. The two kinds are called: *Thakheen* and *Raqeeq*.

***Thakheen* socks**

In the terminology of the *Fuqahaa*, *Thakheen* are socks of such durable and tough material which renders them in the category of the *khuffain*. (The properties of *Thakheen* have already been explained).

***Raqeeq* socks**

Non-leather socks which do not possess the properties of *Thakheen* socks are called “*Raqeeq*” in the terminology of the *Fuqahaa*.

Allaamah Shams-ul-A’immah Al-Halwaaee رحمته الله عليه is reported to have said:

There are five types of socks:

Firstly, those socks which are manufactured from the wool of sheep.

Secondly, those socks which are manufactured from spun thread.

Thirdly, those socks which are manufactured from the hair (hides) of animals.

Fourthly, those socks which are manufactured from thin leather.

Fifthly, those socks which are manufactured from cotton.

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Allaamah Shams-ul-A'immah Al-Halwaaee رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ thereafter explained that each of these types was at times made of thin material and at times of durable and tough material. Sometimes people would attach leather to the sole of these socks or leather was sewn on the entire outer layer of the sock. At times they would sew leather on the inner layer.⁶⁵

Allaamah Tibi⁶⁶, Allaamah Ibnul Manzoor⁶⁷ and Allaamah Zabeedee⁶⁸ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ have defined the *jowrab* to be a general covering (cloth) which is used to cover the feet. However, Allaamah Tibi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ added that the cloth be of leather material. Allaamah Qadhi Abu Bakr Ibnul `Arabi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states: *Jowrab* is any type of footwear produced from wool in order to protect the feet from cold.⁶⁹

Imaam Nawawi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states:

Jowrab is footwear made of strong (tough) material which will enable a *musaafir* to walk a considerable distance (without wearing shoes). Hence, *masah* will be rendered invalid if performed on thin socks or even that which is made from wool.⁷⁰

Shaikh `Abdul Haq Dehlawi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states:

Jawaarib (socks) is a material that is worn above the *khuffain* which covers the entire feet (including the ankles). The

⁶⁵ Ghunyat-ul-Mustamli, p. 119

⁶⁶ Sharh-ut-Tibi, 1/282

⁶⁷ Lisaan-ul-`Arab, 1/584

⁶⁸ Taaj-ul-Aroos, 1/181

⁶⁹ Tuhfat-ul-Ahwazi, 1/282

⁷⁰ Roudat-ut-Taalibeen, 1/239

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purpose of the socks is to prevent water or dirt reaching the *khuffain* and to protect the feet from cold.^{71,72}

Note: All these various types of *Jawaarib* (socks) were commonly used during the past centuries of *Islam*. However, the validity of *masah* upon the *Jawaarib* (socks) is dependent upon the explained conditions.

List of Sahaabah ﷺ who performed *masah* upon their socks:

It is authentically proven that Sahaabah ﷺ used to make *masah* upon their socks. Shaikh Jamaal-ud-Deen Al-Qaasimi listed sixteen Sahaabah ﷺ who used to perform *masah* upon their socks.⁷³ Allaamah Ibnul Munzir رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ mentioned nine Sahaabah ﷺ who are known to have performed *masah* on their socks.⁷⁴ They were:

Hazrat Abu Mas`ood Al-Ansaari ﷺ⁷⁵

Hazrat `Ali ﷺ⁷⁶

⁷¹ Ghaayat-ul-Maqsood, 2/37

⁷² Apart from these above quoted excerpts there are many other definitions which are found in the commentaries of *Hadeeth* (some of which have been recorded by this servant in a treatise titled *Al-Mashu`alal-Jowrabain*). The Ulama explain that there is totally no contradiction between these definitions. Instead all these definitions entail the various types of *Jawaarib* which were in vogue in certain parts of the world throughout the different centuries of *Islam*.

⁷³ *Al-Mashu`alal-Jowrabain*, p. 52

⁷⁴ *Tuhfat-ul-Ahwazi*, 1/277

⁷⁵ 1) *Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah*, 1/171, reported from Hammam ﷺ.

2) *Ibid*, p. 172, reported from Basheer bin `Uqbah ﷺ.

3) *As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi*, 1/285, reported from Khaalid bin Sa`d ﷺ.

4) *Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq*, 1/199, reported from Khaalid bin Sa`d ﷺ.

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Hazrat Anas ؓ⁷⁷

Hazrat Baraa bin `Aazib ؓ⁷⁸

Hazrat `Uqbah bin `Amr ؓ⁷⁹

Hazrat Ibnu Mas`ood ؓ⁸⁰

Hazrat Ibnu `Umar ؓ⁸¹

Hazrat `Ammar ؓ⁸²

Hazrat Bilaal ؓ⁸³

Conclusion

We do not doubt or dispute the authority of the aforementioned Sahaabah ؓ, for most certainly we believe that every Sahaabi was a beacon of guidance for the entire *Ummah* of Rasulullah ﷺ. Moreover, apart from these few *Aathaar* (reports), other reports are also recorded in the books of

⁷⁶ 1) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/172, reported from Ka`b bin `Abdillah.

2) Ibid, 1/172, reported from `Amr bin Kuraib / p. 172, reported from Khallaas.

3) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/285, reported from `Abdullah bin Ka`b.

4) Ibid, reported from Ka`b bin `Abdillah with two chains of narrators.

5) Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq, 1/199, reported from Ka`b bin `Abdillah.

⁷⁷ 1) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/172, reported from Qataadah.

2) Ibid, reported from `Abdullah bin Dhiraar.

3) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/285, reported from Sa`eed bin `Abdillah.

4) Ibid, reported from Raashid bin Najeeh.

5) Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq, 1/200, reported from Qataadah.

⁷⁸ 1) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/172, reported from Isma`eel bin Umayyah.

2) Ibid, reported from the father of Isma`eel bin Rajaa.

3) Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq, 1/200, reported from the father of Isma`eel bin Rajaa.

4) As-Sunan-ul-Kubra-Baihaqi, 1/285, reported from the father of Isma`eel bin Rajaa.

⁷⁹ 1) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/171, reported from Khaalid bin Sa`eed.

2) Ibid, p. 172, reported from Abu Waail.

⁸⁰ Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq, 1/200-201, reported from Ibraahim An-Nakha`ee.

⁸¹ 1) Musannaf `Abdur Razzaaq, 1/199, reported from Abu Julaas.

2) Ibid, p. 217, reported from Yahya Al-Bukaa`.

3) Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah, 1/173, reported from Yahya Al-Bukaa`.

⁸² Al-Awsat fis-Sunan wal-Ijmaa` wal-Ikhtilaaf - Ibnul Munzir An-Naysaaburi, 1/463

⁸³ Al-Awsat fis-Sunan wal-Ijmaa` wal-Ikhtilaaf - Ibnul Munzir An-Naysaaburi, 1/463

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Hadeeth, some of which are classified authentic and some unauthentic according to the terminology of the *Muhadditheen*. However, it is vitally important for us to comprehend that the mere mention of any Sahaabi's performing *masah* on his socks will not afford us the permission nor warrant us the license to execute that action until it is absolutely certain that our action is in total compliance and conformity with what they did in reality.

The reality is that various types of socks existed during the era of the Sahaabah ﷺ. Furthermore, the exact and complete description of the socks upon which they used to perform *masah* has not been reported in any narration. Thus, for one to deduce permissibility from such reports is indeed incorrect. The renowned *Ahle-Hadeeth* Allaamah Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi states: There are many types of socks (available nowadays). Some types are produced from hides of animals, some from the wool of sheep and similarly some are made from cotton. Moreover the connotation of the word "socks" equally holds true on each type of socks present today. We are all well aware that the concession of performing *masah* (upon the socks) can only be extended to all these various types of socks after authentically establishing that the *jowrabain* present today resembles the *jowrabain* upon which Rasulullah ﷺ or the Sahaabah ﷺ performed *masah*. (But since this cannot be proven, how can general concession ever be issued?)⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Ghaayat-ul-Maqsood, 2/40

Summary

* The *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* – The Four *Imaams* of *Fiqh* (May Allah Ta`ala reward them on behalf of the *Ummah*) lived in the era closest to Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahaabah ؓ. They had either met the illustrious Sahaabah ؓ or the students of the Sahaabah ؓ. They did not examine the *Ahaadeeth* (the *Sunnah*) of Rasulullah ﷺ merely by studying the words of the *Hadeeth*. Rather, they witnessed the practical demonstration and the implementation of the *Sunnah* in the company of the Sahaabah ؓ and the students of the Sahaabah ؓ. For this very reason we find that Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ ruled that the *jowrabain* (socks) must be of such durable material that one is able to continuously walk in them (without wearing shoes). Imaam Ahmad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ further explained that it is upon this type of *jowrabain* that the Sahaabah ؓ performed *masah*, as it closely resembled the *khuffain*.⁸⁵

* The *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* exercised extreme care and precaution to ensure that none of the limits of *Shari`ah* be transgressed, nor any injunction of *Deen* (i.e. the laws of the Qur'aan Shareef or *Sunnah*) be violated. As a result of this precaution, they had restricted the validity of *masah* upon socks with certain basic requirements which would qualify the socks to enter within the purview of the *khuffain*. This was considered necessary in order to avoid any contradiction with the injunction of the Qur'aan Shareef in relation to washing the feet. Imaam Muslim رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ is reported to have stated: "We

⁸⁵ Al-Mughni, 1/331-334

are not prepared to abandon the Qur'aan Shareef because of the weak narration of Abu Qais (which establishes permissibility of *masah* upon the socks)."⁸⁶

* We have previously explained that since *masah* on the *khuffain* is established through *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah*, it will qualify the generality of a Qur'aanic injunction. Hence, the *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* in order to reconcile between the Qur'aan Shareef and the *Sunnah*, regarded the enactment of the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet as obligatory in the condition where the feet are not covered by any footwear. As for the condition where the feet are covered by the *khuffain* or that which resembles the *khuffain*, they declared performing *masah* upon the *khuffain* as permissible, acting upon the dictates of the *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah* which establish permissibility of *masah* on the *khuffain*. However, due to the *Ahaadeeth* of *jowrabain* not reaching the level of *tawaatur*, they are unable to establish independent validity and permission. If *masah* on *jowrabain* is regarded as permissible despite the *Ahaadeeth* not reaching the level of *tawaatur*, it will result in us abandoning the Qur'aanic injunction of washing the feet. Nevertheless, the *A'immah-e-Arba`ah* did not entirely disregard the *Ahaadeeth* of *jowrabain*, as is the misconception of the *Ahle-Hadeeth*. Instead, they practised upon it in the case where the explained conditions are existent.

* The Authority, Imaam Jassas رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ encapsulates this discussion in *Ahkaam-ul-Qur'aan*. He writes:

⁸⁶ As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Baihaqi, 1/284

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“The actual basis is that the injunction in the *Aayah* of *Wudhu* is of washing the feet. This is proven (by *Nass-e-Qat`ee*⁸⁷). If it were not for the *Ahaadeeth-e-Mutawaatirah* narrated from Rasulullah ﷺ regarding *Masah`Alal Kuffain*, we would not have permitted it. Since authentic *Ahaadeeth* (of the *Mutawaatir* category) have been narrated in this regard, we used it as proof to establish the permissibility of *masah* on *khuffain*. As for the *Ahaadeeth* pertaining to *masah* on the *jowrabain*, we left them on the basis of the injunction of the verse of the Qur’aan (which commands washing of the feet), since these *Ahaadeeth* did not reach the *mutawaatir* category. Thus, the Qur’aanic injunction of washing the feet was upheld and *masah* on *jowrabain* was not permitted.”⁸⁸

Summary of Discussion

The crux of this discussion can be summarised as follows:

1. The most important act after *Imaan* is *Salaah*. The key to *Salaah* is *Wudhu*.
2. The Qur’aanic injunction explicitly commands the washing of the feet in *Wudhu*. This injunction dictates that the feet should always be washed in *Wudhu*.
3. Since the *Ahaadeeth* which mention the permissibility of *masah* on *khuffain* (leather socks) have reached the level of

⁸⁷ *Nass-e-Qat`ee* is an explicit textual proof established from a Qur’aanic verse or a *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*.

⁸⁸ *Ahkaam-ul-Qur’aan*, 2/440

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tawaatur, the scholars are unanimous that *masah* on *khuffain* is permissible.

4. The *Ahaadeeth* which apparently permit *masah* on *jowrabain* (non-leather socks) are weak and cannot be used to establish permissibility of any aspect in *Deen*.

5. If the *Ahaadeeth* of *jowrabain* were authentic then too it would not be permissible to restrict or qualify the explicit injunction of the Qur'aan on the basis of these few *Ahaadeeth*.

6. The overwhelming majority of scholars in every era, including the four great *Imaams* of *fiqh*, Imaam Bukhari, Imaam Muslim, numerous other expert Muhadditheen as well as the likes of Allaamah Shams-ul-Haq Azeemabadi and Shaikh `Abdur Rahmaan Mubarakpuri (two of the most senior *Ahle-Hadeeth* scholars of the last century) have all clearly prohibited *masah* on ordinary socks such as cotton etc.

May Allah Ta`ala accept this humble effort and make it beneficial for the *Ummah*. *Aameen*.