

The ruling concerning wearing shoes and clothes made of pig's skin

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What is the ruling concerning shoes, bags, purses and clothes made of pig's skin? Can they be purified by tanning? And may Allaah reward you with what is best.

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers until the Day of Resurrection:

It is well-known that the pig is physically impure according to the unanimous agreement of the Scholars¹; in accordance with the explicit meaning of His Saying, عز وجل:

قُلْ لَا أَجْنَفِي مَا أُوحِيَ لِي مِنْ حَلَالٍ غَيْرِ طَاعِمِي طَعْمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ هَيْبَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَهْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنزِيرٍ
(فِيلَهُ رِجْسًا)

Translation of the meaning of the Verse:

﴿Say (O Muhammad): "I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless to be Maitah (a dead animal) or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork); for that surely, is impure﴾ [Al-An'aam: 145]

The pig -even it is impure and cannot be permissible by slaughtering-, but rendering its skin pure by tanning is a point of divergence among the scholars.

The underlying reason for this divergence is the generality stated in his saying (تورلى الله عليه وسلم) "Any skin that is tanned, then it has been made pure"². So, is this generality maintained and accordingly any skin that has been tanned comes under the ruling of purification

¹ Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr Al-Maaliki (رحمه الله) said in "Al-Kaafee" (18): "There are no live animals whose body is impure except the pig alone. It was also said that the pig is not impure when it is alive, but the former view is the most authentic".

I said: This, if the pig is alive, but if it dies in whatever manner, it is unanimously considered among the impurities. Ibn Rushd Al-Maaliki (the grandson) (رحمه الله) has reported in "Bidaayat Al-Mujtahid" (1/ 76) the consensus concerning the impurity of the pig after its death; he said: "As for the types of impurities, the scholars agreed upon four [among them]: the pork in whatever way it was killed".

² Reported by At-Tirmidhee (1728), by An-Nasaa'ee (4241) and by Ibn Maajah (3609) from the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنهما). At-Tirmidhee said: "This hadeeth is good and authentic (Hasan Saheeh)". This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami'" (2711). The hadeeth was also reported by Muslim (366) in this wording: "If the skin is tanned, then it is purified".

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whether the animal is absolutely pure -eatable or uneatable (i.e.: it is not permissible to eat it)- or impure, or is it a generality limited to animals that are pure alive whether they are eatable or not; or is it a generality that concerns especially the eatable animals such as camels, cows, sheep and suchlike?

From my own perspective: the hadeeth refers to eatable animals that can be slaughtered. This is underpinned by the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked a woman for water, she said: "I have only the water stored in the Qirba made of the skin of a dead animal". He said: "**Haven't you tanned it?**" she replied: "Yes"; upon this he said: "**Tanning it purifies it**"³. So, the Prophet (ﷺ) has compared -in this hadeeth- the tanning of the skin with its slaughtering (purification). And it is obvious that the slaughtering does not purify except the eatable animals; and tanning, on the other hand is like the life and life does not fend off the impurity and so does the tanning.

It is unanimously agreed that the pig is physically impure and cannot be permissible through slaughtering; for that reason its impurity cannot be purified by tanning; it is like Al-'Adhira which cannot be purified even if it is washed with the sea water.

And since such shoes, purses and clothes were made of pig's skin, its impurity cannot be removed as it is a physical impurity; for that reason, the Muslim has to keep away from it, according to His Saying عز وجل:

(وَيَبَأْتَفَظَهٗر)

Translation of the meaning of the Verse:

﴿And purify your garments﴾ [Al-Muddathir: 4]

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عز وجل; and our last prayer is all the praises and thanks are to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers of Allaah are to Muhammad and his Family, Companions and Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers on Ramadan the 22nd, 1430 H

Corresponding to September the 12th, 2009 G

³ Reported by An-Nasaa'ee (4243) from the hadeeth of Salama Ibn Al-Muhabbaq (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ). This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Ghaayat Al-Maraam" (26). See: "Al-Majmoo' " by An-Nawawee (1/218).