

21147 - Ruling on drinking whilst standing

the question

I have read some ahaadeeth which say that it is forbidden to drink whilst standing. Does this mean that drinking whilst standing is prohibited?.

Detailed answer

There are ahaadeeth which say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade drinking whilst standing. For example, Muslim (2024, 2025) narrated from Anas and Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade drinking whilst standing.

But there are other ahaadeeth which say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) drank whilst standing, such as the following:

Al-Bukhaari (1637) and Muslim (2027) narrated that Ibn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I brought water to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) from Zamzam and he drank whilst standing.

Al-Bukhaari (5615) narrated from 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) that he drank whilst standing then he said: Some people say it is makrooh for one of you to drink whilst standing, but I saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) doing what you have seen me do.

Ahmad (797) narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with him) drank whilst standing, and the people looked at him as if they objected to that. He said: "What are you looking at? If I drink whilst standing, I saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

drink whilst standing, and if I drink sitting, I saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) drink whilst sitting.” Ahmad Shaakir said in Tahqeeq al-Musnad: its isnaad is saheeh.

Al-Tirmidhi (1881) narrated that Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “We used to eat at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) whilst walking, and we used to drink whilst standing.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

The scholars reconciled these hadeeth by stating that the forbidding mentioned here does not mean that it is haraam, rather it is to be understood as advice, and that it is better to drink whilst sitting. The ahaadeeth which describe the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) drinking whilst standing indicate that it is permissible to do that.

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

There is no contradiction in these ahaadeeth, praise be to Allaah, and none of them are da’eef (weak). Rather they are all saheeh. The correct view is that the forbidding mentioned in them is to be understood as meaning that it is disliked. The fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) drank whilst standing indicates that it is permissible to do so. This is all that needs to be said on the matter.

If it is asked: How come it is makrooh to drink whilst standing when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did that?

The answer is that if what he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did was to show that it is permissible, then it is not makrooh, rather he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was

obliged to show and explain that, so how can it be makrooh? It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did wudoo' washing each part only once, and that he circumambulated the Ka'bah (i.e., did tawaaf) riding a camel – even though there is scholarly consensus that it is better to do wudoo' washing each part three times and that it is better to do tawaaf walking. There are many similar examples. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was demonstrating that something is permissible one time or many times, but he persisted in following the better option. So usually when he did wudoo' he washed each part three times, and he usually did tawaaf walking, and he usually drank whilst sitting. This is clear and is not confusing to anyone who has the slightest claim to knowledge. And Allaah knows best.

This reconciliation between the ahaadeeth was suggested by al-Khattaabi, Ibn Battaal, al-Tabari and others.

Al-Haafiz said in Fath al-Baari:

This is the best and soundest explanation, and the farthest removed from contradiction.

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (22/133):

The basic ruling is that one should drink whilst sitting, which is better, but one may drink whilst standing. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did both to demonstrate that there is a lot of room for manoeuvre in this matter.