



Islamic Rulings on

# Menstruation

&

Postpartum Condition



Abdul Rahman Abdullah

Islamic Rulings on  
**Menstruation and Postpartum Condition**

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Compiled By: Darussalam

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## **In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

*“They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: That is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath)...” (V. 2:222)*

### **Publishers Note**

The birth of a human being is a most amazing phenomenon. The study of this subject alone is one of the greatest efforts of mankind. The physical cycles that the body of woman must endure in order to maintain this act of creation should be respected to the highest degree. Allah mentions that our mothers have born us with difficulty and struggle and because of this are due the highest respect. One among many of the difficulties that women must brave, are the doubts that these conditions present to the correct observance of her religion. How is her fasting affected, how are her prayers affected, how is her ability to pursue her studies affected, and how are her conjugal relations affected by her ever changing physical condition in relation to her role as the sole vessel of the birth of man.

It is with great pride and solemn humility that we at Darussalam present What A Muslim Woman Should Know About Menstruation and Postpartum Condition.

It is the purpose of this humble presentation to bring relief to any doubts or misunderstandings she might have concerning the observance of her religious obligations. So she might without hindrance, and with the ease provided by the knowledge of what is right and correct, fulfill her duties to her Creator Who has honored her above all of creation.

In this compilation, the pertinent rules have been presented from the writings of Shaikh Muhammad bin Salih Al-Uthaimin, which are exactly in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah. As the Quran and the Sunnah are the only reliable authority and source of knowledge towards which every Muslim should turn up to for the needs of this world and the Hereafter. When we rely on these Divine sources as an authority to solve our problems, we feel complete satisfaction, comfort and ease devoid of any type of doubt or any feeling of uncertainty.

It is only scholars who can derive rulings from Shari ‘ah and give legal verdicts. Hence the people are commanded by Allah to have recourse to the pious scholars of religion.

Allah says:

*“So ask of those who know the Scripture if you know not.” (An-Nahl, 16:43)*

The most asked questions by the Muslim women in this regard, and their answers and Shari ‘ah rulings given by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Shaikh Ibn Baz, Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin, Shaikh Ibn Jibreen and others, become the second part of this compilation making it a very much beneficial presentation on the subject.

**Abdul Malik Mujahid**

General Manager

## **Definition of Menstruation and its Philosophy**

Philologically, menstruation is defined as just flowing or the running of something; but legislatively (according to Islamic law), it means the blood which is discharged from the female at given times pursuant to nature, without any obvious reason. It is a natural blood which is not caused by a disease, wound, fall or delivery. Since this blood is a natural blood, its character varies as per physical constitution of the female, the environment and the climate, the lady lives in. Hence, the timing of the discharge of blood varies from woman to woman.

### **What is the Philosophy and Secrets lying behind this Blood?**

The foetus within the mother's abdomen (womb), cannot be fed by the traditional way like those children who are outside of the womb. The matter which makes a mother the most intimate one, and who gives her full mercy to it, remains unable to provide it with any food. Therefore Allah, glory is to Him, has created bloody secretions (discharges) in the female on which the embryo inside the mother's abdomen can be nourished without the need of having food and digesting it, which otherwise will have been an impossible matter. Such exudations penetrate into its body through the umbilical cord of the mother where the blood goes through its veins. By this way the foetus becomes able to receive the food with least trouble. So, Blessed is Allah, the Best to create. From the above foregoing, we realize clearly the useful secrets lying behind this blood. Thus, in the event the woman gets pregnant, the blood of menses will eventually stop, and cannot be menstruated except in very rare cases. The same case applies to the foster mothers, with the exception of a few, who can menstruate; especially at the first days of the fosterage period.

### **Timing and Duration of Menstruation**

This chapter concerns two aspects regarding menstruation:

**First Aspect:** The age at which the blood of menstruation may start.

**Second Aspect:** The duration of menstruation.

As regards the first aspect, it is said that the blood of menstruation flows out from the woman between 12 up to 50 years of age. However, she may get menstruated below or above the mentioned ages according to her physical constitution, environment and ambient climate. Religious scholars (' Ulama '), Allah's Mercy may be upon them, differed of the age at which the woman gets menstruated in the sense that the blood will not flow from her before or after a given age; and if it happened that any female saw such blood flowing, then it will be considered as a spoiled blood and not a menstruation's one!

Regarding this point scholars differed thereon, Darimi, after stating the controversies and the disagreements, said that all these points, from his point of view, are wrong since the only authority controlling all these endeavours is the flowing of the menstruation blood. Any portion to be seen therefrom at any status or age should be identified as menstruation and Allah is the All-Knowing. The comment of Darimi is the correct one, the same thing has also been stated by Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyah. Depending on this, just as a female feels flowing of the blood, she will be considered as menstruated even if she is below nine or over fifty years old. This is because Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) have made the rules ensuing from the menstruation as being existed. At the same time, neither Allah nor His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned a certain age for the woman to be described as menstruated for the turning up of the pertinent blood. So, we have to take the existence of the menstruation blood on which rules are pending as an authoritative reference. Moreover, if the turning up of the blood of menstruation is given for a limited time period of age, then this will need to be proved by an evidence either from the Noble Quran or from

the Sunnah. However, both are free from such proof.

The second aspect concerns the duration of the woman's monthly course, i.e., how long does the blood lasts? 'Ulama' differed to a large extent to this point also, their opinions thereon amounted to about six or seven. With a group of 'Ulama', Ibn Al-Mundhir said: "There is no limit of days for the minimum or the maximum duration of the lasting of the blood of menstruation." I comment saying that the above decision is similar to Darimi's one which has been stated previously and which has been also chosen by Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyah. Such a decision is considered to be the correct one since it is evidenced by the Noble Quran, Sunnah and the indications or arguments of 'Ulama

## The First Evidence

Allah says in the following Verse:

﴿ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٢٢٢]

*"They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: That is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath)..." (V. 2:222)*

Allah has made the prohibition term of not approaching the female during the course as being connected with being in a clean state and He did not make the term as elapsing of one day or night, three days or fifteen days etc. This proves that the rule is based on the course of the woman as being existed or not existed. So, when the blood of menstruation is found, the pertinent rules eventually will come into force; and when the woman gets free therefrom then the relevant applicable rules will become null and void.

## The Second Evidence

What has been authenticated in Sahih Muslim (one of the approved books comprising the correct traditions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)) is that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to his wife 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) who got menstruated, while she was already in a state of Ihram to perform 'Umrah, to do the same rites which the pilgrims do except that she should not circumambulate around the Ka'bah till she gets clean, i.e., till the blood of menstruation stops. 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) stated that she became pure (clean) on the day of Sacrifice.

It has been narrated in Sahih Al-Bukhari that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) told her to wait till the time she got cleaned of the blood and then to go out to Tan'im station (a place for Ihram near Makkah) and to complete the Arkan of Hajj. Thus, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) made the rule of being forbidden in the completion of the other Arkan of Hajj and pending these until the state of cleanliness is achieved. He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not restrict the term of prohibition to a certain time and this explains the rules of the monthly period of menstruation in case it is existed or not.

## The Third Evidence

The trends and elaborations handled by Islamic scholars around this issue are not mentioned in the Quran or the Sunnah, despite the necessity and the need required for making them clear enough. So, if it was incumbent upon people to be well acquainted with this issue and to worship Allah, then, Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would have already made it obvious to everybody just as the rules ensuing for prayers, fasting, marriage, divorce, inheritance and other important matters. This will be, as Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) have made clear about the times of prayers along with the due timings, its bowing and rostration; charity (giving alms), the financial limitation for distributing the prescribed share and people whom alms should be given; fasting with its tenure and time; Hajj (pilgrimage) and other lower rank issues than those mentioned above. The morals of having food, drink, sleeping and as well as the manners regarding the call of nature and even the number of stones with which you should clean the organs of stool or urine. This is besides other minute and great matters which Allah, the Almighty has completed the religion with and made blessings perfect for believers as Allah has stated in the following Verses:-

﴿ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ﴾ [النحل: ٨٩]

“...And we have sent down to you the Book (the Quran) as an exposition of everything...” (16:89)

And he said:

﴿ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِن تَصَدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ﴾ [يوسف: ١١١]

“... It (the Quran) is not a forged statement but a confirmation of the Allah’s existing Books (the Torah, the Gospel and other Scriptures of Allah) and a detailed explanation of everything ...” (12:111)

Since the issues stated by the Islamic scholars around this subject have not been elaborated in the Noble Quran nor mentioned in the Sunnah and these are free from such elaborations and explanations stated by the Islamic scholars for settling this issue, so it becomes clear that they cannot be relied upon; and reliance should only be focused on the content of the menstruation, upon which the relevant jural laws are dependent whether it existed or not.

The rules pertaining to the monthly courses are not mentioned in the Noble Quran nor in the Sunnah, and this itself is an evidence which should not be considered to help those concerned with this issue for mere knowledge, as jural decisions cannot be determined except through a legislative evidence to be quoted either from the Holy Book (Quran), or from His Messenger’s traditions (Sunnah), or from a well-known consensus by a group of ‘Ulama or through an accurate similarity.

Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyah stated in one of his verdicts that with the term of menstruation, Allah has made several rules subordinate to and dependent in the Noble Quran and His Prophet’s traditions. Nevertheless, he neither specified a certain limit as a minimum or maximum duration of the blood of menstruation, nor of the interval period for the lady lasting purified after elapsing two times (periods) of the menstruation. Such points have been overlooked despite the fact that it is a common matter shared by all peoples and their dire needs thereof. As regards the linguistic definition there is no consideration for an extent over another, therefore, anyone who proportionates or fixes a given limit for that, will be involved in disagreement with the Holy Book and the Sunnah.



## The Fourth Evidence

Consideration which means the steady and accurate comparison (estimation by analogy). Since Allah, the Almighty described menstruation as a harm, so, once it is seen, harm will be felt and there will be no difference whether it occurred the second day or the first day, the 4th day or the 3rd, the 16th or the 15th, the 18th or the 17th day because menstruation is a menstruation and harm is a harm. Cause will be found in the two successive days on an equal footing. So, how would it be permissible to differ in judgment between the two days although they are equal in cause? Does not it contradict with the correct comparison?

Is it not the correct comparison that the days should be equal in judgment for being equal in cause?

## The Fifth Evidence

The sayings of the (determinant) scholars are differed and confused. This proves that the issue is free of an evidence which decides or settles such disagreements. We notice that such sayings are just endeavoring judgments, susceptible to be wrong or right and none thereof is superior to the other. And the authority which 'Ulama ' should refer to when conflicts arise among them is the Noble Quran and the Sunnah. Consequently, if it became distinctly clear that the concept of no limit for the less or the more period of menstruation is virtually strong and has been given preponderance over others, then one should admit that any natural blood to be seen by a woman and not caused by a wound or something else will readily be counted as a menstruation blood without taking into consideration any estimation of the time or the age during which it turned up, except that blood which will be flowing continually without interruption or to be stopped just after a little line for one or two days per month. Such blood will be specified and defined as bleeding {Istihadah} and will be explained later along with relevant rules in chapter 5. Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyah stated that any blood coming out of the womb will be originally a menstruation until it is proved by evidence that it is an Istihadah (bleeding frequently). He also added that any blood which will fall out from a female will be considered as a menstruation unless it is from a vein or a wound.

This saying (statement) is not only superior for having the supportive evidence but is also more understandable, reliable, readily practical and applicable than what has been stated by the determinant scholars. A statement which has such advantages will be trustworthy and acceptable since it conforms to the core of the Islamic religion and its principal embodiment and convenience. Allah states in His Book, the Quran, the following Verse:

﴿وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ﴾ [الحج: ٧٨]

*"...and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship..." (V. 22: 78)*

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him said:

«إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا

وَأَبْشِرُوا»

*“Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion, will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded.” (Al-Bukhari)*

It was of the Prophet’s conduct that when he (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked to choose a couple of things, he used to choose the easier one on condition that it was not a sin.

## **Menstruation of the Pregnant**

It is well-known to the majority that when the female gets pregnant, the blood of menstruation stops. Imam Ahmad (May Allah have mercy upon him) said, “Women would know when they become pregnant by the sign of the blood.” Hence, what happens if the pregnant woman saw the blood running out from her? How this will be judged? To analyse this case, it is said that if the blood was prior to delivery within a little time of 2 or 3 days or along with labour pains, it will be treated as post partum blood. But if it was seen much before delivery, or within a little period of time before delivery while the pregnant woman was not in a state of labour: then in this case, the blood will not be a post partum one. The question, therefore, arising is: Will it be menstruating blood which comes under the rules of menstruation, or a spoiled (foul) blood to which the rules of menstruation will not apply? In this respect there was controversy amongst Islamic scholars.

But the correct opinion is that it is menstruation, especially if it is that one, a pregnant woman sees in its existing form. The judgment is that the blood is of menstruation because the blood afflicting the woman is originally a menstruation unless there is a reason which prevents itself to be the blood of such origin. Besides there is no Quranic Verse and not one tradition from the Sunnah stating what brings the woman to menstruate.

The above judgment is the doctrine and religious creed of Imam Malik and Imam Shafi‘i and the opinion of Shaikh Allslam Ibn Taimiyah as he stated in Al-Ikhtiyaral, page 30. It was also narrated by Imam Baihaqi from Imam Ahmad.

So the rules of menstruation will be applied to both the pregnant and the non-pregnant alike except in two cases:

The first is divorce: It is prohibited for the non-pregnant who is in the state of menstruation to be divorced as ‘Iddah, the period of waiting, is imposed upon her during which she is prohibited to remarry. However, this case does not apply to the pregnant since divorcing the non-pregnant in the state of menstruation is a breach to Allah’s Saying:

﴿ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِقُوهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ﴾ [الطلاق : ١]

*“When you divorce women, divorce them at their ‘Iddah (prescribed periods) and count (accurately) their ‘Iddah (periods).” (V. 65:1)*

As regards the act of divorcing the pregnant, who is in a state of menstruation, it will not be a violation of the above verse because one who is divorcing the pregnant, should divorce her in compliance with her ‘Iddah, the period of waiting. Whether she is menstruating or has cleared her period of waiting, it depends upon the child’s birth. Therefore, it is not prohibited for a husband to divorce his pregnant wife after making an intercourse with her while it does not apply to others.