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Menstruation & Postnatal Bleeding In The Maliki School

Based on al-Izziyah & al-Akhdari

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The Technical Meaning of Menstrual Blood According To al-Izziyah

“Menstrual blood is blood that comes out by itself, from the genital organ of a woman, who customarily has the ability to become pregnant, for the [maximm] duration of fifteen days or less, even if [she bleeds] for a moment – due to reasons other than birth or sickness.”

The Different Classifications of Women During Menses

The types of women in regards to menstruation are three:

1. al-Mubtada'ah: refers to a woman who gets her menses for the first time.
2. al-Mua'tadah: refers to a woman who had menses previously; meaning that she is not a first timer. In this case she is split into two types; either her menstrual cycle is always a fixed number of days and does not change or her cycle differs.

3.al-Hāmil : refers to a woman who is pregnant.

The Maximum Duration of Menses for the Three Different Types of Women

1.al-Mubtada'ah: Her maximum menstrual cycle is 15 days as long as her blood is continuous.

2.al-Mua'tādah: Her maximum menstrual cycle is based on whether she customarily has a fixed cycle each month or whether the number of days in her cycle changes monthly.

If the menstrual cycle is customarily the same/fixed each month, then the maximum duration of her menses is her customary cycle, including an additional three day waiting period [al-istihār] if the blood continues past her normal cycle (as long as it does not surpass 15 days).

Example:

Each month, if a woman has a consistent menstrual cycle of 6 days and it happens that one month her bleeding did not stop. She is requested to add 3 more days of waiting to her cycle of 6 days. Thus, she will wait the 7th, 8th and 9th day. Now on the 10th day if she is still bleeding then that blood is not considered part of her menses but instead istihādah. Nonetheless, if a woman's menses is 13 days and the blood

does not stop, she only waits two days and not three; that is the meaning of “as long as it does not surpass 15 days”.

If her menstrual cycle differs each month, her maximum is according to the highest number of days she experiences in a menstrual cycle, along with three more additional days of waiting [al-istihār].

Example:

If a woman has a menstrual cycle of 6 days and sometimes 8 days, if she does not stop bleeding on the 6th day, then she is requested to wait based on her highest menstrual cycle (which in this case is 8 days). Thus, she will wait the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th day¹. Then, if she is still bleeding on the 12th day, then that blood is not menses, but instead istihādah.

3. al-Hāmil: her maximum cycle is based on how long she has been pregnant. If she has been pregnant for less than three complete months then her maximum cycle is the same as al-mua'tādah [meaning she is considered as one who is al-mua'tādah]. If she has been pregnant for more than three complete months then her maximum is

¹ Note that the 7th and 8th day are to complete her highest menstrual cycle and the 9th, 10th and 11th day is for her three day waiting period [al-istihār].

15-20 days². After 6 months of pregnancy it is 20-30 days.

The Matter Concerning al-Mua'tādah When Her Menstruation Discontinues Before Her Customary Duration

Al-Akhdari says:

“If menses discontinues, then she must combined the days together until they add up to the number of her customary menstrual cycle.”

If a woman has a customary cycle of 7 days and it happens that during her menses the blood stops on the 3rd day, then the rule is that if the blood returns she is requested to join the first 3 days of menses [before the blood stopped] to 4 more days of the returning blood in order to complete her custom duration. This rule only applies if there were not 15 days between the time the blood stopped and the time that it returned.

Example:

If a woman has a normal cycle of 7 days, but one month, she bled for only 3 days and then the blood stopped. Then, before 15 days passed the blood returned. At this point, she

² This is the opinion mentioned in al-Akhdari which is one of the opinions in the madhab. The other opinion –which is according to the apparent meaning of Mukhtasar Khalill and the opinion of the magribi scholars (which Shaykh Dardir said is the relied upon opinion) –is that as soon as she enters the third month then her maximum becomes 15-20 days. The difference between the two opinions is that the first says that she must complete the whole third month, meaning that her maximum becomes 15-20 days when the fourth month begins. As for the second opinion her maximum will be 15-20 days when the third month begins.

is requested to combined 4 more days from the returning blood to the 3 days she bled before the blood stopped in order to complete her customary cycle. On the contrary, if the blood were to return after 15 days, then she would not combine them at all because this new bleeding is considered a new menses.

An important note to make here is that whenever the blood stops, then she is considered to be pure which means she must perform the ritual washing (al-ghusl), pray and fast. It is also permissible for her to have relations with her husband, although when the blood returns, this is no longer the case because she has returned to menses.

Two Signs of The End of Menstruation

There are two signs that indicate the end of a menses:

1. al-Jufūf : refers to the placing of a piece of material (such as cotton) in the genital organ then removing it so that it is without any traces of blood.
2. al-Qassah al-Baidā : refers to a clear thin liquid that appears at the end of menses.

Concerning Which of The Two Signs Is Given Preference In Determining The End of Menses

In al-Izziyah it says:

al-Qassah is given preference [over al-jufūf] in respect to al-mua'tādah. Thus, if she were to see al-jufūf first, she is to wait [which is only recommended/mustahab not obligatory] for al-qassah to appear up until al-waqt al-mukhtār [which refers to the first prayer time that a person must pray in unless he/she has an excuse to delay it]. As for al-mubtādah, she does not wait for al-qassah if she sees al-jufūf first.

Actions Prohibited For A Woman During Menses

Al-Izziyah says:

Menstruation prohibits: Prayer, Fasting, divorce, touching the Qur'an, reading the Qur'an [In al-Akhdari, it mentions that it is permissible to read Qur'an], entering the mosque, sexual intercourse during the actual period of menses and after it until she purifies with water [In al-Akhdari, it is also not allowed for a man to touch her between the navel and the knees].

Technical Term of Postnatal bleeding (al-Nifās) in al-Izziyah

“Al-Nifās refers to blood that exits from the vulva due to giving birth, and is not more than 60 days”

Al-Izziyah goes on to say:

Thus, if it [bleeding] surpasses 60 days she does not wait [but rather she makes ghusl and prays and fasts].

Al-Akhdari explains this point more extensively saying:

Thus, if the blood was to discontinue before it [that is, 60 days] –even during the same day of birth –she makes ghusl and prays.

Concerning Postnatal Bleeding When It Ceases Before 60 Days

Al-Akhdari says:

If her blood were to return [after it ceased], if there were 15 days between them [that is, between the day it stopped and the day it returned] or more, then the second bleeding [the returning blood] is menses, otherwise it is part of the first bleeding [that is, the postnatal bleeding]

Actions Prohibited For A Woman During Postnatal Bleeding

Al-Akhdari summarized it simply saying:

“Al-Nifās is like menses in regards to what is prohibited”

He means that whatever is prohibited during menses is prohibited during postnatal bleeding.

