

Sultanate of Oman
Diwan of Royal Court
Sultan Qaboos Centre for Islamic Culture

The Guide

Rulings of Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding

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Translated by:
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Dedication

The translation is dedicated to
Sultan Qaboos Centre for Islamic Culture
Islamic Information Centre
Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious

Sha'bān
17th 1427
September 10th 2006

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Regards,

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The Guide

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Bakīr Muḥammad Rashūm

**Translated by:
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‘Āishah, the Mother of the Believers - may Allāh be pleased with her - says:
“The best of women are the women of Anṣār¹ whose shyness does not hinder them from asking about their religious duties”

- Narrated by Abu Da’ūd -

¹ Anṣār are the people of Al- Madīna who supported the Prophet - peace be upon him - when his people in Makkah had tortured him and his followers and thrown them out of Makkah.

Translator's Foreword

Praise be to Allāh, my Creator and Sustainer. May His eternal blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - and his Companions and followers who have always sought Allāh's satisfaction and approval.

It is my pleasure to offer an accessible English translation to "The Guide: Rulings of Menstruation and Postpartum" which meticulously answers the major private concerns of women. The author - may Allāh reward him for good- has succeeded beyond words in bringing the wonders of his experience and knowledge about the issues of menstruation and postpartum bleeding to the close attention of Muslim women. He has delivered his thoughts and ideas in a clear and elegant manner, elucidating the issues of menstruation and postpartum to the best he can through inclusion of tables and diagrams. The book, in its Arabic format, is very easy to understand and follow as it includes no complications. I hope the English version would be the same.

The English translation is targeted for Muslim Non- Arabic speakers, thus, I was careful, through the course of my translation, to offer a meaningful translation avoiding word for word rendering and retaining the major arguments discussed in depth by the author. In translating the verses of the Qur'ān, I depended on "The Meanings of the Illustrious Qur'ān" By Yusuf Ali. As for the translation of the Traditions of the Prophet, I did the translations myself. I also included a glossary of the new or unfamiliar terms mentioned in the body of the book which might be difficult for Non-Arabic speakers.

I encourage my Muslim sisters to keep a copy of this useful book as we are obliged to seek good knowledge and understanding about these relevant crucial matters. I ask Allāh, the Divine, to make my deed of translating this book exclusively for His sake and lavish me with strength to carry on with the faculty he bestows on me to benefit Islam and Muslims.

Khalsa Hamed al-Aghbari, Canada, April 3rd 2004

**In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
May His blessings be upon Prophet Muḥammad
and his Companions**

Introduction

All praise is due to Allāh who creates human beings and never leaves them out in vain. He legislates rules of guidance for them. Those who abide by these rules are not led astray and those who abandon them are doomed.

He sent us prophets who were bearers of glad tidings and warnings. They guided us to the evident Truth and taught us religion. May Allāh's blessings be upon them all. May Allāh's special blessings be also upon our Prophet Muḥammad, the seal of the prophethood and all who have followed him till the Day of Resurrection.

Knowledge about purifications of menstruation and postpartum bleeding is of crucial importance. It is also an indispensable matter for the accurate performance of acts of worship. People who are equipped of this knowledge are led straight in this life and the Hereafter. However, those who neglect them are doomed. No excuse is given to the ignorant.

Allāh has afflicted women of Eve with menstruation and postpartum bleeding. He obliges them to seek knowledge about the differences between them and rules which relate to each. Thus, knowledge about menstruation and postpartum bleeding is mandatory.

Muslim scholars have done their share of explaining and classifying these matters. They have written about these issues extensively. May Allāh reward them for the best. "Allāh suffereth not the reward to be lost of those who do good" (Qur'ān 18: 30).

I have taken a look at this concise book written by my brother Sheikh Bakīr bin Muḥammad Rashūm, the obedient and trustworthy scholar. I have found it useful, well expressed and easily understood. A beginner can understand it easily. Obtaining this book suffices to educate oneself about these matters. Our Muslim daughters need such a reference to answer all their concerns about menstruation and postpartum bleeding. I looked into it thoroughly and noticed that it includes our agreed upon *Fatwas* (Islamic rulings) and excludes different opinions of others. I urge Muslim women to

refer to it. I also encourage women who constantly travel to keep this as a great reference. I also ask Muslim women to regard this book as a guide that enlightens their way to the Truth. Those who Allāh has bestowed light on are not like those in the depths of darkness.

I ask Allāh to accept this good deed from the author and reward him for the best. He is the All-Hearing and All-Seeing. The last of our prayers is All praise is due to Allāh, the Cherisher of all.

Nāsir Bin Muḥammad al- Marmūri

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most merciful

All praise is due to Allāh and the end is (best) for the righteous. May His blessings be bestowed upon the best of messengers.

Allāh, the Almighty, says: “And the male is not like the female” (3:36). This is a divine verse which dispels an intuitive fact that is unarguable except by the disobedient.

A Man is a man and a woman is a woman. They complement each other and by this life will be in order. However, blind equality or conflict between them results in chaos. The believing woman is the one who experiences safety in the guardianship of her father, husband or any of her *mahrams* (persons forbidden for marriage). This guardianship should not be understood as dictatorship and oppression but rather as love, care, support and cooperation to do good deeds.

We should not elaborate on this matter as it is not part of this book which we were asked to introduce. Its title speaks louder than any words. The Author wants it to be “The Guide: Rulings of Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding.”

It is no wonder that the author produced such a book. He has taught women about these matters for no less than three decades in his hometown “Baryān”, one of the villages of Wadi Mīzab known for its abundant goodness. How I wish all the villages of the world would take this village as an example and specify places for women to individually learn about issues pertaining to them.

Who can say that men partner women in the menstruation and postpartum bleeding? We have to acknowledge that the issues of menstruation and postpartum bleeding are not given their rights of explanation in the books of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) despite the chapters being allotted to them. This is due to the fact that men not women who always write about these issues. I hope Muslim women would pursue analyzing these matters as they are the ones who undergo them. Men only know about them but they do not experience them.

Such an urgent hope does not decrease the value of this book because its author is close to women and he is always asked meticulous questions with respect to these issues.

Truly, the author was cautious to keep this book concise. This concision is, however, compact and comprehensive as he has done his best to extract complications shrouding these matters. Both the beginner and experienced alike can benefit from this booklet. As will be seen, parts of it take the form of listings and the other parts of questions and answers.

What elucidates these issues even more are the tables, cautions and rules which extract the basics and highlight them.

May Allāh make this 'guide' a true guidance and grant the author success to benefit Muslims from his experience.

Faraḥāt bin Ali al- Ja'bīri.

Author's introduction

All praise is due to Allāh, the Creator and Cherisher of all and may His blessings be bestowed upon Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions.

I was urged to produce this book which deals with the rules of menstruation and postpartum bleeding. Before embarking on this difficult task, I hesitated a lot.

However, I reconsidered the suggestion as I realized that the issue of menstruation and postpartum bleeding is shrouded in obscurity and is less understood by some women. Undoubtedly, it is an indispensable aspect of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) which raises concerns and questions and is considered a big reference in *Fiqh*. Thus, I relied on the Almighty Allāh and commenced to accomplish the request. May Allāh guide me to the Right Path.

I called this booklet 'The Guide' so that it guides to what has been obscured in the issues of menstruation and postpartum bleeding.

I made sure it is compact, easy to follow, detailed and comprehensive. I included all the crucial, indispensable matters of menstruation and postpartum bleeding. I dispensed with the rare cases so that the book will not go beyond its major topics.

As for the questions concerning these issues, I was meticulous to relate to the established *Fatwas* (Islamic rulings), being cautious to take authentic rules pertaining to our divine religion. I also did my utmost to extract *Fatwas* (Islamic rulings) from the basic *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) references which I will include in the bibliography so that interested readers can refer to them.

Readers will also find - by Allāh's will - general rules. I hope they will pay attention to them and commit them to memory so that they educate themselves about this subject.

My hope is that all Muslim women obtain a copy of this book and read it thoroughly. Moreover, I hope Muslim women especially those who

travel abroad as they have no one to consult about their religious duties will apply it.

I acknowledge all the efforts made by those who have helped me in the course of writing this book and producing it in this elegant way and professional typing. May Allāh reward them for the best.

May Allāh grant us success and bestow on us His guidance and mercy.

The Author

Preface

The Verse of Menstruation and the Reason for its Revelation

Allāh, the Exalted says in the Qur'ān: "They ask you concerning women's courses. Say: They are a hurt and pollution: so keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, you may approach them as ordained for you by Allāh for Allāh loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean". (2: 222)

In pre-Islamic paganism, Jews and Arabs exaggerated in dealing with menstruating women to the extent that they forbade living, eating, and socializing with them during their periods.

Christians, on the other hand, had an opposite stance. Their corrupt behavior took them as far as allowing sexual intercourse with women while in their menstruation.

The difference in dealing with menstruating women expressed by these parties has arisen concerns from Muslims. To inform Muslims about menstruation Allāh, the Almighty, revealed the verse: "**They ask you concerning women's courses**": Oh, Muḥammad, they ask you about the social intercourse with women who have their periods.

- "**Say: They are a hurt and a pollution**" means menstruation is harmful.
- "**so keep away from women in their courses**": refrain from having a sexual intercourse with them while in their periods. Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: "you are ordered by Allāh to only refrain from having a sexual intercourse with them."
- "**and do not approach them until they are clean**" which means do not have sexual contact with them until their discharge runs clear.
- "**But when they have purified themselves**" means when they clean themselves with pure water.
- "**you may approach them as ordained for you by Allāh**" means you can have sexual intercourse with them as Allāh has ordained it to you, which is for the purpose of progeny.

- “for Allāh loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean” Allāh loves those who repent from bad deeds and those who purify themselves from dirtiness.

The Importance of This Issue

Knowledge about menstruation and postpartum bleeding is of great importance to women from the religious and worldly aspects of their life.

Religious: accurate performance of praying, fasting and pilgrimage, which are the pillars of Islam and acts of worship, entails understanding the issues pertaining to menstruation and postpartum bleeding. Furthermore, Islamic laws on puberty, divorce, 'idat (a period of waiting during which a widow or divorcee may not remarry) and sexual intercourse depend largely on the understanding of menstruation and postpartum bleeding.

Worldly: menstruation indicates the beginning or the end of the reproductive life of women. It is also a sign of pregnancy.

Therefore, Muslim women have to seek knowledge about the Islamic rulings on menstruation and postpartum bleeding. They are obliged to educate themselves about what is expected of them during these periods, so that they ensure that their religious duties are governed by Islam's rulings and their worldly life is complemented by the knowledge and full awareness of these crucial issues.

Types of Blood

Women experience three types of blood in their life:

1. Menstruation blood
2. Postpartum blood
3. Prolonged period

Women are supposed to draw a clear distinction between these three types of blood since each has its own specific rulings.

Type One: Menstruation

Reasoning Behind Menstruation

Prophet Muḥammad - may Allāh's blessings be upon him - said: "Allāh (SWT) prescribed menstruation on Ādam's daughters".

Allāh (SWT) creates blood secretion in females to enhance the development of the fetus in their wombs. "So blessed be Allāh, the Best to create". (23: 14)

If Allāh has not predetermined the development of a fetus in the womb, that blood secretion becomes harmful excess. The womb gets rid of it outside the body; otherwise, women are physically harmed.

Definition and Characteristics of Menstruation

Linguistically: menstruation means flowing.

From the Islamic Law (Sharī'a) perspective: menstruation is a black, thick, foul-smelling blood which flows on its own from an adolescent's vulva while healthy and has not yet reached menopause. Menstruation lasts from three to ten days.

- **Black, thick, smelly blood:** It has a distinguishable bad smell. Prophet Muḥammad - may Allāh's blessings be upon him - said: "menstruation blood is thick, black and has a bad smell". He - peace be upon him - said: "the blood of menstruation is black and is distinguishable".

- **Flows on its own:** menstruation blood flows naturally without having to search for it or forcefully cause it to come out.

- **From an adolescent's vulva:** menstruation flows from a girl's vulva at the age of puberty or around nine years old (the very beginning of puberty).
 - **Not in menopause:** menopause is about sixty years old. Sheikh Itfīsh said: "that (sixty years) is the right estimation"
 - **In a healthy condition:** menstruation flows not of sickness, giving birth or first sexual intercourse.
 - **From three to ten days:** If blood flows for less than three days, it is not considered menstruation. What's more, if it lasts more than ten days, it is a prolonged period which has its special rulings. Anas bin Mālik reports that our Prophet - peace be upon him - said: "menstruation does not last for less than three days and more than ten days".
- Caution (1):** For a woman to know that she has a menstrual flow, she wipes with a piece of clothing on her vulva from left to right while between a standing and sitting position.

Rulings on Non-Menstrual Bloods

Not all blood which flows from women or is seen by them is considered to be menstruation. Women have to ensure that the blood flowing from them has all the three characteristics mentioned earlier. Any blood, which lacks one of the characteristics attributed to menstruation, is known as 'non-menstrual bloods'. Non-menstrual bloods are divided into two types; each has its special rulings as illustrated in tables (A) and (B).

Type (1)

Women should not refrain from praying or fasting if they have the following non-menstrual bloods. It goes without saying that these bloods are not to be considered as menstruation.

Type (A)	Type (B)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bloods that are not regarded as menstruation because they do not flow in the regular time of menstruation. <p>These have their own rulings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Blood seen in childhood.(2) Blood seen in menopause.(3) Blood seen during pregnancy.(4) Blood seen if the interval between periods is less than ten days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bloods that are not regarded as menstruation because they do not flow from women's vulva. <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Blood seen in the thigh.(2) Blood seen in the shirt.(3) Blood seen in a place women sit on for a while.(4) Yellow spots turning into red with time.(5) Blood seen as a consequence of sickness or injury.

Table A

Type (2): Non-Menstrual Blood

Non-menstrual bloods that are not considered menstruation unless they meet two conditions. These are divided into two types; each has its own specifications.

Type (A)	Type (B)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bloods that are not regarded as menstruation unless they continue after the reason they flow for ends:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Blood seen in fear.(2) Blood seen as a result of carrying heavy loads.(3) Blood seen after riding a bike or animals (donkeys and horses)(4) Blood seen as a result of jumping.(5) Blood seen after normal sexual intercourse (not the first one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bloods that are not regarded as menstruation unless they last more than three days. If continuing for three days, they are to be regarded as menstruation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Blood seen while taking oral medication.(2) Blood seen as a result of the first sexual intercourse (breaking the hymen).(3) Blood seen after breaking of the hymen and opening the menstruation outlet on their own.

Table B

Mucous Discharges (Vaginal Secretions)

The womb might secrete discharges or fluids which are neither menstruation nor non-menstrual bloods. These discharges are called mucous discharges (mucous dirty secretions) that flow during menstruation and in-between periods.

Definitions: Mucous discharges are divided into five types.

Yellow secretion (yellow discharge): a weakened form of blood (like plasma) that turns into yellow.

Murky secretion: a discharge between black and white; resembles a dirty, muddy water.

Scant brown discharge: water which looks like sand in appearance.

Blood clot: a clot of thick, frozen blood.

Vaginal Dryness: When the discharge runs clear and menstruation finishes, menstruating women experience dryness.

Rulings pertaining to these discharges: They have two states:

The first state: If a woman experiences the above-mentioned discharges after or during the menstruation period- from three to ten days- then she ascribes the rulings of menstruation to them. She does not clean herself until her discharge runs absolutely clear or she experiences milky discharge (the white, vaginal discharge, leukorrhea). ‘Āishah - may Allah be pleased with her - narrated that the Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him- said: “women do not clean from menstruation until they experience the milky discharge (the whites)”

The second state: If a woman has these discharges after she cleans, then she should consider them clean. She does not refrain from praying and fasting. Um ‘tayah said: “We never considered yellowish discharge as a thing of importance (as menses).

Caution (2): If these mucous discharges flow after the monthly period is over and the woman’s discharge does not run clear yet, then she has to wait. The waiting period will be explored in-depth later.

Signs of Cleanliness and Purity from Menstrual Flow

Allāh, the Almighty, says in the Qur'ān: "Keep away from women in their courses and do not approach them until they are clean" which is interpreted as 'until they purify themselves'.

- Signs of Cleanliness:

The Milky Discharge (the Whites): this is a very milky and watery secretion that a woman considers as a sign to her cleanliness from menstruation provided that it flows from the same place that menstruation flows from.

The milky discharge is the strongest, unquestionable sign of cleanliness- in our estimation.

Vaginal Dryness: dryness happens when menstruation completely finishes and the place of blood secretion (vulva) becomes pure and clear. If a woman places cotton on the vulva, it will not get stained.

This is an indicator of cleanliness for women who normally clean by dryness instead of experiencing the milky discharge (the whites). Moreover, scholars unanimously agree that it can be taken as a sign for purity and cleanliness. Ibn Abbās narrated that Prophet Muḥammad - may Allāh's blessings be upon him - said: "Women are obliged to wash and purify when menstruation ends"

Caution (3): If women who normally experience vaginal dryness get the milky discharge (the whites) at one period, then they should go for it and purify as the milky discharge is considered as a strong, unquestionable sign of cleanliness.

Caution (4): Women should not cause the milky discharge to flow by basically searching for it. Moreover, they should not intentionally cause menstruation to flow so that they can refrain from praying and fasting meanwhile. Sheikh Iṭfīsh - may Allāh rest his soul in Heaven -said: "if menstruation is seen but never flows and a woman searches for it to cause it to flow, she is entitled to harsh penance". Moreover, she should not pray

because of a searched milky discharge. If she causes the milky discharge to come out, she is entitled to a harsh penance as well.

Menstruation Time and the Interval Between Periods

1. Women are obliged to know the minimum and maximum number of menstruation days. The minimum number of menstruation days is three and the maximum is ten days if her discharge does not run clear in between. Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: “menstruation does not last for less than three days and more than ten days”.
2. If she experiences blood for less than three days, she should not consider this as menstruation. If she happens to have refrained from praying or fasting during that time, then she has to make up for all the prayers and fasting she missed. This is because she has come to realize that it is not menstruation that she thought she had.
3. If blood flows for more than ten days, then that blood is a prolonged period and not menstruation. Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: “menstruation is only ten days, if continued more than ten days, then it is a prolonged period”. In this case, women have to wait as will be demonstrated.
4. Women should keep written records of their periods. Usually, if they experience fixed timing of bleeding, then that should be considered as their regular fixed period time in the future.

Caution (5): a day of menstruation is calculated from one hour to another. For example, from eight o'clock of this morning to eight o'clock tomorrow morning should be counted as one day.

Sheikh İtfish - may Allāh rest his soul in Heaven - said: “I can not bear ignoring a second of my life without counting it as I know it is part of my life. The first moment of menstruation is the time when a woman first bleeds, be it night or morning. From that particular moment to the same next day is counted as a day. If menstruation comes at night, then that night together with the night of the second day shall be counted as a day”

Caution (6): If a woman gets used to a regular menstruation time, then she should remember it and keep a written record of it so that she never forgets

it. This time definitely is an indicator of when to refrain from and resume praying. It is also a core element for a set of rulings.

The Interval Between Periods (Cleanliness Time)

1. The interval between periods lasts at worst for ten days and at best up to sixty days.
2. Women as they are entitled to know the time and duration of their menstruation period should also care about when and for how long their interval between bleedings lasts, between the ten and sixty days mentioned above.
3. The interval between periods may vary considerably. For example, a woman might pray for twenty days; thus, she considers her interval time between periods to be twenty.

Sometimes, she prays twenty-two days then menstruation flows. Other times, she prays eighteen days and then she bleeds. In this case, she can take all these times as tentative and potential times for her interval between regular bleedings.

Caution (7): Women might have doubts about the times of their periods and interval between periods because of a sickness or forgetfulness. Therefore, they can not remember their exact times. In this case, they should ask one of their relatives about their period and interval between periods and do like them- Allāh knows best.

Waiting Time During the Period and Mucous Discharges .

1. Waiting time is the period that a woman adds to her period days if blood continues to flow or if she experiences any of the mucous discharges described earlier after her usual period days are over.
2. Waiting with a flow of pure blood is two days.
3. Waiting with the mucous discharges is a day and a night (24 hours)
4. Women with respect to the waiting period are of two types:

Beginner: is a woman who bleeds for the first time. If blood continues flowing and her discharge does not run clear after ten days are over, she waits for two days. Then, she cleans herself and prays. If she experiences mucous discharges and these continue after the ten days are over, she has to wait for a day and night (24 hours). Then, she purifies and prays.

Accustomed: is a woman who has already established a regular time as her period time. If blood continues to flow until after her usual days are complete, she waits for two days and then prays. As for experiencing mucous discharges after her regular days are over, she waits for a day and night.

Caution (8): The waiting period starts from the moment the woman's usual time for menstruation is over. The menstruating woman begins counting from that moment to the same moment the following day as one day- be it a day or night. To illustrate, she counts from a specific hour to the same hour the next day as she does in the menstruation time.

Caution (9): If a woman is on the waiting period with blood, then, if the blood stops and she has mucous discharges before the two days of waiting are over, she continues the whole two days and then cleans and prays.

Caution (10): If a woman is on the waiting period with mucous discharges, then, if the blood flow resumes before the day and night are over, she has to wait for *two* days because it is mandatory to consider blood as stronger evidence of menstruation than mucous discharges alone.

Heavier and Lighter Menstrual Flows

1. Heavier menstrual flow happens when the menstruation period becomes heavier than regular and menstruating women add more days to her regular period days. The interval between periods becomes shorter.
2. Lighter menstrual flow happens when menstruation bleeding becomes lighter than regular and menstruating women drop down her usual number of menstruation days. The interval between periods is longer.
3. A woman's period time is said to become heavier or lighter when her menstrual flow bears the same characteristics of menstruation since blood and not the mucous discharges decides heavier and lighter menstrual flows.
4. Heavier menstrual flow is established after three menstruation bleedings as it signals fewer prayers and fastings. Lighter menstrual flow, on the other hand, is decided after only two period times as it is more prayers and fastings.
5. Heavier and lighter menstrual flows take place between the minimum and maximum number of menstruation days, which are three to ten days.

How does a woman know that her menstruation is now heavier than regular? I will provide the following example:

A woman who normally bleeds for seven days has her period for eight days one time. After eight days, her discharge runs clear. If this happens to her two more subsequent times, then as a future reference, she considers her menstruation days as eight and not seven and she cancels her previous calculations.

How does a woman know that her menstruation is now lighter? Similarly, I will provide the following example:

A woman who normally bleeds for eight days gets the milky discharge after the six day once. Then, she cleans and prays because the milky discharge is a strong, unquestionable indicator for cleanliness. If she experiences this for two consecutive times in her future periods, then she considers her menstruation days to be for six days and she cancels the eight days.

Irregular and intermittent bleeding

1. Irregular and intermittent bleeding relates to the beginner who bleeds for the first time. She has not yet had a regular time of menstruation and cleanliness.
2. An irregular and intermittent menstrual bleeding lasts for two days and irregular postpartum bleeding lasts for three days.
3. Irregular and intermittent bleeding is constrained with the flow of pure blood and not with discharges.

Example: I will explain how irregular and intermittent bleedings happen then illustrate it in the diagram below. If a beginner bleeds for two days and then her discharge runs clear, then she cleans and prays. Then, if she bleeds on the sixth day before completing the ten days of cleanliness and she continues bleeding till the ninth day and on the tenth day her discharge runs clear for the second time, her period is characterized by irregular spottings. She adds up the four days she bleeds on to the first two days and establishes six days as her period days.

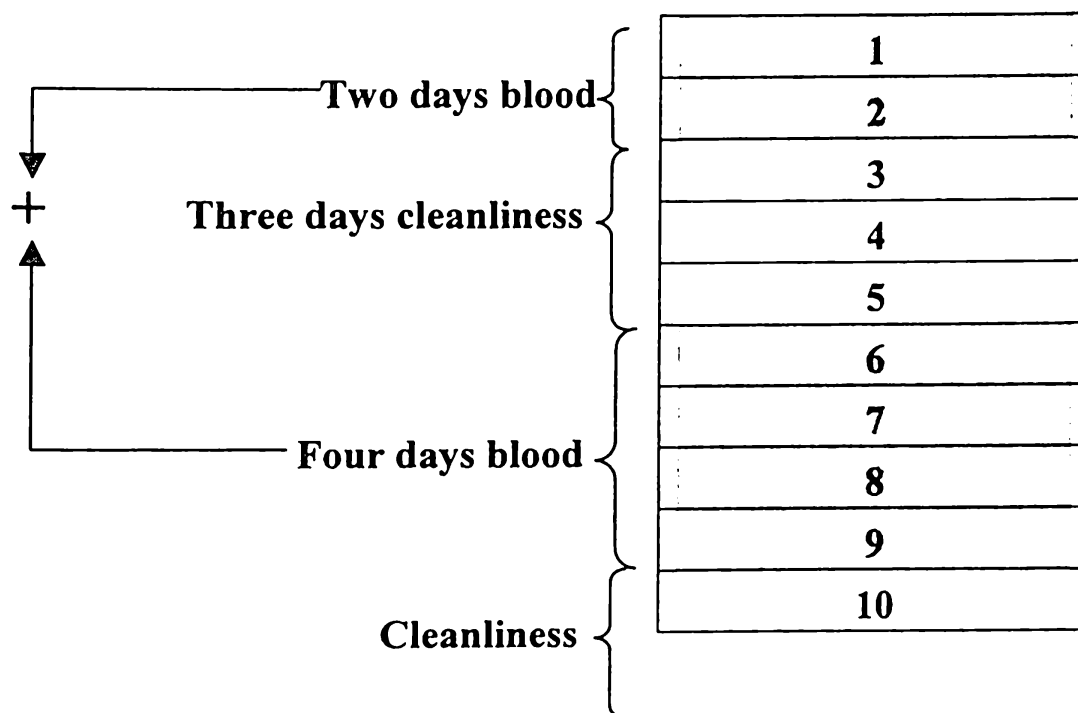


Table C

Note: The first two days: are established as period days.

The last four days: are joined to the first two days of period.

Caution (11): A woman does not make up for the prayers of the days that she has established as her period days (example, the two days demonstrated above).

Caution (12): Irregular bleeding is rare. If a woman has it, then she should consult religious scholars.

Relating Menstrual Time to Relatives'

Relating menstrual time to relatives' refers to a beginner who can not determine her period and cleanliness times. She has to relate the times of her period and cleanliness to a relative of hers like her mother or aunt.

However, what is applied in our case is the rule of Imām A'-Rabī' bin Ḥabīb - may Allāh be pleased with him - which is "any blood seen after ten days of praying is menstruation". Applying this rule does not take effort for women because of its straightforwardness - Allāh knows best.

Explanation of This Rule

If the discharge of a woman runs clear so she cleans and prays, then she bleeds on the seventh day of the prescribed ten days. She does not consider this as menstruation and never gives up praying and fasting. She prays till she completes the ten days. Fifty prayers are the minimum number of prayers for each interval between periods. If she continues bleeding afterwards (after ten days of praying), she then considers this as menstruation. This follows from the rule: "any blood seen after ten days of praying is menstruation".

Advice for the Beginner

Dear Muslim girl, you are obliged to learn about your religious duties of which menstruation and postpartum bleeding are crucial parts. Knowledge is now accessible and easily sought when compared to the past.

Do not shy away from asking and educating yourself about these matters because one has to seek knowledge about his/her religious duties and what is entitled to them “Allāh is not shy (to tell you) the truth”. 'Āishah, may Allāh be pleased with her, said “the best of women are the women of Anṣār whose shyness does not hinder them from asking about their religious duties”

A practical way for the beginner: The following steps guide you to what you should do if you experience menstruation for the first time (If blood with the previous characteristics comes to you, then do the following):

First: tell your sister, mother, or a relative.

Second: Refrain from praying until you are finished because you are menstruating and the rulings of menstruation apply to you.

Third: Start counting your period days from the very hour you bleed, be it a night or morning hour. For example, if you bleed at nine o'clock this morning, then at nine o'clock the next day, this will be your first day.

Fourth: Expect the milky discharge anytime between the moment you bleed till the tenth day of your menstruation.

Fifth: If your discharge runs clear between three and ten days, supposedly you experience the milky discharge on the seventh day, then you have to purify and pray. Keep a written record of this time, as it will be your time when your period is over and praying is obligatory in the future.

Sixth: If you continue bleeding till the tenth day, wait for two days and then clean and pray.

Seventh: If any of the mucous discharges like yellow secretion or murky secretion continues with you till the tenth day, then you have to wait for a day and night (24 hours). After the tenth day, clean yourself and pray.

Caution (13): Establishing a regular and fixed time for the menstruation is upon the arrival of the milky discharge at one period since it is a strong, unquestionable indicator for cleanliness.

Caution (14): If you normally clean by vaginal dryness instead of the milky discharge, then start anticipating dryness on the fourth day of your period. If you encounter a day on which you completely dry up - let us say the eighth day - then you have to establish this time as your cleanliness time. If the dryness time continues to be fixed with you for three periods in the future, then your period days are eight days.

Sheikh Itfish - may Allāh rest his soul in Heaven - said: “those who experience milky discharge after menstruation ends stick to their times. But those who do not experience the milky discharge have to keep record of three instances -even if separate- in which they clean by vaginal dryness after the same period of time, then they regard it as their time.”

Caution (15): Can we use menstrual suppressants?

It is unlawful in Islam to use menstrual suppressants like the Pill without permission from a doctor or having an extenuating reason (like pilgrimage) because stopping the normal menstrual cycle causes harms to women's health.

As for those who want to perform *hajj* (pilgrimage), then it is permissible for them to use these preventives so that they can do all the rituals of *hajj* in their ascribed manners since *hajj* is timely constrained. Ibn Omar did not see a reason why women who want to perform *hajj* should not use menstrual suppressants to stop their menstruation. Sa'īd bin Maṣṣūr narrated that Ibn Omar was asked about a woman who purchased medicine to stop her period so that she could do *tawāf*, he did not see a problem and sent her the water of Arak¹.

¹ Type of herbs.

Type Two: Postpartum Bleeding

Q: What is postpartum bleeding?

A: It is the blood, which flows from women who have recently given birth (delivered a child) to either a complete or incomplete (miscarried) child.

Q: Who is a confined (in childbed) woman?

A: She is the woman who has recently given birth to a baby.

Q: When does a pregnant woman refrain from praying and fasting?

A: A pregnant woman should not refrain from praying and fasting until part of the baby has actually come out in delivery, be it complete or incomplete (miscarried). Sheikh İtfish - may Allāh rest his soul in Heaven - said: "A pregnant woman does not refrain from praying or fasting until part of the baby has actually come out in delivery- even without water or blood. Before this happens however, she is neither menstruating nor confined so on what basis does she give up praying and fasting then?"

Q: For how long does postpartum bleeding last?

A: The shortest period of postpartum bleeding lasts for ten days. The longest is about forty days if the confined woman's discharge does not run clear before the forty days are completed. Um Salamah said: "In the Prophet's time, we would confine for forty days if our discharge does not run clear before that"

Q: How long does the waiting period last for postpartum bleeding?

A: If the confined woman continues to bleed, then she should wait for three days. However, if she only has mucous discharges, then she waits for a day and a night similar to the waiting period of menstruation.

Q: How does a confined woman purify herself from her first postpartum bleeding?

A: She should expect her discharge to run clear from the eleventh day to the fortieth day. If her discharge runs clear meanwhile, i.e. between these two times- let us say, she experiences the milky discharge on the thirtieth day, then she is obliged to clean and pray. She considers the thirty days as her

postpartum time in the future. She should keep record of this time and make a reference to it in the future.

If she completes the forty days and she has not meanwhile seen any signs of cleanliness, she waits for three days after the forty days are over if she still bleeds. However, if after the forty days are over, she experiences mucous discharges, she waits for a day and night.

Q: How does an accustomed confined woman purify from postpartum bleeding?

A: An accustomed confined woman is the one who has repeated child deliveries in the past and she has a regular time for cleanliness. For example, her discharge usually runs clear on the thirtieth day, if she also experiences the milky discharge after thirty days of delivering this time, she cleans herself and prays. If her discharge does not run clear and she still bleeds, then she waits for three days and then cleans. If she has mucous discharges, she waits for a day and night.

Women who have no regular time for cleanliness should stick to forty days of confinement. If she continues bleeding after the forty days are over, she should wait for three days and then clean herself and pray. If she has the mucous discharges, she should wait for a day and night.

Caution (16) If a confined woman has her discharge run clear before she completes the forty days, she considers this time as her time of cleanliness from postpartum in the future.

Q: If a woman miscarries, how long will she confine?

A: The postpartum period depends on what the miscarried portion is. If she gives birth to a complete child, then she confines for forty days as demonstrated above.

However, if she miscarries and gives birth to an incomplete child, then her postpartum period differs as shown in the table below.

Types of miscarriage	Period of pregnancy	Postpartum periods
- Tiny (tadpole)	40 days.	4 days.
- Blood clot	From 41 to 80 days.	7 days.
- Embryo	From 81 to 120 days.	14 days.
- Bone without flesh	From 121 and on...	21 days.
- Complete baby		40 days.

Table D

Caution (17) The waiting period after each of the above cases lasts for three days if bleeding continues and for a day and night with mucous discharges.

Q: If a pregnant woman bleeds, what should she do?

A: If she is confident she is pregnant and she unexpectedly bleeds, she should ignore this blood and pray. Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: “menstruation and pregnancy do not coincide”. Sheikh İṭfīsh said: “the truth is what is articulated by A'rabī' –may Allah be pleased with him- who says: “If a woman conceives, then she should not refrain from praying and fasting even if she bleeds”

Caution (18) If a woman bleeds and refrains from praying and fasting, then she realizes she is pregnant, she has to make up for the days she did not fast or pray on. This is due to the fact that pregnancy and menstruation do not coincide.

Caution (19) If a woman thought she was pregnant but then she started bleeding and she went on praying and fasting, then she came to realize that she was actually menstruating and was not pregnant, she should make up for the days she fasted on thinking it was not menstruation she had.

Prohibitions on Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding

Menstruating and confined women are prohibited from doing the following:

- **Sexual intercourse:** The Qur'ān, Sunnah (Prophet's teachings) and unanimous agreement of Muslim scholars consent to forbidding sexual intercourse with menstruating and confined women. Allāh, the Almighty, says in the Qur'ān "They ask you concerning women's courses. Say: They are a hurt and pollution: so keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, you may approach them as ordained for you by Allāh for Allāh loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean". (2: 222)

Abu-Hurayrah - may Allāh be pleased with him - reports that Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: "He who has sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman, or in a woman's rear or consults a fortune-teller has denied what is been revealed to Muḥammad" peace be upon him. With respect to this matter, a unanimous agreement is reached that sexual intercourse with menstruating women is forbidden.

If a man intentionally has sex with a menstruating woman, then he has committed a great sin. He should sincerely repent and do penance by paying one dinār if the woman whom he has sex with is still bleeding and half a dinār if she has her mucous discharges. It is worth mentioning that dinār is taken as the equivalent of 4 grams and 250 mg of gold.

Ibn Abās narrated that the Prophet - peace be upon him - said: "If it is red blood, then a dinār should be paid, if it is yellow blood, then half a dinār should be paid".

Mu'ād bin Jabal asked the Prophet: "Oh, Prophet, how should I act toward my menstruating wife?" The Prophet - peace be upon him - said: "what is over the wrapper (lower undergarment) is allowed but abstinence is better".

Islam forbids having sex with menstruating women because this causes physical harm to men, women and children as well. Doctors have

extensively pinpointed the harm and illness that might result from intercourse with menstruating women. Blood is the best environment for the growth of microbes and germs.

-Prayer and fasting: Menstruating and confined women are obliged to refrain from praying and fasting. They are, however, ordered to make up for the days of fasting. As for praying, they are not obliged to make up for the missed prayers so as not to burden them, as 'Āishah - may Allāh be pleased with her - said: “in the Prophet’s time, we would menstruate and make up for fasting but not praying”

Caution (20) If a woman bleeds after the time of a certain prayer has started (Maghrib prayer, for instance), she has to make that prayer up as it is her own responsibility.

- Walking around the Ka’ba (Ṭawāf): Menstruating and confined women are forbidden to perform ṭawāf until they are ritually purified at the end of their periods because ṭawāf is considered as a form of praying. Praying is restricted to cleanliness. Abdullāh bin Abās narrated that the Prophet - peace be upon him - said: “When menstruating and confined women come to the appointed place for assuming Iḥrām (Miqāt of *Hajj*), they wash and assume Iḥrām, then they participate in all the rituals of pilgrimage except walking around the Ka’ba”

- Entering mosques and seclusion for worship: Menstruating and confined woman should not enter mosques; neither do they enter Al-Ḥarām Mosque in Makkah nor the Prophet’s mosque in Al-Madīna. Um Aṭiyah said: “The Prophet - peace be upon him - had ordered women to detach themselves from the Muslims’ place of praying”.

Seclusion must be accompanied by fasting. It takes place in a mosque. Given the fact that menstruating women are not permitted to fast nor to enter mosques, they, thus, refrain from seclusion for worship while they have their periods.

- Reciting or touching the Qur’ān: Allāh, the Exalted, says: “which (the Qur’ān) none shall touch but those who are clean”.

Jābir bin Zayed said: “Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him – said of those in post-sex ritual impurity, women in their periods and anyone who is lacking in ritual purity: “They shall not touch the Qur’ān or recite it without being purified”.

Students and teachers are excluded from this ruling because menstruating women are forbidden to recite the Qur’ān as a form of worship in the first place. However, if they fear forgetting the Qur’ān while menstruating, then there is no harm in their reciting the Qur’ān. Sheikh ‘Āmer Al-Shammākhi in his ‘elucidation book’ said: “menstruating women can perform Ḍikr (invocation of Allāh) and recite the Qur’ān”.² No one is prohibited from invoking the Almighty Allāh.

- **Getting divorced:** Getting divorced while in the menstruation period is called heresy divorce. It is forbidden in the Sunnah (Prophet’s teachings). Divorce takes place during the period of purity in which the couple have not had sexual intercourse.

- **Applying cupping or cutting anything off her body (e.g. finger nails):** Menstruating and confined women are banned from applying cupping due to their physically weak state, and from cutting their hair and nails because they could not possibly purify these clippings afterwards.

- **Combing hair, putting Kohl and ḥenna and using Sewāk (a wooden brush):** As known, these deeds beautify women and entice their husbands to make love with them. Sexual intercourse is forbidden and hence it is advisable for women to refrain from these actions until their periods are over.

² The formal legal opinion (fatwa) mostly in use does not sanction recitation of the Qur’ān for women in their periods, based on the afore-mentioned Prophet’s saying. However if they get terrified, they are permitted to recite from the Qur’ān as much as they may need to relieve their terror. See ‘Fatawa’ by His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamed Al Khalili, 2003 - Al Ajyaal, Oman, 3rd edition, book 1, pg 21-23.

Combing hair should be excluded from this list, as it is an essential part of cleanliness that has to be done on a regular basis.³

³ The formal legal opinion mostly in use excludes also brushing the teeth from this ban for the sake of hygiene as well as clipping the fingernails and shaving the body hair if need be.

Purification from Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding

Allāh says: “and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, ye may approach them as ordained for you by Allāh”. Prophet Muḥammad - peace be upon him - said: “If menstruation ends, purification is obligatory”.

Time of purification: If the discharge of a woman runs clear from menstruation and postpartum bleeding (either she experiences the milky discharge or vaginal dryness if she normally cleans by it), she has to purify herself before the time for the prayer ends.

Example: If her discharge runs clear at 12 noon, she has to purify herself before Ḍuhr prayer ends.

Manner of purification: Purification from menstruation and postpartum bleeding is similar to purification done after sexual intercourse. However, some extra steps are required for the purification of menstruation and postpartum bleeding:

First: Wash hands.

Second: Wash away traces of blood from vulva.

Third: Have the intention (not necessary by saying out loud) that this purification is done for menstruation and postpartum bleeding.

Fourth: Rinse water out of both mouth and nose.

Fifth: Wash hair with water and soap (shampoo, in other words), comb hair and rinse it thoroughly. Then, gather the hair lost, wash it and conceal it, as it is a private part. The ruling goes that what you conceal while you still have (your hair as you cover it by scarf) should also be hidden from seeing when it separates and gets lost because of washing.

Sixth: Wash the whole body and rub it doing the right parts first and moving to the left sides.

Seventh: Do ablution (wuḍū, more accurately)

'Āishah - may Allāh be pleased with her - narrated that Asmā' bint Yazīd asked the Prophet - peace be upon him - about washing out menstruation, he said:

- Take your water and nabq (look at the glossary at the end of the book).
- Wash nicely.
- Pour water on the head and rub thoroughly till water reaches the scalp.
- Pour water over the whole body.
- Take a piece of cloth drenched in musk and clean with it.
- Asmā' enquired: how does she clean with the piece of musk cloth?
- The Prophet responded: Glory to God! Clean with it.
- 'Āishah clarified: wipe along the traces of blood (to get rid of the bad smell).

Caution (21) Ibn Abās - may Allāh be pleased with him - said: “if a woman purifies after *Aṣr* prayer, she prays both *Duḥr* and *Aṣr* prayers. If she purifies after Isha, she prays Maghrib and Isha”.

Caution (22) If a woman bleeds twice a month, then she is exempted from undoing her hair in every purification process (she does not have to untie it). She undoes it once and leaves it tied later exactly as done to purification from sexual intercourse.

Caution (23) If a woman has to wash from sexual intercourse and she bleeds meanwhile (before purification happens), then she should intend to wash from both sexual intercourse and menstruation when she purifies after menstrual bleeding stops. Only one purification for both suffices.

Caution (24) If a woman can not wash to purify from sexual intercourse, menstruation and postpartum bleeding, she can alternatively purify herself by with clean earth or sand. If she can not wash her hair, she should first wipe her face and hands with clean earth to substitute for washing the hair and then wash up the rest of her body.

Type Three: Prolonged Period

The blood flowing because of a prolonged period is red, thin and has no smell. Therefore, it differs from the menstruation blood. The womb secretes this blood because of illness (a hemorrhage). Prophet Muḥammad - may Allāh's blessings be upon him - said: "the blood of a prolonged period is a vein blood and not menstruation". He - peace be upon him - also said: "blood of a prolonged period is impure because it is a vein blood; it nullifies ablution (*wudū*) (renders it void)."

A woman who has a prolonged period is the one who continues to bleed in a time which is not her regular menstruation time.

Prolonged period might happen to four types of women –mostly: beginner, accustomed, pregnant and a woman in her menopause.

- **Beginner:** is a woman who in her first menstruation continues to bleed after the tenth day. She should wait for two days after the tenth day. Then, she purifies herself even if blood continues to flow. She prays for ten consecutive days (fifty prayers). If she continues bleeding afterwards, she shall consider herself menstruating based on Imām A'rabī' bin Habīb's- may Allāh rest his soul in peace- rule "Any blood seen after praying for ten days is menstruation". Such women are stricken by the prolonged period. Thus, they refrain from praying for twelve days and pray for ten days till Allāh the Almighty relieves them of their suffering.

- **Accustomed:** is a woman who continues bleeding after her usual menstruation time is over. She should wait for two days then she purifies and prays till the ten days are over. Afterwards, she considers herself menstruating and refrains from praying during her menstruation period with the waiting time (two days). Then, as this is over, she prays for ten days and so on.

- **Pregnant:** is a woman who bleeds after she conceives. She should not refrain from praying and fasting till she delivers.

- **Woman in her menopause:** is a woman who bleeds after she reaches 60 years of age. As has been established, this woman should not refrain from praying and fasting.

Purification from the prolonged period

A woman who has a prolonged period is obliged to do two purifications: obligatory and desirable purification.

Obligatory purification: is the purification, by which the woman gets cleaned from menstruation and bound to resume praying. It comprises the same steps of purification from menstruation.

Desirable purification: is the purification done before each prayer – during her cleanliness time. Prophet Muḥammad-peace be upon him- said to the Anṣārī woman –Asmā’ bint Yazīd- when she asked him: Oh Prophet, I bleed extensively. The Prophet said: “Purify, cram cotton there and pray”.

Women with prolonged period can postpone *Ḍuhr* prayer and move *Aṣr* prayer forward, so they can pray them together with one purification. They do the same for *Maghrib* and *Ishaa* prayers. It is narrated that Sahla bint Suhail had a prolonged period, she then came to the Prophet. He ordered her to purify for each prayer. This has burdened her, so the Prophet asked her to combine *Ḍuhr* and *Aṣr* with one purification and *Maghrib* and *Ishaa* with one purification and to purify for *Fajr* prayer separately.

If a woman who has a prolonged period gets sufficed with ablution instead of washing her entire body before each prayer, then this is fine as the Prophet - peace be upon him - said: “a woman with prolonged period performs ablution for each prayer”. Imām Jābir bin Zayed - may Allāh rest his soul in peace - said: “She can pray with that ablution as much as she wants whether obligatory or *Nawāfil* (supererogatory or extra prayers) as long as she is still in her praying spot.

Advice for Women with a Prolonged Period

The blood of a prolonged period is a hemorrhage. Women who are stricken by prolonged periods should seek treatment especially in our present time when medications and treatments are available- All praise is due to Allāh.

Crucial Rules to Remember

- (1) The womb secretes three types of blood:
 - Menstruation: a normal flow of blood that flows from a physically healthy woman.
 - Postpartum Bleeding: blood flowing after child delivery.
 - Prolonged period: blood secreting as a result of illness.
- (2) Age of menstruation: puberty age or around nine years old.
- (3) Menopause: 60 years of age.
- (4) Mucous discharges: have the same rules as what comes before them.
- (5) Basic cleanliness sign: the milky discharge (the whites).
- (6) A woman who does not experience a milky discharge is cleaned by vaginal dryness.
- (7) A woman establishes her time of menstruation and postpartum bleeding if experiencing the milky discharge at one period.
- (8) A woman establishes her time of menstruation and postpartum if cleaning by vaginal dryness after three periods.
- (9) The milky discharge (the whites) is a strong, unquestionable evidence for cleanliness.
- (10) A woman should not look for menstruation flow or clear discharge herself. These are natural cycles that flow without searching.
- (11) A day of menstruation and postpartum is 24 hours, i.e. from a definite hour of menstrual flow on a day to the same hour the next day.

- (12) A woman establishes a regular time for her menstruation.
- (13) A woman can take several times for her cleanliness time.
- (14) Pregnancy and menstruation do not coincide.
- (15) Any blood seen after praying for ten days is considered menstruation.
- (16) Menstruating and confined women refrain from praying and fasting until they have finished. They only make up for fasting.
- (17) A woman should not delay washing after her discharge becomes clear.
- (18) A man should not have sexual intercourse with his wife until she purifies herself. Clear discharge from menstruation alone does not suffice. Purification with water is essential.
- (19) Whatever a menstruating woman is prohibited from doing; a confined woman is also prohibited from doing.
- (20) Purification from both menstruation and postpartum bleeding has the same procedure.
- (21) Issues pertaining to blood have five dimensions:
- A. Times.**
 - B. Waiting period – shared by both beginners and the accustomed.**
 - C. Relating menstrual time to relatives’.**
 - D. Heavier and lighter menstrual flows: only pertains to the accustomed.**
 - E. Irregular bleedings: pertains to beginners.**
- (22) Heavier menstrual flow in both menstruation and postpartum bleeding is established after three times and lighter menstrual flow is established after two times.

Table of times

Times	Least	Most
Menstruation	3 days	10 days
Postpartum Bleeding	10 days	40 days
Cleanliness	10 days	60 days

Table E

Table of waiting periods

Waiting in the menstruation	With blood for two days With mucous discharges for a day and night
Waiting in the postpartum bleeding	With blood for three days With mucous discharges for a day and night

Table F

Conclusion

By Allāh's Grace and His will, this book is complete. I ask Allāh to benefit Muslims from it and make this deed exclusively for His sake. If I produce the right, then Allāh has blessed me, however, if a flaw is found, then it is because of me and the Devil. I seek forgiveness of Allāh.

I would appreciate comments and extend thanks in advance.

Last but not least, All praise is due to Allāh with whose guidance good deeds are accomplished.

The Author

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Glossary

1. **Abu Da'ūd:** one of the compilers of ḥadīth, the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).
2. **Ansār:** the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) from the inhabitants of Al- Madīna who embraced Islam, supported it and who received and entertained the Muslim emigrants from Makkah and other places.
3. **Dinār:** an ancient gold coin.
4. **Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence.
5. **Ghusl:** a bath with running water.
6. **Ḥadīth:** the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), often referred to as “ The Traditions”
7. **'iddah:** Allāh's prescribed waiting period for a woman after divorce or death of her husband, after the expiry of which she can remarry another person (see the Qur'ān, Surat 65)
8. **Izār:** A sheet worn below the waist to cover the lower half of the body.
9. **Koḥl:** antimony eye powder.
10. **Maḥram:** a man whom a woman can never marry because of close relationship (e.g. a brother, a father, an uncle); or her own husband.
11. **Miqāt:** one of the several places specified by the Prophet (PBUH) for the people to assume Iḥrām at, on their way to Makkah, when intending to perform pilgrimage.
12. **Mustaḥḍah:** a woman who has bleeding from the womb between her normal periods.
13. **Nabq:** a tree over 7th heaven near Paradise (the late tree of utmost boundary).
14. **Sharī'ah:** literally, “the way”; the code of life of Islam, based on the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Sunnah.

15. **Sunnah:** the practice of the Prophet consisting of what he himself did, recommended or approved in others.
16. **Ṭawāf:** circumambulation or encircling the Kabbah while praising and supplicating God, one of the essential rites of Ḥajj and Umrah.
17. **Wuḍū’:** ablution, which is washing the face and hands up to the elbows, wiping the hands and ears with wet fingers and washing the feet up to the ankles for the purpose of offering prayers or doing circumambulation around the kabbah.
18. **Wrapper:** the equivalent for this in English would be loincloth or waistcloth. Modern perspective would of course call this underwear or panties or undergarment.

About the Translator

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رقم الإيداع : (٢٠٠٧ / ٦١)

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