

**FIQH OF
MENSTRUATION**

Simplified

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

NAIELAH ACKBARALI

Fiqh of Menstruation Simplified
A Beginner's Guide for Muslim Women

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*To every sister,
who helped me,
guided me,
or inspired me.
Thank you.*

Transliteration Table

ARABIC LETTER	ENGLISH TRANSLITERATION	ARABIC LETTER	ENGLISH TRANSLITERATION
ء	’	ض	ḏ
ا	a, ā	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘, ‘a, ‘i, ‘u
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و	w, ū, u
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	ي	y, ī, i
ص	ṣ		

ARABIC SYMBOL	ENGLISH TRANSLITERATION	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
	<i>ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam</i>	Allāh bless him and give him peace.
	<i>‘alahī as-salām</i>	Peace be upon him.
	<i>raḏiya ‘Llāhu ‘anhum</i>	May Allāh be pleased with them.
	<i>raḏiya ‘Llāhu ‘anhā</i>	May Allāh be pleased with her.
	<i>raḏiya ‘Llāhu ‘anhu</i>	May Allāh be pleased with him.

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Introduction

“Indeed, We created humans in the best form.”

(at-Tīn, 95:4)

Allah Most High is the best of Creators. He fashioned women to menstruate, and through this blessing they can possibly give birth to children and be honored with continuing the lifeline of this *ummah*. The journey of menstruation itself is a progression of physical stages that facilitate the noble act of childbearing.

When a woman first reaches puberty, menstrual blood makes an abrupt entrance into her life. A young girl could be met with the challenges of hormonal fluctuations and physical development. She may experience tiredness, mood swings, headaches, and pelvic pain – possibly as a preparation for the road of responsibility that lies ahead.

As she enters the childbearing years of her twenties and thirties, her cycles may become more regular and routine, or they may never settle into an expected pattern, which can present challenges for some.

Once she approaches her forties and fifties, her body will undergo another stage of transformation as she welcomes the end of her period woes with menopause.

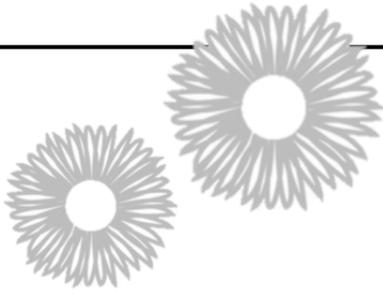
A woman's aging process is like a blossoming flower. She starts as a seed that roots herself into the ground. As time passes, she grows into a stem and begins to bud. Flower petals eventually appear as she matures and blooms, which beautify her unique shape, color,

and size. Then, as the seasons pass, the petals begin to fall away until she returns to her Creator for the ultimate stage of her existence.

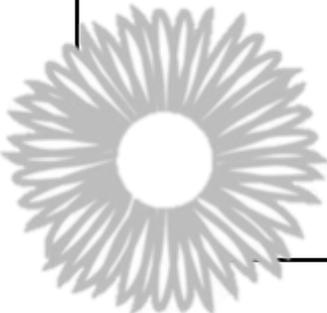
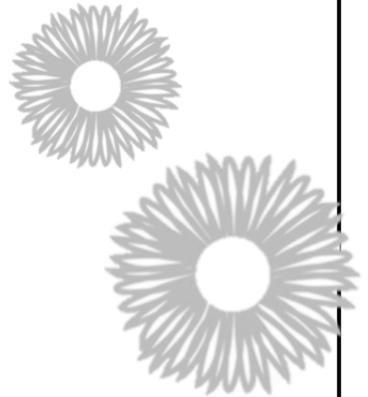
What is evident from this cycle is that women will spend a large portion of their lives menstruating. Thus, it is imperative for women to understand what Allah Most High wants from them in the various circumstances that they face.

This guide is a simplified version of the *fiqh* of menstruation. It is intended to help women who are beginning to learn this essential knowledge. More explanation and details can be found in our intermediate guide ‘A Muslim Woman’s Guide to Menstruation Rulings.’

By sticking to the basics, the hope is that it will provide a foundation for growth in understanding, developing, and blossoming in the Islamic rulings that Allah Most High has willed for women to follow.



The Islamic Perspective



Allah Says...

Today I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My favor upon you and chosen Islam as the way for you.

(al-Mā'ida, 5:3)

Say (O Prophet): “If you really love Allāh, then follow me, and Allāh shall love you and forgive your sins. Allāh is Most-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.

(Āli Imrān, 3:31)

They ask you about menstruation. Say: “It is an impurity. So, keep away from women during menstruation, and do not have intercourse with them until they are purified. When they purify themselves, then you may approach them in the manner specified by Allah. Verily Allāh loves those who always turn to Him in repentance and those who purify themselves.

(al-Baqara, 2:222)

1. Aisha's Hajj

It was the tenth year after the *hijra*, the last year of the Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ life. Yet, no one knew that his ﷺ demise was to come. The Prophet ﷺ intended to undertake *hajj* during this year. It was the only *hajj* that the Prophet ﷺ performed after it became compulsory. Less than three months later, he ﷺ would suddenly fall sick and pass away.

Thousands of the Companions ﷺ came from various parts of the Arabian Peninsula to complete the *hajj* with the Prophet ﷺ. As for his wives ﷺ, all of them accompanied him to Makkah during his final pilgrimage.

The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ left Madīna when there were only five days remaining of the month of *Dhū'l Qa'da*. They entered into a state of pilgrim sanctity (*iḥrām*) just a few miles outside of Madīna at Dhūl Ḥulayfah, which is known as Masjid ash-Shajara in today's times.

The Prophet ﷺ ordered those with him to intend what they wanted. There are different intentions that a pilgrim can make for *hajj*. A pilgrim can intend to do *hajj* only (*iḥrām*), or a *hajj* and an *umra* together with the same intention (*qirān*), or an *umra* by itself and a *hajj* by itself (*tamattu*). The Prophet's ﷺ beloved wife Lady 'Ā'isha ﷺ intended to do the latter type, which is an *umra* and a *hajj* with separate intentions.

The Companions ﷺ were so excited to perform the *hajj*. They chanted the *talbiya* throughout their trip down to Makkah. One can only dream of how elated their spirits were and the immense honor that they must have felt to be part of the Prophet's ﷺ pilgrimage.

The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ entered Makkah on the fourth of *Dhū'l Hijjah*, prepared to complete the sacred rites due upon them. However, Lady 'Ā'isha ؓ started to menstruate before that at Sarif, a location that is approximately ten miles outside of Makkah.

She was already in the state of pilgrim sanctity, and not knowing what was to come, she became deeply saddened by the thought that she could not do *hajj* at all.

In her own narration, she describes what happened and says:

“We set out with the Prophet ﷺ for *hajj*, and we were not making mention of anything except *hajj*. When we reached Sarif, I got my menses. When the Prophet ﷺ came to me, I was crying. He ﷺ asked, ‘Why are you weeping?’ I said, ‘I wish – by Allāh! - that I had not performed *hajj* this year.’ He asked, ‘Perhaps you got your menses?’ I replied, ‘Yes.’ He then said, **‘This is a thing which Allāh has written for the daughters of Adam.** So do what all the pilgrims do except that you do not perform the *tawāf* around the Ka'ba until you are (ritually) pure.’”

(*Bukhārī*, 305)

Lady 'Ā'isha ؓ was crying out of disappointment. She did not want to miss the momentous experience of *hajj*, but what could she do? In those days, there were no hormonal medications that existed to stop her menstrual flow.

She had to submit to Allāh Most High's will, but it was nevertheless a heartbreaking moment for her – even to the extent that she wished that she had not performed *hajj* that year! Little did she know that this would be the only *hajj* that her beloved husband ﷺ would

perform, and he ﷺ would die only a few months later in her own arms.

The Prophet's ﷺ response to Lady 'Ā'isha's crying was exemplary in many ways. Firstly, he ﷺ knew why she was crying. This is the type of loving relationship that they had with each other. He ﷺ could sense his wife's emotional state.

Secondly, he was gentle in his approach. He ﷺ saw that she was in pain and reached out to her in a caring way. His words comforted and consoled her worries. And what were his words? That women are the daughters of Prophet Adam ﷺ.

Sometimes people think that menstruation is dirty and disgusting, but the Prophet ﷺ elevated women to the lofty status of being the progeny of the first Prophet to mankind because of their monthly cycles.

This *ḥadīth* also proves that menstruation is not a punishment. Rather, menstruation is natural and normal – something which Allāh Most High has ordained for all women until the end of time.

In fact, Allāh Most High honored women with their monthly cycles. If it were not for menstruation, Muslim women could not get pregnant, have children, and continue to uphold the lifeline of the *ummah*.

The Prophet ﷺ informed Lady 'Ā'isha ﷺ that she could perform *ḥajj*, but she could not do the *ṭawāf*. This is the only *ḥajj* ritual that a menstruating women must avoid until her menstruation ceases.

She can do everything else: camp at Minā, stand at 'Arafat, sleep at Muzdalifa, stone the *jamarāt*, carry out the slaughtering, make *dhikr*, supplicate, engage in repentance, make *ṣalawāt*, and much more.

Lady ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها followed through with the Prophetic instruction. She exited her pilgrim state for *‘umra* and entered into a new pilgrim state for *ḥajj*. She completed the standing at ‘Arafat, and when her menstruation ended she performed the *ṭawāf* on *‘Īd* day.

She accepted that this is what Allāh Most High had willed for her. Furthermore, she was still able to benefit and have a spiritual experience despite her circumstance.

In another narration, Lady ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها told the Prophet ﷺ that everyone else had completed a *ḥajj* and an *‘umra* but she had only done a *ḥajj*. The Prophet ﷺ ordered her brother, ‘Abdur Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr رضي الله عنه, to take her to Tanīm so that she could enter into a state of pilgrim sanctity for *‘umra*. (*Muslim*, 1213)

In today’s times, this location is demarcated by a mosque known as Masjid ‘Ā’isha. It is where everyone goes nowadays to enter into pilgrim sanctity (*iḥrām*) for *‘umra* once they are in Makkah.

Because of Lady ‘Ā’isha’s situation رضي الله عنها, Muslim women know what to do when they experience menstruation during *ḥajj*. More than this, all Muslims know where to go if they want to perform another *‘umra*. Her trial, her pain, and her worry over her menstruation became a symbol of Islam – landmarked by a *masjid* that people will use until the end of time.

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