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Home > Jurispudence Made Easy > Dialogue on Haydh

## Dialogue on Haydh

My father took his seat. I could notice a broad smile on his face that led me to assume that he was bent on something unusual.

I'll talk to you today on haydh.

Before today, I did not know what haydh is, although I remember I hearing the word before. What had interested me in the subject was that I hear women whisper about it, with noticeable embarrassment, as if there was something shameful in the word. However, I do not hide a secret if I say that as soon as I was faced with a real situation of the subject being discussed in the open, a kind of shaming started to creep into me. I do not know why I was gripped with embarrassment. I resigned to the fact that if haydh was indeed so humbling a matter to talk about, how my father is going to discuss it with me?

Yet, aren't we discussing matters of Islamic law? Surely, this topic should be within the remit of Islamic jurisprudence. So, why should we feel embarrassed to talk about it? Is it not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an? Didn't the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Imams (a.s.) talk about it to their companions. And after all, why should we feel a sense of shaming to talk about a subject whose rules we must know in order to follow?

My self-examination was short-lived as my father resumed his talk.

- Haydh is a bleeding from a woman's genitals. It occurs at regular monthly intervals and whose colour is dark red. When it leaves the body, women can feel its warmth.
- \* Is there a certain age group of women who experience haydh?
- Although it varies from person to person, it can start at the age of nine lunar calendar years till the age of sixty, which is the climacteric.
- \* So, between 9 and 60 years?
- Yes, any blood that can be seen before the age of nine and after the age of sixty does not fall under

the definition of menstral blood.

- \* How many days does the bleeding last?
- The minimum period is three days and the maximum ten.
- \* Suppose it lasted three days, then stopped?
- This cannot be considered period blood.
- \* What if it lasts more than ten days?
- This is not haydh blood.
- \* How should one treat the case of a woman whose haydh ended, then she had ghusl only to see blood again, say after nine days?
- The blood that the woman saw should not be treated as haydh blood, because the period separating any two periods should not be less than ten days.
- \* When does the woman consider herself as having a period?
- When she starts bleeding at the time of her temporary period, or before her regular period, say one or two days earlier.
- \* How should a woman be described as having a temporary period?
- She could be described as such when the period blood appears twice in any period of two months or more.
- \* How do you describe a woman who does not fit the two categories mentioned above, such as the young woman who experiences period blood for the first time, or a woman with an irregular period?
- A woman in any of the two examples you've just quoted can describe herself as having a period when one of the following two conditions arise:
- 1. For the blood to be termed as menstrual blood, it should be red or black in colour, warm, and could pour out profusely.
- 2. When the woman is sure the blood continues for three uninterrupted days and over.
- \* Well, suppose she thought that it was period blood according to point one. Accordingly, she stopped performing prayer. However, the bleeding stopped before the lapse of the three-day period. What should she do?

- She should perform prayer in lieu of the period of bleeding.
- \* If the bleeding continues for ten days or less, but exceeds the duration of her normal period?
- She can still be considered as having period throughout the duration of the bleeding, albeit some of the blood can no longer satisfy the conditions of period blood.
- \* What if the woman has regular periods, in both the number of days and the date of the period, yet the bleeding continues for more than ten days?
- She should observe the bleeding that coincides with the duration of her period only as that of menstruation.
- \* Suppose the same woman failed to have her period on time, then the blood appeared and continued for more than ten days. However, some of the blood bore the characteristics of period blood, some of it did not. Which one should be treated as haydh?
- The first one. Yet she should take into account the number of days of her previous normal period. If that part of the blood that fulfils the conditions of period blood was less than the number of days of a normal period, she should complete it by adding the remaining days of that part of the blood that did not satisfy the conditions of period blood. If, however, the bleeding she was experiencing satisfied the criteria of period blood, she should stick to the number of days of her normal period and consider it haydh.
- \* Should the bleeding continue for more than ten days in the case of a woman who either experiences bleeding for the first time or that whose period is irregular, how should they differentiate the period blood from other kinds of bleeding?
- All depends on the characteristics of the blood and the duration. If some of it bears the qualities of period blood and it continued for a period of three to ten days, should be treated as haydh. The remaining type of blood should be considered istihadha, which shall be the subject of a forthcoming session.
- \* If the woman was in doubt as to whether her period has ended, what should she do?
- She must check.
- \* In what way?
- She should insert a piece of cotton into her vagina and leave it for a short while and retrieve it. If no traces of blood could be seen, she must assume she is tahir, do ghusl and resume acts of worship. Should the piece of cotton, however, found to be soiled with blood, she must maintain that she is still in haydh.

- \* When the woman knows she has haydh, what are the things that are permissible for her to do and those that are not?
- The rules regarding woman's periods are:
- 1. No prayers should be performed, be they obligatory or voluntary.
- 2. She is not required to perform any prayer instead of the ones she missed while she had the period.
- 3. It is not permissible for her to fast.
- 4. She must fast instead of the days she missed while she had the period during Ramadhan.
- 5. Tawaf during hajj, be it obligatory or voluntary is not in order.
- 6. She cannot be declared divorced while still having her period, except in certain situations.
- 7. It is haraam to have sexual intercourse with a woman who is having a period. It is permissible, however, after the bleeding had stopped. However, it is permissible before performing ghusl [and after washing the vagina].
- 8. It is haraam for her to embark on any act of worship, in the same way as certain acts are not permissible for a person who is in a state of janabah. This, as you may recall, was discussed in detail in the (Dialogue on Janabah).
- 9. When her period is over, she should perform ghusl in order to be able to perform prayer. This, I will explain to you in the (Dialogue on Ghusl).

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