

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > Jurispudence Made Easy > Dialogue on Istihadha

Dialogue on Istihadha

My father took his seat. He gave the title of istihadha to today's session. No sooner had he finished uttering the word, it dawned on me that the word has a ring about it that reminded me of haydh. Thus, I concluded they might be related and that the subject could concern women. That is, a kind of bleeding is involved.

I asked my father:

- * Is istihadah confined to women?
- Yes, but..
- * But what?
- Yes, it is, provided that the bleeding is not that of haydh, nifas, wounds, ulcerations, and that resulting from ripping the virginal membrane.
- * There are quite a number of different types of bleedings.
- Some of them indicate woman's fertility and youth. Don't you notice that when a woman reaches menopause, she cannot bear children.
- * Since the nature of the blood of nifas, wounds and pimples is known, how could the woman differentiate between the blood of istihadha and haydh?
- Do you remember the characteristics of haydh blood?
- * Yes, I do. It is red or blackish in colour and warm.
- It is often the case that istihadha blood differs from that of haydh. It is yellowish in colour, thin in property, and seeps out without a sting or burning.
- * How could a woman identify that istihadha blood is not that resulting from bursting open the virginal

membrane, especially at the time of her wedding?

- The blood resulting from puncturing the virginal membrane is little, in that if the woman places a piece of cotton inside, the blood will form a circle round the cotton. The blood of istihidha, on the other hand, could soak the piece of cotton, and sometimes exceeds it.

That said, istihadha is of three types: A major one that I have just talked about, a medium one in which the piece of cotton could be soaked, but not more, and a minor one where the blood may soil the piece of cotton, but not to the saturation point, because it is little.

- * What is the ruling on each one of these types of istihadha?
- For a major istihadha, the woman must perform three ghusl. One for Subh (Dawn prayer), one for Dhuhr (Noon or lunch-time prayer) and Asr (Afternoon prayer), if performed concurrently, and one for Maghrib (Sunset prayer) and Isha (Evening prayer), if she decides to perform them consecutively.
- * And If she was to perform each one of them separately?
- She must do ghusl for each prayer.
- * Is this a universal rule?
- Well, this is the ruling, if the bleeding was continuous. If, however, it was intermittent, so much so that she could perform ghusl and say one or more prayers before the bleeding resumes, [she must renew ghusl after bleeding recurs. If, for example, she had a ghusl for Dhuhr prayer and bleeding resumed before or during Asr prayer, she must have another ghusl for it]. However, if the interval between any two appearances of blood was long enough to perform two or more prayers, it is permissible without the need for a new ghusl.

This applies to major istihadha. In a medium istihadha, she must do wudhu for each prayer [and ghusl once a day before the first wudhu].

- * Could you give me an example?
- Before Subh prayer, a woman discovered that she had istihadha. Upon checking, she ascertained that it was a medium one, she must [do ghusl] and perform wudhu for Subh. The ghusl that she carried out should suffice for the whole of that day, provided she does wudhu for every prayer. Come a second or a third day, she must do the whole procedure again. That is, if no change has occurred as to the type of istihadha.
- * Does the istihadha change from one type to another?
- Yes, it may change. A major istihadha could turn into a minor one, and vice versa.

- * How would a woman know that her istihadha has changed?
- [She must check for the blood before every prayer] and act according to the degree of istihadha, be it minor, medium, or major.
- * Should she change the towels she uses during the istihadha?
- Yes, if they were of the disposable type. If not, they should be washed, for every prayer when the istihadha is minor or medium. Should it be a major one [she must change them, if it was possible] and take extra precaution against blood coming out for the period from the ghusl to the end of prayer, provided that such a precaution does not entail any harm to her wellbeing.
- * Should she embark on prayer as soon as she becomes tahir?
- [Yes.].
- * What is the ruling on istihadha?
- 1. A woman in a state of istihadha must become tahir, for prayer, as soon as the bleeding stops by way of wudhu, if istihadha was minor or medium, and through ghusl, if it was major.
- 2. It is not permissible for a woman in a state of istihadha to touch the writing of the Holy Qur'an. It is permissible, however, to do so after she becomes tahir.
- 3. In the case of divorce, it is permissible to pronounce a woman, in a state of istihadha, divorced.
- 4. Certain prohibitions, such as sexual intercourse, entering, staying in, and leaving something inside mosques, and reciting the ayas of sajdah, that are imposed on a woman in haydh do not apply to a woman in istihadha.
- 5. Fasting of a woman in a state of minor or medium istihadha is acceptable, even though she may not be able to observe wudhu or ghusl for prayer. As for a woman with a major istihadha, a number of jurists maintain that the acceptability of her fasting is dependent on her doing ghusl the night before and the ghusls during the day of fasting. However, it is most evident that this should not invalidate her fasting.
- 6. Wudhu is not obligatory on a woman with major istihadha, for ghusl would make up for wudhu. As for her who is with a medium istihadh, she must do wudhu after ghusl [that is obligatory on her].

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/jurispudence-made-easy-sayyid-ali-hussaini-sistani/dialogue-istihadha#comment-0