

Islamic Rules on
MENSTRUATION
&
POST-NATAL BLEEDING

أحكام دمء المرأة الطبيعية

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

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IN THE NAME OF
ALLAH
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



**Islamic Rules on
MENSTRUATION AND
POST-NATAL BLEEDING**



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Allah, the All-High, Lord of the universe, sole Creator and Sustainer, deserves all praise and thanks. Blessings and Peace be upon the last of the prophets and messengers, Muhammad, who led humanity to the divinely enlightened path of salvation for all times to come.

Books 'dedicated solely to issues of feminine hygiene' from an Islamic perspective are almost non-existent. Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, a devoted missionary and scholar of Islam, has been able to compile an important book on the Islamic Rulings on Menstruation and Post-natal Bleeding, based strictly on the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the teachings and practices of the early pious generations.

The book was previously published by a sister organization, Dar al Fatah Publications in the UAE. Now the author has revised the book thoroughly and the IIPH is proud to present it to its English readers in its new outfit. The book, in its present form, is better suited to cater to the needs of our sisters in Islam.

Dr. Philips, after reverting to Islam in 1972, devoted his life to acquiring pure and authentic Islamic knowledge and acquainting English readers with the same in an easy-to-understand style and language. He has a number of important books to his credit including this one.

May Allah bless his noble efforts with acceptance and reward all those associated with the production of the book here and in the Hereafter.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin al-Tuwaijri

General Manager,

International Islamic Publishing House, IIPH

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

FOREWORD

It has been my intention, for some time now, to prepare a work concerning the Islamic rules on menstruation and post-natal bleeding for women, because I found questions on this subject constantly arising at the end of my lectures in different parts of the English speaking world. The many questions raised by Muslim women indicate that existing literature in English does not sufficiently address the related issues. Until very recently, there were no books dedicated solely to issues of feminine hygiene. This void is a direct result of the virtual absence of female scholars of Islamic law in the Muslim world today.

There are certain basic rules governing female bleeding which are clearly defined by the Sunnah¹ and the judicial explanations given by the Prophet's wives and his Companions. Compilations of these laws and rulings in English may be found in hadith² compilations like *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, etc., as well as in good *Fiqh*³ books like *Fiqh us-Sunnah* by Shaykh Sayyid Sābiq,⁴ which does not

¹ The sayings, acts and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which have legal force.

² Narrations containing the statements and actions of the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him).

³ Applied Islamic law.

⁴ The Arabic original is in three volumes and the English translation by Jamal Zarabozo and Saïd Dabbas is to be in twelve volumes, five of which have been published to date by American Trust Publications in the USA and the International Islamic Publishing House in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

restrict itself to the juristic opinions of a single school of Islamic legal thought.⁵ However, after reviewing *Fiqh us-Sunnah*,⁶ I realized that there were a number of hadith texts not included in the author's presentation.⁷ Consequently, I decided to make a comprehensive compilation of the hadiths related to female bleeding, thereby providing the reader with sufficient basic data to understand the basic rules regarding this subject. However, there are a number of issues related to female bleeding that are not covered in the basic texts. The deduction of laws concerning these issues and others not ruled upon by the earlier generations of scholars can only be made by those who have a thorough knowledge of the shari'ah⁸ its guiding principles and its goals.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ṣāliḥ Āl 'Uthaymīn is well known in the Muslim world today as one of the leading scholars of Islamic Law. A number of his rulings have been compiled and published in Saudi Arabia over the past few years, among them a couple of booklets on female bleeding. Dārul-Birr Society in Dubai, with whom I am presently working, asked me to review a translation of a collection of Shaykh Āl 'Uthaymīn's rulings on female bleeding entitled *Ithnāni wa Khamsūna Su'ālan 'an Ahkām il-Ḥayḍ*.⁹ This forty-nine page booklet is quite popular in the Arab world due to its concise coverage of the major problematic issues related to

⁵ The Reliance of the Traveller is a recent English translation of Aḥmad Naqīb al-Miṣri's legal compendium, *'Umdat us-Sālik*, which is according to the Shāfi'i school of law, and *al-Hedaya* is an old English translation of the major compilation of legal rulings based on the Ḥanafī school of law.

⁶ Vol. 1, Pp. 69-74.

⁷ For example, the hadiths concerning the penalty for engaging in sexual intercourse during menses, or taking a *ghusl* for each prayer in the case of prolonged blood-flow (*istihādah*), etc.

⁸ Islamic law as revealed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

⁹ *Fifty-Two Questions on the Laws Concerning Menstruation*.

female hygiene and Islamic law. Unfortunately, I found the translation inadequate and unsuitable for publication. Consequently, I was obliged to undertake the project of retranslating the booklet.

Upon completion of my retranslation of Shaykh Āl ‘Uthaymīn’s “*Fifty-two Questions*” booklet, I realized that most of the hadiths referred to by the author, directly or indirectly, were not quoted in their entirety and that there was a wealth of material not mentioned at all. It has always been my position that Muslims should be encouraged to gain their basic understanding of the religion from the Qur’an and hadiths, wherever possible. Consequently, I decided to provide the reader with a more comprehensive text by compiling and explaining the basic evidence for the rulings on female bleeding as the first chapter of my own book and to add the Shaykh’s rulings as its second chapter.

In the course of my preparation of the Shaykh’s booklet for the second chapter of my book, I decided to make certain changes in order to make the material more readable and interesting. Primarily, I deleted repeated questions and answers. Although the compiler of the Arabic booklet stated that some questions and answers were repeated because there were subtle differences in both the questions and the Shaykh’s answers which warranted their repetition, I chose not to repeat them but to combine them into a single question wherever possible. Consequently, the number of questions and answers dropped by eight, from the original fifty-two to forty-four. Some of the questions and answers have been rearranged to provide a more logical flow of ideas. Furthermore, wherever Shaykh Āl ‘Uthaymīn mentioned opinions of other scholars or schools of Islamic law which he considered inaccurate or weak, I relegated them to the footnotes, so as not to

confuse the reader who has no academic background in Islamic law. It should also be noted that, where necessary, the wording in both the questions and the answers have been modified in their translation for clarity, because literal translations are often very misleading. In the second chapter of this work I have sought to present in English the essence of the Arabic original, and I pray that I have succeeded in doing so. Fifteen questions and answers from a recently published collection of Islamic rulings on women's issues, *Fatāwā al-Mar'ah*, were also added to Chapter Two in order to widen the scope of this work and increase its benefit. Footnotes indicating the name of the scholar who made the ruling and the source (i.e. *Fatāwā al-Mar'ah*) were also added to distinguish between the rulings from Shaykh ibn Āl 'Uthaymīn's booklet and those from *Fatāwā al-Mar'ah*. This book was also given to two Muslim female gynecologists and a number of Muslim women from different parts of the world for review and comment. Their suggestions and relevant information from medical texts have been included in the footnotes.

I have referenced all of the hadiths and Qur'anic verses mentioned in the text, and the location of hadiths in existing English translations were also added for the convenience of English readers. Furthermore, all of the hadiths not found in the authentic collections of Bukhari and Muslim were checked for authenticity according to the monumental work of Shaykh Nāṣirud-dīn al-Albānī on the *Sunan* and other works.

Since there are a number of references in the hadiths and the Shaykh's booklet to *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*, I thought it appropriate to mention some of the authentic narrations describing these methods of ritual purification as a third chapter to the book. This chapter is of particular importance to Muslim women due to the widespread ignorance among them today regarding some of the most basic religious matters.

In closing, I ask Allah to reward all who have contributed in putting this booklet in the hands of English readers, especially my wife, Sakeenah, who did the English editing, my typist, Raja Muhammad, and my department researcher, “Abdul-Majīd ‘Ali Ḥasan, who helped in the referencing of hadiths . I ask Allah to accept our sincere efforts to serve the religion of Islam.

Dr. Abu Amīnah Bilal Philips

U.A.E.



CHAPTER ONE: THE EVIDENCE

HAYD, NIFĀS AND ISTIHĀDAH

The Arabic term *ḥayḍ* literally means “flowing.” However, according to Islamic law it refers to the regular flow of blood from the vagina of a healthy woman that is not a result of childbirth or the breaking of the hymen. Thus, the term *ḥayḍ* corresponds to the English term “menstruation” or “menses”.

Women should not feel sad or inconvenienced because of the restrictions and difficulties associated with menses, because Allah destined it for them as a part of the trials of this life.

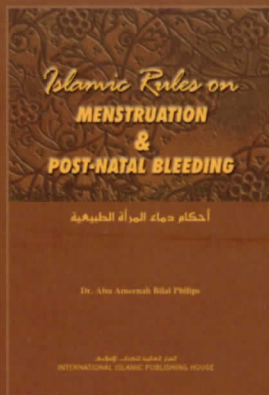
﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

(سورة الملك ٦٧ : ٢)



﴿It is He who created death and life to determine by tests which one of you is the best in deeds, and He is the Almighty, the Forgiving.﴾ (Qur'an 67: 2)

Allah made menses an essential part of the life-giving process by which the female body is prepared for accepting and nurturing the fertilized human egg. Consequently, the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) emphasized to Muslim women that the trials of menses were a part of the divine destiny which every Muslim must believe in and accept as a pillar of faith. ‘Ā’ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said,



About the Book: This book, *Islamic Rules on Menstruation and Post-Natal Bleeding* addresses the Islamic rules on the major problematic issues of female hygiene. The author has researched and compiled *hadeeths* related with these female issues. Chapter one explains the female bleeding issues, chapter two defines the Islamic rulings on purity and prayer and chapter three details the methods of ritual purification in Islam. It is a must in all Islamic households.

“This book presents much-needed and sought-after information clarifying many delicate and pertinent details regarding feminine hygiene. The author clearly elucidates the Islamic view and rulings regarding menstruating and postpartum women. The question and answer section of this book answers questions every Muslim woman wants and needs to know the answers to.”

Hediyah Al-Amin, Columnist, *The Peninsula*, Doha, Qatar

“The most frequently asked legal issues concerning menstruating women are tackled in the light of Islam’s authentic sources. Every woman should master its contents.”

- Amjad Khan, Production Editor, *The Weekly Gulf Times*, Doha, Qatar

About the Author: Dr. Abu Ameenah BILAL PHILIPS was born in Jamaica, West Indies, and grew up in Canada, where he accepted Islam in 1972. He completed a B.A. in Islamic Disciplines from the Islamic University of Madeenah, Saudi Arabia, an M.A. in Islamic Theology at the University of Riyadh, College of Education, and a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at the University of Wales, UK. From 1994 to 2001, Dr. Philips founded and directed the Islamic Information Center in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He was a professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University in Dubai and Ajman University, head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Preston University-Ajman, UAE, and is currently a lecturer at Qatar Guest Center, Doha, Qatar. More information about him and his activities may be found at www.bilalphilips.com.



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