

How Can I Get Closer to Allah?

What Every Muslim Woman Needs to Know
About Her Menses and After Giving Birth

Jamila Hakam & Nazek Younis

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IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



How Can I Get Closer to Allah?

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PUSTAKA PERDANA



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Transliteration Chart

أ	a
آ. آى	â
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ

8 Transliteration Chart

ط	t
ظ	<u>dh</u>
ع	'
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ - ه - هـ	h
و	w
و (as a long vowel)	oo
ي	y
ي (as a long vowel)	ee
ء	'
	(Omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs:

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أو ، و	Long o, as in <i>dough</i>	au, aw, ow
أي ، ي	Long a, as in <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

َ	Fatḥah	a
ِ	Kasrah	i
ُ	Ḍammah	u
ّ	Shaddah	Double letter
◌	Sukoon	Absence of vowel



Arabic honoric symbols used in this book

(ﷻ) : *Subhânahu wa Ta'âla* — “The Exalted”

(ﷺ) : *Şalla-Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* — “Blessings and peace
be upon him”

(ﷺ) : *'Alayhis-Salâm* — “Peace be upon him”

(ﷺ) : *Radîa-Allâhu 'Anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him”

(ﷺ) : *Radîa-Allâhu 'Anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, all praise is to Allah, and prayer and peace on Prophet Muhammad, Messenger of Allah and on his family and all his Companions. We thank Allah for all His Blessings, and we intend by our efforts to please Him, and to make known to our sisters in Islam some important information regarding the true religion.

Allah (ﷻ) tells us:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ [سورة الذّاريات: ٥٦]

«I created the jinns¹ and human beings only that they may worship Me.»² (Qur'an 51: 56)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not go to extremes, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, afternoons, and the last hours of the night.»³

¹ Jinns are non-human, rational beings created by Allah, often referred to as 'demons' in English.

² In this book, the translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an have been altered slightly to render the language more graceful and easier to understand.

³ *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri*, vol. 1, hadith no. 38.

Preface to the Second Edition

In response to the requests of some readers, we have made some revisions to the original manuscript, and expanded it in order to include more information, particularly about worship in Ramaḍân. In addition, we felt that it was important to note the availability of more material in English on this subject in the years since the first edition was published. This new edition is dedicated to ‘Umm Omar’, who lovingly reminded us of the importance of imparting beneficial knowledge as one of the three ways the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has told us that our good deeds can continue after we die. May Allah accept this effort from her, and may He have mercy on her and grant her Paradise for her patience in adversity.

Preface

Some of the questions Muslim women ask most often regarding their practice of the religion have to do with menstruation. This is because most women are affected by menstruation and/or post-childbirth bleeding for regular and prolonged periods in their lives. Also, Islam has specific rules for a woman in these conditions.

Jamila Hakam is a mother and life-long student, and has a Master’s degree in Linguistics. She has been interested in the subject of the worship of Allah as it affects women since she accepted Islam many years ago. She felt that she had many unanswered questions about the topic of worship during the time of a woman’s menstruation. More specifically, she had not found an answer to the question of whether or not a menstruating woman could read the Qur’an.

Jamila began to look for answers to her questions in books of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). She found a fatwa (religious decree) in

the great work of Ibn Taymiyah, *al-Fatâwa al-Kubrâ*, which stated that it was permitted for a menstruating woman to read and recite the Qur'an. From there she started to research the subject in more detail. She wrote a short paper outlining what she had learned, and kept it in her file until she could find a way to disseminate the information to other women.

Later on she moved to Oman, where she met Nazek Younis, a neighbour of hers. Nazek, who was also a mother and a teacher, was pursuing a degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies with the American Open University. She and Jamila discussed the paper and the topic of menstruation from the fiqh point of view. Nazek's native language was Arabic, and so she was able to help research the topic more thoroughly and to add to the scholarliness of the work. Thus she became a co-author of the paper, and also translated it into Arabic. Upon the encouragement and suggestion of friends, Nazek and Jamila decided to prepare their research for publication as a booklet. With Allah's help, it will be available to Muslim women all over the world.

Introduction

Whenever a Muslim woman has a question about her religion, she should seek the answer in the Qur'an (Allah's revealed Word) and the Sunnah (the example in word and deed) of His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). If the answer is not found in these two sources, she should look to trustworthy Muslim scholars for help. She is encouraged to read, study, and learn as much as she can about her religion, for the search for religious knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim individual.⁴

⁴ *Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Deen: Revitalization of the Sciences of Religion*, English trans., 1997, Pp. 9-15.

If the question is about a subject related to fiqh (which deals with understanding and interpreting the sharia or Islamic law), she may find more than one simple answer. This is in part because after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the end of Revelation, the Companions and those who came after them spread out over the Muslim world and became separated by space and time. This separation, in an era where fast transportation and instant communication did not yet exist, meant that scholars had to develop their schools of thought in near isolation from each other and, in some cases, far from the sources of the Sunnah.

As a result, the Imams who founded these schools of Islamic thought each developed a different set of opinions and legal decisions to be put into practice by their followers. The four Imams of the major Sunni schools of thought never intended for their opinions to be used to divide and split the Muslim community. In fact, they all said that if anything which they had decreed was not in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), then it was to be disregarded.⁵ Nonetheless, these schools of thought evolved over many centuries into rigid sects.⁶ People began following them blindly, and Muslims lost sight of the more important goals of unity in their religion and obedience to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) above all else.

Every century or so, however, Allah the Exalted has given one or two of His servants the knowledge and wisdom to look beyond the petty divisions and call Muslims back to the straight path.⁷ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «The best of people is my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them.»⁸

⁵ See the Introduction to *al-Muwatta* by Imam Mâlik.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of this topic, see *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 2nd ed., by Bilal Philips, IIPH, Riyadh, 2006.

⁷ Sayyid Sâbeq's Introduction to *Fiqh us-Sunnah*, English trans., Pp. xi-xiii.

⁸ Bukhari and Muslim.

These three generations of virtuous Muslims are known as ‘the righteous ones who follow’ (what has been originally handed down — that is, the Sunnah), while those who followed after the first three generations are often called ‘people of the Sunnah’.

Some of those in the long chain of scholars and thinkers whose work still influences Islamic thought today are Abu Ḥamad al-Ghazâli, Muhammad ibn Rushd, Taqi ad-Deen ibn Taymiyah, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhâb, and Hassan al-Banna. It was Al-Banna who commissioned his student and colleague Sayyid Sâbeq to write the now well known *Fiqh us-Sunnah*.⁹ Contemporary scholars like Sayyid Sâbeq and Muhammad Shaukâni have depended greatly on the legacy of the earlier righteous followers in making known to modern Muslim readers the true nature of the Sunnah. It is in these scholars’ writings as well as in the opinions of the four Imams that we can find the answers to our questions on the topic of worship and menstruation.

How does menstruation or postpartum bleeding affect my ability to worship?

Believing Muslims who practice their religion sincerely know that worship of Allah takes many forms. *Ṣalât* (formal prayer, not simply supplication),¹⁰ *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity), *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *du‘â’* (supplication as distinct from formal prayer), reading and reciting the Qur’an, and *istighfâr* (seeking forgiveness from Allah) are all forms of worship that they perform on a daily basis. Fasting, *i’tikâf* (seclusion in the mosque), *zakât*

⁹ Introduction to *Fiqh us-Sunnah*, p. xv.

¹⁰ In this book we will use the term ‘prayer’ only to mean formal prayer, and not simply supplication.

