

The Little Green Book

Volume II Chapter 18

On Woman and Her Periods

Woman is pseudo-menstrual when blood is discharged from her vagina outside the time of her regular periods. The blood may be yellowish, cold, and fluid, and be discharged without any burning sensation; it may also be blackish or yellow, hot, thick, and cause a burning sensation as it passes.

Pseudo-menses are of three kinds: weak, medium, and abundant. If the blood does not fully soak a piece of cotton introduced into the vagina, the pseudo-menses are weak; if it soaks the cotton without going through to the fabric placed over the vulva, the pseudo-menses are medium; if, on the other hand , the blood soaks through both cotton and fabric, these are abundant pseudo-menses.

In the case of weak pseudo-menses, the woman must wash according to religious ritual before praying, change the cotton or ash it, and also wash her vulva if it has been soiled by the blood.

The menstrual period proper is the period of those few days during the month when blood is discharged from women's vaginas. This blood is most often thick, hot, blackish red or bright red, and gushes forth with a burning sensation.

Women of the lineage of the Prophet of Islam are menopausal at the age of sixty; others, once they are over fifty.

Blood that is discharged from the vagina of a girl under the age of nine and a woman over the age of sixty can therefore not be considered menstrual blood.

The pregnant woman and the nursing woman may have regular menstrual periods.

It is indispensable that during the first three days of the menses, the blood not be stopped from flowing; therefore, if the flow ceases after two days to resume a day later, it is not menstrual blood.

It is not indispensable that the blood flow out of the vagina for all of the three days; it is sufficient that there be some inside the vagina.

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If a woman sees blood flowing from her vagina for more than three days and less than ten days, and is not sure whether this is menstrual blood or blood from an abscess, she must attempt to introduce a piece of cotton into her vagina and then withdraw it. If the blood runs out on the left side, it is menstrual blood; if on the right side, it is from the abscess.

If a woman sees blood flowing from her vagina and wonders whether it is menstrual blood or the blood of her hymen, she must introduce a piece of cotton into her vagina and leave it there for a while before withdrawing it. If the blood has spotted only the edges of the cotton, it is the blood of the hymen; if the whole piece of cotton is soaked with blood, it is menstrual.

If a woman sees blood flow from her vagina for less than three days, then stop and resume for a period of three days, then stop and resume for a period of three days, then stop and resume for a period of three days, it is this second flow which must be considered to be that of the menses, even if the first one coincided more exactly with her menstrual cycle.

During the time a woman is menstruating, it is preferable for a man to avoid coitus, even if it does not involve full penetration – that is, as far as the circumcision ring – and even if it does not involve ejaculation. It is also highly inadvisable for him to sodomize her during this time.

If the number of days of the woman's menstrual period is divided by three, a husband who has intercourse with her during the first two days must pay the equivalent of 18 nokhods [about 3 grams or 0.1 ounces] of gold to the poor; if he has it on the third or fourth days, the equivalent of 9 nokhods; and if he has it during the last two days, the equivalent of 4.5 nokhods.

Sodomizing a menstruating woman does not require such payment.

If a man has intercourse with his wife during all three of these periods, he must pay the equivalent in gold of 3.5 nokhods. If the price of gold has changed between the coitus and the time of payment, the rate in effect on the date of payment will prevail.

If during an act of intercourse a man notices that the woman has begun menstruating, he must withdraw; if he fails to, he must give alms to the poor.

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If such a man cannot afford to give alms to the poor, he must at least give something to a beggar. If he cannot afford that either, he must ask forgiveness of Allah.

After a wife's menstrual period, her husband may repudiate her, even if she has not yet made her ablutions. He may also indulge in relations with her, but it is preferable that he wait until she has made her ablutions. In the interim, the woman is not authorized to do anything which is forbidden to her during menstruation, such as going into a mosque or touching the writing of the Qur'an, until she has completed her ablutions.