

Islamic Academy of Coventry

An Introduction to

Female Hygiene

from An Islamic Perspective

(3rd Edition)

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Introduction

I begin with Praising Allāh, Lord of the Worlds and sending Peace and Salutations to our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Cleanliness is a very important aspect in Islām. Our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ mentions the following Ḥadīth narrated by Abi Mālik Al-'Ash'ari رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ قَالَ
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ¹

'Cleanliness is half of Imaan'.

Great emphasis has been placed on cleanliness and it is mentioned numerous times in both the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth to show its paramount importance in Islām.

The reason why it is so important is that it is a pre-requisite, a condition for prayer. Before a person can engage in certain types of prayer like Ṣalāt, Ṭawāf or reading the Qur'ān, a person must be in a state of ritual purity. Being in a state of physical purity also safeguards people from many illnesses and diseases.

Some of the reasons for compiling this booklet were that we found many people had queries about cleanliness both young and old. Whether this is related to specific situations in the workplace or at schools. We also found that there was a genuine knowledge gap where many adults in our community were not familiar with the basic concepts of hygienic requirements in Islām, such as how to perform Ghusl and what hair needs to be removed on a regular basis etc.

There are many resources available, especially for females which explain subjects such as menstruation, cleanliness and purity in Islām in great detail, but sometimes it is difficult to translate this information into real life situations. We have prepared this booklet/workshop with this in mind and Inshā'Allāh it will address some of these specific issues related to cleanliness, which affect females in different environments. We have summarized the main Masāil from the great work of Fiqh – Hidāya on the subjects of menstruation (Ḥayḍ), postnatal bleeding (Nifās) and bleeding due to illness (Istiḥāḍa).

Another similar booklet has already been prepared for males but the challenges faced by females can be different and more complex in many situations, hence it was decided that a separate booklet would be compiled.

We have also placed great emphasis on prepubescent children – children who are due to become Bāligh (mature) and young teenagers. This is a time when their bodies are going through a lot of physical changes and many things happen which can be embarrassing and even frightening in some cases. They face certain scenarios where they are unsure what to do. This then results in a lot of them staying ritually impure without actually knowing it.

The booklet can also be used by females who are new to Islām and would like a quick summarized view of the hygienic requirements. Many times they are overcome by the sheer amount of information available from different sources but Inshā'Allāh this booklet will cover off the important points.

A quick overview of the subjects covered in this booklet is as follows:

- The signs of a female coming to age in Islām
- How does a person become ritually pure from uncleanness?
- What are the requirements in Islām with regards to personal hygiene, i.e. hair removal, cutting nails etc.?
- Address issues which young teenagers face during puberty
- Address issues for people who wish to pray in schools or the workplace
- Answer common questions relating to female hygiene on Ḥayḍ (menstruation), Nifās (postnatal bleeding) and Istiḥāḍa (bleeding due to illness)

It is recommended that both children and parents read this booklet together. There are still subjects today, which are considered taboo. Many parents still feel embarrassed talking about certain subjects with their children. There is an expectation that the child has acquired this knowledge during his/her time at Madrasah, but in reality it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child knows all the relevant Masāil (rulings) before he/she comes of age. The child must be comfortable enough to be able to ask their parents any questions they may have and the parent must be comfortable enough to answer them without being embarrassed and more importantly know the correct answers themselves.

If this booklet is being taught in a workshop or Madrasah to younger females then it may not be necessary to go through all of the chapters and questions i.e. related to Nifās. Place emphasis on those chapters which are relevant to them and explain in a clear and simple manner.

In this edition we have provided more clarification on some rulings and made amendments as necessary making it easier to understand. We have kept it concise as it is only an introduction to the subject matter. If you need more information or clarification about your own personal situation then it is always good to consult your local scholars.

Alḥamdulillah we have had a lot of support from senior authorities in this field whose input has been invaluable in improving this booklet. We have used the article "The Laws of Menstruation, Postnatal Bleeding & Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding" published by www.zamzamacademy.com to aid us in further elaborating on our subject matter.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who have helped and contributed to the compilation of this booklet. May Allāh ﷻ accept all our efforts, Āmīn.

Ebrahim Noor (16th Shabaan 1437)

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Coming of Age in Islām – Bulūgh

When a person comes of age in Islām, it is a life changing experience. The terminology used in Shari‘ah is called Bulūgh, so a person becomes ‘Bāligh’ when he/she reaches the age of puberty. The person will now have to fulfil all of the acts of Worship, which have been commanded to them by Allāh ﷻ. They will now have to read Ṣalāt five times a day, they will have to keep all of the compulsory fasts in the month of Ramaḍān, they will have to discharge the Zakāt if they have enough wealth and also go for Ḥajj if they can afford to do so. They will now be answerable for all of their actions, good and bad.

The laws of modesty now also become an obligation for both males and females. The body parts which constitute as ‘‘Awrah’ or ‘Satr’ (private parts) have to remain covered in front of the relevant people. For females, they must also observe the rules of Ḥijāb. There are many resources which have further information regarding this subject.

Note for Parents: Teach your children how to read Ṣalāt from an early age

Now before we go into what makes a person mature or Bāligh in Islām, it is very important that the child knows how to fulfil all of the obligations that are required of them before they become Bāligh. For example, the time to learn how to read Ṣalāt is not after they become Bāligh but before, so when the time comes, they already know how to pray and not just that, they are in a habit of praying 5 times a day so they don’t see any difference in the change-over.

If we try to start teaching our children how to read Ṣalāt after they have become Bāligh, by the time they are reading five times a day they will have already missed so many Ṣalāt. These Ṣalāt will then have to be made up. The advice for parents is to follow the advice from the Ḥadīth of our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ²

Our Prophet ﷺ said

“Command your children with Ṣalāt when they are seven years old”.

Now the wisdom behind this is that if a child starts to learn how to read Ṣalāt from the age of seven, by the time the child has reached ten years of age, in these three years, they have gradually built up from reading a single Ṣalāt to one Ṣalāt a day and slowly building up to five Ṣalāt every day. Once they are regular in this, it will be easy for them to maintain this momentum and carry on reading Ṣalāt five times a day after it becomes an obligation on them. We also have to remember that sometimes females reach maturity at a much younger age than males, so the sooner they are taught the better.

Signs of a Female becoming Bāligh

The natural ways in which a female will be classified as having becoming Bāligh or mature are as follows:

- If a female starts her menstrual cycle (period).
- If she experiences a nocturnal emission.
- If she gets pregnant without starting her menstrual cycle.
- If a female reaches 15 years of age and hasn’t experienced any of the above, then she will become Bāligh. The 15 years are Islamic years so this equates to approximately 14 years and 6 months in the Western Calendar.

Menstruation

The medical description for menstruation is “a recurring cycle in which the endometrial lining of the uterus prepares for pregnancy. If pregnancy does not occur, the lining is shed at menstruation”.

To put it simply, a female reaches the age where her body now allows her to reproduce. Each month her body prepares for fertilization but if this does not occur, the lining of the uterus will break down and is discharged.

The first time this occurs, the girl will notice some bleeding in her underwear, this could be quite heavy. She could also experience some pain during this time, especially in the lower abdomen area.

More information about the menstrual cycle will be shared later.

Nocturnal Emissions

A female may experience a sexual sensation while sleeping (and may see a dream of a sexual nature) which results in some fluid being discharged. This is known as a wet dream or a nocturnal emission. The fluid discharged will be different to urine and normal discharge. If the fluid is visible, then she will be in a state of Janābat (ritual uncleanness) and Ghusl (ritual bath) will become compulsory upon her.

Note: Certain Prayer Actions become restricted until Ghusl has been performed

The person who has experienced a wet dream will not be allowed to perform the restricted prayer actions like reading Ṣalāt, performing Ṭawāf or touching the Qur'ān until they have become ritually clean by performing Ghusl. More information about this can be found later.

If this is the first time this has happened and the female has not started her menstrual cycle or reached 15 years of Islamic age, she will now be considered Bāligh.

Question: What if she had a dream of a sexual nature but there was no sign of fluid discharge/wetness, does Ghusl still have to be performed? Also does this make the girl become Bāligh?

Answer: The Ghusl (ritual bath) will not be compulsory if no visible sign is found. If this is the first time a girl has experienced this and she has not become Bāligh due to any other reason, she will still be considered a minor.

So to summarize this section, a girl will become Bāligh when she experiences her first menstrual cycle, experiences a nocturnal emission, gets pregnant without starting her menstrual cycle or reaches 15 years of Islamic age without experiencing any of the previous signs. This girl will now have to complete all of the obligations. In Islām she will now be considered an adult.

Important Note: There are other non-natural ways in which a person will be classed as having reached puberty but these are prohibited in Islām.

Ḥayḍ, Istihāḍa & Nifās explained

It is important to understand a few terms which are commonly used when it comes to discussing female hygiene in Islām. It is imperative that the difference between these terms\states is understood clearly as the ruling for each will be different. There are also certain actions which are not permissible if a female is in a certain state whilst at other times they will be permissible, these will be discussed later.

Ḥayḍ - Menstruation

The Arabic term used for the menstrual cycle is Ḥayḍ – حيض

This is taken from the root word حاض which means to flow. Due to the blood flowing each month, it is called Ḥayḍ.

Discharge of any colour red, yellow, muddy, green, black, or earthy which a female sees in the days of menstrual bleeding will be considered menstrual discharge. Her menstruation will continue until her discharge become pure white or clear or there is no discharge.

Question: In Islām, what is the minimum amount of days a female can experience a menstrual cycle?

Answer: Depending on the school of thought whom you follow, there is a difference of opinion as shown below.

Ḥanafī	The minimum period is three days and three nights.
Shafī'ī	The minimum period will be one day and one night (if it is less than this, then it will be classified as Istihāḍa)
Māliki	There is no minimum limit, even if a female bleeds just once, this will be classified as Ḥayḍ.
Ḥanbali	The minimum period is three days and three nights.

Question: In Islām, what is the maximum amount of days a female can experience a menstrual cycle?

Answer: Again there is a difference of opinion among the schools of thought. Each opinion is given below.

Ḥanafī	10 days and nights
Shafī'ī	15 days and nights
Māliki	17 days and nights
Ḥanbali	15 days and nights

Note: Ghusl must be performed at the completion of the menstrual cycle

After a woman completes her menstrual cycle (whether this is less than 10 days as per her normal habit or a maximum of 10 days & nights according to the Ḥanafī school of thought) she must perform Ghusl before she can resume the restricted prayer actions which will be mentioned later.

For the Ḥanafī School of thought, any bleeding less than three days or more than ten days will be considered as Istihāḍa (bleeding due to illness).

Question: In Islām, what is the minimum duration a woman can be classed as pure between two cycles?

Answer: The minimum duration of purity (ṭuhr) or duration of cleanliness between two cycles is 15 days. If a woman, after completing her cycle begins to bleed again within 15 days, it will not be considered the start of a new cycle.

Question: In Islām, what is the maximum duration a woman can be classed as pure?

Answer: There is no maximum duration for purity. Hence, a woman will remain pure as long as she does not bleed, even if it extends to several months or years

Question: A woman's normal menstrual cycle was 7 days. Her cycle has now changed so that it is permanently 14 days, in the last few days there is just a little spotting, when can she start reading her Ṣalāt?

Answer: According to the Ḥanafī School of thought, the maximum time for a menstrual cycle is 10 days, therefore any bleeding after this will be considered as Istihāḍa, bleeding due to illness. So after 10 days she will perform Ghusl and start reading Ṣalāt. Although she will begin praying after 10 days, she will have to make up 3 days of prayer (from day 7-10). Her habit will remain the same as the previous month, which was 7 days.

During her Istihāḍa, each time she sees blood her Wuḍū will be invalidated. If the bleeding is excessive then she may be considered a Ma'dhūr (excused person) if she meets the criteria for an excused person.

In subsequent months, if the bleeding no longer exceeds 10 days and finishes before, this new time will become her habit.

Istihāḍa – Bleeding due to illness

The Medical Term given to Istihāḍa is Dysfunctional Uterine bleeding.

If a female experiences more blood loss through menstruation or postnatal bleeding than normal (not through the amount of blood but the amount of days she continues to bleed) then she is known as a Mustahāḍa - مستحاضة

According to the Ḥanafī School of thought, any blood which is less than 3 days or more than ten days (240 hours) i.e. beyond the maximum duration of menstruation will be classed as Istihāḍa. If a woman bleeds in the time between two menstrual cycles (within 15 days after the completion of her cycle), then this will also be Istihāḍa.

If a woman who has given birth bleeds for more than 40 days (according to the Ḥanafī school of thought), any bleeding after this will be classed as Istihāḍa.

A female who is experiencing Istihāḍa will be considered like a normal woman who is Ṭāhir (ritually pure). She will have to perform all actions of prayer but there will be a difference on how often she shall perform Wuḍū (ablution) for her Ṣalāt. She will also be allowed to continue having relations with her husband.

If a woman who is suffering from Istihāḍa is also established as a Ma'dhūr (excused person) then she will perform Wuḍū for the time of each obligatory (Farḍ) prayer. And, with that Wuḍū it is permissible for her that she prays as many obligatory or optional prayers (Farḍ, Wājib, Sunnah & Nawāfil) as she desires during that prayer time. She will also now be able to touch and recite the Qur'ān. When the time for the next obligatory prayer arrives, she will perform Wuḍū again.

Note: For a Mustahāḍa to be classed as a Ma'dhūr (excused person), her bleeding must be excessive to the point that she cannot make Wuḍū and pray without bleeding again. So her problem remains for the complete duration of an obligatory prayer time in a way that she cannot perform Wuḍū or Prayer without its absence.

She will remain in this condition (excused) if her bleeding reoccurs at least once during each subsequent prayer time. As soon as a complete obligatory prayer time finishes without her bleeding even once, then she will no longer be classed as a Ma'dhūr.

The Wuḍū of a Mustahāḍa who has been classed as Ma'dhūr (excused) will not break if she bleeds again during the same obligatory prayer time. However, her Wuḍū will be nullified by all other nullifiers (i.e. passing gas, passing urine or stool etc.) and with the expiry of the current prayer time.

It is always good practice that you seek advice from an 'Ālim\Ālimah and discuss your unique situation to confirm whether you can be classed as a Ma'dhūr or not.

Nifās – Postnatal Bleeding

The blood which flows after a woman gives birth is known as Nifās.

Question: In Islām, what is the minimum limit for Nifās?

Answer: There is no minimum limit for Nifās; there is a consensus of opinion on this. So a woman, who gives birth and experiences no blood loss after, will be considered Ṭāhir (ritually pure). She will have to complete all of her obligatory prayer actions.

Question: In Islām, what is the maximum limit for Nifās?

Answer: There is a difference of opinion with regards to the maximum limit as shown on the following page.

Ḥanafī	40 days
Shafī'ī	60 days
Māliki	40 days
Ḥanbali	40 days

After a woman's maximum postnatal bleeding (Nifās) term has finished she will perform Ghusl and start to pray. If she still experiences bleeding after the maximum term has completed, it will be considered as Istihāḍa.

If a woman stops bleeding before the maximum time limit for Nifās, then she must perform Ghusl and start to pray. She will not wait for the maximum period to elapse before commencing her Ṣalāt.

Question: A woman gives birth to a child and experiences no postnatal bleeding, does she still need to perform Ghusl in order to resume the restricted prayer actions?

Answer: Yes, even if a woman experiences no postnatal bleeding, she will still need to perform Ghusl before she can start to read her Ṣalāt, touch and read the Qur'ān etc.

Important Note: Make a note of important dates and times

In Islām, many Masāil (rulings) with regard to purity are based on timing. Therefore it is imperative that a clear record is kept of key dates and times, some of which are as follows:

- What date and time did your current menstrual cycle start?
- What date and time did your current menstrual cycle finish?
- How long was your cycle from the previous month?
- What dates are you projected to start your cycle the following month?
- What date & time did you give birth?
- How long was your cycle in the month of Ramaḍān?
- How many obligatory fasts need to be made up due to having a cycle in Ramaḍān?

Actions which are prohibited during the Menstrual Cycle & Postnatal Bleeding

When a female is on her menstrual cycle (Ḥayḍ) or experiencing postnatal bleeding (Nifās), she will not be considered to be in a state of ritual purity (Ṭahārat). Therefore, she will be excused from certain obligations & not allowed to perform certain actions as follows:

- 5 times Daily Ṣalāt (these do NOT have to be made up)
- Sajdah Tilāwah & Sajdah Shukr (it is not permissible to perform both of these prostrations)
- Recitation of even a single verse of the Holy Qurān
- Fasting in Ramaḍān (these DO have to be made up - Qadha)
- Holding the Maṣḥaf (Qur'ān) without a cover or holding the Qur'ān which has a cover, which cannot be separated. If a cover is attached to the Qur'ān like a sleeve, this will still not be permitted. If a cover is wrapped around the Maṣḥaf (Qur'ān) then she will be allowed to carry it. It is also not permissible to touch the Qur'ān with a portion of one's garment, such as the sleeve or the edge of a dress while one is wearing them.
- Performing the Ṭawāf (circumambulation) of the Ka'bah.
- Entering any area which is designated a Masjid (A man or woman who is in the state of ritual impurity (Janābat) is also not allowed). A woman on her period is allowed to enter a temporary place of prayer (Muṣalla) or a Prayer Room as they are not deemed to be a Shar'i Masjid.
- Intercourse will not be allowed with the husband.
- Sexual Enjoyment from the navel to below the knee of a menstruating woman

Note: Make up the fasts missed in Ramaḍān as soon as you can

For fasting in Ramaḍān, the female will calculate how many fasts she has missed during the month and make them up as soon as possible. There is a habit nowadays that females wait until the winter time when the days are short to make up their fasts as it is easier. One must remember that if they pass away before making up the fasts then they will not have fulfilled their religious obligations.

Question:

Can a woman who is on her menstrual cycle, or in the state of ritual impurity or postnatal bleeding, read the Qur'ān if she doesn't hold it?

Answer:

Women in all three states are not permitted to read the Qur'ān until they attain cleanliness. A single āyah (verse) is not allowed as mentioned above and even less than a verse. The evidence for this is the following Ḥadīth. However, if a woman is teaching the Qur'ān, it is permissible for her to read one or two words at a time, breaking her breath in between.

Also if there are Supplications (Du'as) which contain verses from the Qur'ān, then it is permissible to read them with the intention of reciting the supplication. Also reading less than a verse without the intention of reading the Qur'ān is permissible such as reciting Alḥamdulillah "All praise is for Allāh" with the intention of gratitude or the recitation of Bismillāh "In the name of Allāh" before eating.

We have to remember that It is permissible to take the name of Allah, read Du'as, send salutations and blessings (Ṣalawāt) on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, perform dhikr and prayers of forgiveness (Istighfār).

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ
عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ

لَا تَقْرَأُ الْحَائِضُ وَلَا الْجُنُبُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ³

Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said "A Ḥāḍḍah (a woman who is on her menstrual cycle) will not read, nor will a Junubi (a person who is in the state of ritual impurity) anything from the Qur'ān"

Note: Information for Married Women

If a woman completes her menstrual cycle in less than 10 days as per her normal habit, then she will not be permitted to have relations with her husband until she performs Ghusl.

If a woman stops bleeding after 3 days and before her normal habit, then she must wait until the duration of her normal habit has passed before she can have relations with her husband. The reason for this is that there is a high probability that she could start to bleed again so it is best to refrain.

If a woman stops bleeding after 10 days, then it will be permissible for her to have relations with her husband before she has Ghusl as Ḥayḍ does not last for more than 10 days (according to the Ḥanafī school of thought). It must be noted that it will not be Mustahab (desirable) to have relations before Ghusl; therefore it will be Mustahab to perform Ghusl before having relations.

³ Sunan Tirmidhī 121

Istinjā

Istinjā is the term used to describe the process in which one removes uncleanness after they have been to the toilet. If Istinjā is not done properly then it will leave a person in an impure state. If the person is in an impure state, then all actions of worship which require a condition of ritual purity will not be valid.

Istinjā is also a Sunnah of our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates the following Ḥadīth:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ
كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَرَجَ لِحَاجَتِهِ أَجِيءُ أَنَا
وَعُغْلَامٌ مَعَنَا إِدَاوَةٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ يَعْنِي يَسْتَنْجِي بِهِ⁴

Whenever the Prophet ﷺ went to answer the call of nature, I used to come and another boy with me, with a tumbler full of water so that he may wash his private parts.

As mentioned earlier, to be clean is a requirement for worship therefore it is very important that a person knows how to do Istinjā properly. The following Ḥadīth also shows the warning for people who don't do Istinjā properly.

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ مَرَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِقَبْرَيْنِ فَقَالَ
إِنَّهُمَا لَيُعَذَّبَانِ وَمَا يُعَذَّبَانِ فِي كَبِيرٍ أَمَّا أَحَدُهُمَا فَكَانَ لَا يَسْتَنْجِي
مِنَ الْبَوْلِ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَكَانَ يَمْشِي بِالنَّمِيمَةِ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ جَرِيدَةً رَطْبَةً
فَشَقَّهَا نِصْفَيْنِ فَغَرَزَ فِي كُلِّ قَبْرٍ وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لِمَ
فَعَلْتَ هَذَا قَالَ لَعَلَّهُ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمَا مَا لَمْ يَبْسَ⁵

Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ passed by two graves and he said "Indeed both of them are being punished and they are not being punished for a great thing. As for one of them, he didn't save himself from being soiled with his urine and as for the other; he used to walk around causing enmity between friends". Then the Prophet ﷺ took a fresh palm leaf and split it in half, and planted one on each grave. He was asked why you did this; he said "I hope that their punishment might be lessened, till these get dried"

How to go to the Toilet

Before we go into details of how to perform Istinjā, we must learn the best method of how to go to the toilet. The reason for this is that we are trying to limit the area where the uncleanness spreads to a minimum so it is easier for us to clean ourselves. The more the uncleanness spreads the harder it will be for us to remove it.

The other thing we have to remember is that both urine & faeces are 'Najāsāt-e-Ghalīẓa', which means they are classed as dense or heavy uncleanness. If we get them onto our clothes or body and don't clean them, then it is possible that we will not be in a ritually pure state depending on how much area the uncleanness covers. If we are not ritually clean, again any acts of worship which require ritual cleanliness will not be valid.

Correct method of Going to the Toilet

Before we go to the toilet, we have to make sure we don't leave it till the last minute and go when we are completely desperate. If we wait, then there is a chance that a few drops of urine can come out and make us impure. It is also not good for our health as we put extra strain on our bladder. So let us make sure that we relieve ourselves properly and in good time.

Note: Advice on toilet etiquette

In Europe and America, the most common style of toilet is the seated toilet or commode. These are filled with water at the bottom and it is best practise to put a small amount of tissue paper in the toilet first to reduce the risk of splashing. Splashes can sometimes reach our exposed body parts and cause them to become even more unclean.

Make sure excessive amounts of tissue are not put in the toilet or it will cause blockage.

Also ensure that the seat is clean before sitting on it, so use some tissue paper to clean it first. If needed, you can lay some tissue on the seat as well before sitting to avoid direct contact with your skin.

We must ensure that after we have finished, all the tissue paper is disposed of correctly and if the seat is wet, we wipe that clean as well.

General Etiquette's when going to the Toilet

Before we go to the toilet we should enter with our left foot and recite the supplication mentioned in the Ḥadīth Below.

عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ صُهَيْبٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسًا يَقُولُ
كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْخَلَاءَ قَالَ

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ⁶

Anas رضي الله عنه said “Whenever the Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم went to answer the call of nature, he used to say, “Allāh-humma inni a‘udhu bika minal khubuthi wal khabā’ith”.

O Allāh, I seek Refuge with you from all offensive and wicked things
(evil deeds and evil spirits).

Once we have entered the toilet, we should try and not talk to anyone while we are relieving ourselves.

We should not read anything inside or use any devices including mobile phones and hand held gaming devices.

Try and spend the least time inside as possible.

When removing your clothes, or lowering your garments, make sure that they do not touch the floor or there is a risk that some uncleanness can transfer onto your clothes. Some toilets can be very dirty and very often there is urine on the floor as well so take extra care.

Remove your socks before wearing any sandals which are used especially for going to the toilet, especially in a Masjid or Madrasah. A very common problem nowadays is people wear their socks while they are in the toilet. The sandals may have some uncleanness on them and when the person leaves their socks on inside the Masjid or Madrasah, the uncleanness can spread.

Make sure you have no rings or amulets with Allāh's name on it, or the Qur'ān, or any other prayer material when we go inside the toilet.

It is Makrūh Tehrīmi (very undesirable) to face the Qiblah or have our back towards it while relieving ourselves. The Ḥadīth below explains this.

عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا أَتَى أَحَدُكُمْ الْغَائِطَ فَلَا
يَسْتَقْبِلُ الْقِبْلَةَ وَلَا يُوَلِّهَا ظَهْرَهُ شَرِّقُوا أَوْ غَرِّبُوا⁷

Abū Ayūb Al-Ansārī رضي الله عنه narrates that Allāh's Apostle صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “If anyone of you goes to an open space for answering the call of nature he should neither face nor turn his back towards the Qiblah, he should either face the east or the west”.

The reason why east and west was mentioned in the above Ḥadīth is because Medinah was to the north of Makkah, so by facing either east or west, you would avoid facing or turning your back towards the Qiblah.

So what should you recite when you leave the toilet?

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ
كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنَ الْخَلَاءِ قَالَ
غُفْرَانَكَ⁸

‘Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها narrates that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to come out from the toilet he used to recite “Ghufrānaka” (Your Forgiveness)

In another Ḥadīth, Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to come out from the toilet he used to recite

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ
كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنَ الْخَلَاءِ قَالَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنِّي الْأَذَى وَعَافَانِي⁹

Alḥamdulillah hilladhī Adh'haba ``ānil Adha Wa``āfānī”.
(Praise be to Allāh who rid me of the filth and gave me health)

So both of the above supplications (Du'as) can be read together.

⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī 141

⁸ Sunan Tirmidhī 7

⁹ Sunan Ibn Mājah 297

What can we do Istinjā with?

Before we answer to the call of nature, it is important that we have with us the necessary items we need to become clean. The last thing we want is to go to the toilet and find there is no tissue paper or water or utensil to clean ourselves with.

We have to remember that the following answers are based on the method, which was used over 1400 years ago so today's method will be slightly different in application but the result of attaining cleanliness and purity will be the same.

So what are the items we can use to perform Istinjā?

Clots of soil or stones, and that which take their place (i.e. tissue paper etc.), one must wipe (the area) until it is clean. One must not use writing paper to perform Istinjā.

Originally, before tissue paper was invented people used to use clots of soil or stones. The stones were the type which had natural absorbing qualities so the uncleanness would be easier to remove. We also have to remember that the diet of the past people was very different to ours. Their excretion would be mostly hard, dry and not spread, so it was easier to clean. The substitute to stones nowadays would be tissue paper. So if the uncleanness has not spread and a person cleaned themselves with tissue paper until they were sure that all of the uncleanness has been removed, it will be enough.

Washing it with water is better!

Like it was mentioned earlier, the characteristic of the excretion of the past people was very different to what it is nowadays. Our diets and food have changed, so when we relieve ourselves it is difficult to attain cleanliness with only tissue paper. Therefore to be sure, it is better to use water as well to clean ourselves.

Note: What to do if uncleanness spreads

If the uncleanness exceeds its origin and spreads then we have to use water to remove it. By using just tissue paper, we would first have to use a lot of tissue. The tissue paper will also not be able to completely remove it. The cleaning qualities of water and tissue cannot be compared. The water will remove the impurity, the smell and the effect of the impurity; whereas with tissue paper there is a possibility some of these will remain.

One should not perform Istinjā with a bone, or with dung, or with food, or with the right hand.

The main point for us from the above is to not perform Istinjā with any item that can cause us harm, or an item that does not have absorbing qualities. We must also make sure we don't use the right hand to clean ourselves.

Method of Cleaning after Urination

There is a difference in the method between men and women when it comes to attaining cleanliness after urination. Males have to perform Istibrā' which is the process of ensuring that no urine is left in the private part after urination. Women do not have to perform this however, they must be confident that they have relieved themselves fully.

Once this has been done, it is recommended to use some tissue paper first (with the left hand) to absorb any drops of urine which may be left and then wash the private area with water.

When washing, the utensil must be held in the right hand and the left hand used to clean the actual area.

Istinjā from Greater Impurity

A recommended procedure for doing Istinjā is as follows:

Wipe 3 times with tissue paper, from front to back, this will stop the spreading of the uncleanness to the front private part. If necessary use more tissue paper.

Hold the utensil in the right hand and wash the left hand first if needed and then use the inner part of the middle finger (of the left hand) to clean the soiled area. If needed use the middle parts of the ring finger, little finger and index finger (all of the left hand) in that order. The reason for using the middle part is so that we don't cause damage to our private parts which are very sensitive. By using the fingertips or having long nails can lead to injury when performing Istinjā.

We should continue cleaning ourselves until we are confident that the impurity and smell has been removed.

Wash the hands with soap after Istinjā.

Ensure that the toilet area is left clean and any water spillage has also been dried.

How to put clothes back on after Istinjā

By using only the middle part of our fingers for Istinjā, our finger tips of the left hand should be clean as well as our entire right hand. At the very least our left thumb and little finger tip of the left hand should be clean as well as our whole right hand.

Make sure that we only use the clean portion of our hands and fingers to put our underwear back on and our lower garments or else there is a risk of making our clothes unclean as we haven't had a chance to wash our hands properly yet. This will be relevant especially if we are in a cubicle with no sink in there.

Using a Flat Pan\Squatting Toilet

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ

مَنْ حَدَّثَكُمْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُبُولُ قَائِمًا
فَلَا تُصَدِّقُوهُ مَا كَانَ يُبُولُ إِلَّا قَاعِدًا¹⁰

‘Ā’ishahh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said “Whoever narrated to you that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would urinate while standing, then do not believe him. He would not urinate except while squatting”.

We can see from this Ḥadīth that answering the call of nature in a squatting position is the Sunnah of our Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, so this would be the preferred position. This position is also the cleanest as it reduces the possibility of splashes and the toilet can be easily cleaned for use.

Many of our children and even us nowadays have never used a Flat Pan toilet or the ‘hole in the ground’ South Asian style toilet, so we find it difficult to squat in that position. If anybody ever comes across one of these and has not used them before then it can be a testing experience. The best advice would be as follows:

Completely remove the lower garments so they don’t get soiled and hang them up away from the floor. When removing them, make sure they don’t touch the ground as there is a chance some uncleanliness is on the floor.

Sit in a squatting position with pressure on your stomach, this will ensure that the correct pressure is applied to the organs so that we can relieve ourselves quickly and completely. Make sure you get the correct balance before you start to relieve yourselves as there is a chance you may topple over.

Once you have relieved yourself, perform Istinjā and wash hands.

Take care when putting clothes back on to make sure that they don’t touch the floor and get dirty. This can get tricky but if we roll up the trousers legs or Skirt/dress before we put them on, that can make it easier.

By using flat pan toilets regularly, a person can get used to them and it is also the quickest cleanest & Sunnah method.

General Questions related to Istinjā

Question: At school or work we have no utensil to use in the toilet for water, how do we perform Istinjā?

Answer: You should keep a small empty bottle with you at all times so when the time comes for you to go to the toilet you can take it inside the cubicle with you. If there is no sink inside the cubicle, make sure you fill the bottle before you go in. Make sure you know how to perform Istinjā with that amount of water. Use tissue paper first to remove the uncleanliness then use water after.

If it is too difficult to take a bottle into the cubicle and you want to be more discrete then other products are available in the market from vendors such as WuḍūMate who produce plastic containers which can fold up and be easily put inside the pocket.

Question: Can I use wet tissue paper to clean myself?

Answer: If a person has only urinated, then use dry tissue paper first to absorb the remaining drops of urine. The wet tissue paper can then be squeezed so the water is passed over the private area.

If the person has also passed stool then it is recommended that dry tissue is used first then the wet tissue paper. One must be sure that the uncleanliness has been removed. As much as one can help it they should try and use water so no doubts enter their mind that they are not clean.

Summary

Istinjā is a necessary and integral part of keeping clean. We must learn how to do it and do it properly. Both religiously and hygienically it is beneficial. It safeguards a person from catching infections, diseases, protects them from bad smells and most importantly keeps a person in a pure state from an Islamic point of view. All of the worship a person does will be valid.

On the other hand, a person who stays impure does not fulfil the conditions of prayer. If any of the conditions of a prayer are not complete then the prayer will not be deemed valid. All of the effort and time will be futile.

Note for Parents: Teach your children properly from an early age

It is very important for parents to teach their children how to perform Istinjā from a young age and ensure that they know the correct procedure for going into the toilet. Many parents let their young children go to the toilet and do not teach them the correct method. The child gets into a habit and then finds it difficult later on in life to perform Istinjā properly. For example, letting young male children urinate while standing, or allowing the children to get up after going to the toilet without having cleaned themselves.

We also send our young children to the Masājid and Madāris. We must ensure that they know how to keep clean before we take them. There have been many occurrences where young children have accidents and soil themselves inside the Masājid or Madāris causing the prayer area's to become unclean. This causes great problems for the responsible persons especially when the parents do not help in cleaning up after. So only take our children once they are at an age where we are confident they are clean, they know how to keep clean, that they will not have any accidents and will not disturb other people in their prayer.

Ghusl

Ghusl is the procedure, which a person undertakes to clean their body from ritual impurity or 'Janābat'. If a person does not do Ghusl properly then they will not leave the state of Janābat and any acts of worship, which require a condition of cleanliness, will not be valid.

Question: When does a person need to have Ghusl?

Answer: For females, Ghusl becomes compulsory in the following scenarios

- After completing her menstrual cycle
- At the end of postnatal bleeding
- After having relations with her husband
- After experiencing a nocturnal emission

Once a person has experienced any of the above they must perform Ghusl to become ritually pure again. They must NOT perform any of the restricted prayer actions mentioned earlier whilst in this state.

Compulsory acts in Ghusl

There could sometimes be a need to only perform the Farāiḍ (compulsory) acts of Ghusl in certain situations. For example, if there is a shortage of water, or of time etc.

For a person to become ritually pure they must perform at a minimum the following actions:

- To gargle the mouth once (If fasting ensure water does not get swallowed, keep water in mouth).
- To clean inside the nose once (If fasting ensure water does not pass through the nose into the head).
- To wash the whole body once, ensuring no space is left dry (even that which is equivalent to a hair).

Once the above actions have been completed, a person will now be considered clean and ritually pure.

Note: Ensure the whole body has been washed

There are certain places in the body where people sometimes forget to wash or it may be difficult for water to reach these areas. Water must reach any opening in the body which is not sealed like an ear piercing. We must also ensure to wash the inner part of the navel and ensure that water reaches the all external parts of our private area. Water must also reach the skin under the eyebrows. If a female has long braids then as long as water reaches the roots of her hair, she will be exempt from undoing them.

Sunnah Method of Ghusl

If a person has enough time and there is no shortage of water or time then it is recommended that they perform the Sunnah method of Ghusl, which is as follows.

- First wash your hands up to your wrists.
- Then wash your private parts ensuring that all uncleanness is removed. Also wash any other areas of your body which has uncleanness on it. Remember if any uncleanness has moved onto your hands this also now needs to be washed off before using them to clean the rest of your body.
- We must have the intention that we are performing ghusl to remove our state of impurity. This does not have to be verbal as long as we know why we are doing this action.
- Then perform complete Wuḍū.
- Finally wash the whole body 3 times (ensuring no part is left dry even equivalent to a single hair).

Note: What to do if water collects in the place of Ghusl

If water collects in the place of Ghusl, then one should leave the washing of the feet to the end. So if we are having a shower and the water is not draining quickly enough, we should complete our whole Ghusl except washing the feet. Just before we finish, we should wash both of our feet 3 times. It is recommended that the water be turned off for a little while, so the water completely drains, and then wash your feet.

Hair Removal

Another integral part of cleanliness and hygiene is to remove hair from certain parts of our body. The removal of this hair is Sunnah and is also very beneficial from a hygiene perspective.

Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said "5 things are from Fiṭrah (pure nature), removing the pubic hair, circumcision, trimming the moustache, plucking the armpit hair and shortening the nails".

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَمْسٌ مِنَ الْفِطْرَةِ
الْإِسْتِحْدَادُ وَالْخِتَانُ وَقَصُّ الشَّارِبِ وَتَنْفُ الْإِبْطِ وَتَقْلِيمُ
الْأَظْفَارِ¹¹

Removing Hair from the Pubic Region

There is a lot of misunderstanding as to which area the hair needs to be removed from. The upper boundary is the naval however this does not mean that one should remove any hair all the way up to the naval. There will be a distinct boundary around the pubic area which shows the difference between normal hair and pubic hair. Only the pubic hair needs to be removed.

This will also include any hair on the private part itself.

Removing the hair must be done very carefully. The best time to do this would be whilst one is performing Ghusl and has washed the private area. It is recommended that one removes the hair in a state of purity so if they have been in a state of Janābat – impurity, they have performed the complete Ghusl first.

For females it is recommended to pluck out the hair with tweezers or use a hair removing substance. The hair can be removed by using wax as this will in effect pluck out the hair. Using a hair removing cream may be better for some people who have certain medical conditions such as eczema or psoriasis. Electric razors and epilators can also be used.

If this is difficult to do, then other methods such as shaving are permissible.

To aid in the removal of the hair if shaving, one can use shaving foam, shaving cream or soap if necessary. This will help in easing the removal of the hair. Try and use a clean blade and do not share this with anyone else.

It is recommended that this hair be removed at least once a week; if a person cannot do it every week then they should do it every fortnight. The maximum time period one can leave their hair is 40 days however this is only recommended for people who have extremely slow hair growth. If a person does not remove their pubic hair within 40 days, then they will be sinful.

Once the hair has been removed, ensure that the bathing area, shower tray etc. is cleaned leaving no traces of any hair. Clean the blade and put it away in a safe place out of reach of younger children.

Question: If a person has become Bāligh but has no pubic hair, does he/she still need to shave the area?

Answer: No, only when the hair starts to grow should one start to remove it.

Question: What is the ruling for removing the hair from the rear region around the anus?

Answer: If the hair can be removed without difficulty then it is Mustahab to remove this hair, which means it is desirable. Again one must take great care when removing hair from this area as it is very sensitive and injuries can be caused very easily. This hair does not normally grow until a person gets much older so if there is no hair there, do not attempt to remove it as you could cause yourself injury.

Note for parents: Keep your kids well supplied

Parents should advise their children on how to remove their hair and also make sure they are doing it correctly. Make sure you get them everything they need, like hair removal cream, clean blades and shaving foam if necessary. Also let them know to tell you when they need anything.

Using hot wax to remove the hair can be very painful and sometimes even injurious. It is not recommended for children to employ this method right away.

Removing Hair from Under the Armpits

This hair must also be removed in the same manner as the pubic hair and again it is recommended that it is plucked rather than shaved. Some people might wonder how this is possible, but if a person has made this a habit from the beginning then it is easy and practical. As we have mentioned, waxing and using an epilator is in effect plucking so these methods can also be employed. Otherwise removal using a blade or cream is allowed.

The area will be under the armpit, in the area where the texture of the hair is different to other hair. All of this hair should be removed. The time scales are the same as before. The best practise would be to remove the hair every week.

The armpit is one of the areas where a person sweats a lot. By removing the hair, it removes a lot of smell and bad odour. Many people get bad odour due to having a lot of hair under the armpits so when they sweat, it is harder to clean the area properly and get rid of the smell.

Cutting Nails

Cutting one's nails are also a Sunnah of our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. They are also counted as part of our 'Fiṭrah' or pure nature as mentioned in the Ḥadīth before. Again it is recommended that a person clips them once a week. They should not let them grow to such a length where impurities collect under the nails. It can also cause us harm when we are performing Istinjā if we have long or sharp nails.

Cutting the nails in any way or order is permissible.

Note: Don't bite your nails

There is a habit where people bite their nails; this is unhealthy and not recommended as uncleanliness collects inside the nails and this will then transfer into your mouth!

Masāil for Teenagers

Females on average become mature at a younger age than males. Sometimes they are so young that they do not understand what is happening in terms of their bodily functions during puberty. There are countless examples where a young girl has just become mature and comes across a situation which is confusing and also disturbing.

The purpose of this section is to discuss some of these scenarios to make the children aware of them before they occur. Many people from the older generation will remember how difficult this time was and how many of them were given no education about this whatsoever. We do not want to see our younger generation experience the same issues therefore it is recommended that these Masāil are explained clearly to the child so whenever she comes across such a scenario, she will at least have some idea of what is happening.

We should remember that these things are natural and a person should not be embarrassed about them. It is imperative for the parents to talk and explain these things to the child, or an older sister, or someone who she can confide in. It should be someone who themselves understand what is happening and knows Islamically what steps should be taken. Teachers should encourage dialogue between the child and parents and remove the taboo of discussing such subjects.

The First time you experience a Period – What do you do?

The most common way in which a female becomes mature in Islām is when she starts her menstrual cycle which is commonly known as her period. The female will notice that she has discharged some blood and will see sign of it on her underwear. We have to remember, that this can occur at any time during the night or the day. The bleeding could be very heavy or just a light spotting. So the question is what do you do next?

The first thing is not to panic; it is natural and will become a common occurrence. If you are at home, then inform your mother or your elder sister. They will give you a supply of sanitary pads which you can use. These will be inserted inside your underwear to prevent your clothes from getting dirty.

If you are at school, then visit the school nurse, she may be able to provide you with some pads until you get home. In an ideal situation, you would have been prepared for this situation and your parents would have given you some pads to keep in your bag which you can use if needed. If you are out of the house, and you do not have a pad and there is no way for you to get one, then you may want to line your underwear with some tissue to absorb the bleeding at least until you get home. Once you get home inform your mother or elder sister as before.

You may be in a situation where you don't have anyone to turn to at home, in which case speak to the closest female adult who you can confide in. Get them to help and advise you.

So now that your period has started, there are a few things you need to do now.

Make a note of the time, day and date when you started your cycle.

Do not read any Ṣalāt or Qur'ān until your cycle has finished.

If necessary, place the soiled underwear in the washing and put on some clean underwear. Remember to change the pad as and when required, this will normally depend on how heavy you are bleeding and what day you are on in your cycle. At the beginning of your cycle, even if you are not a heavy bleeder, it is generally advised to change the pad every 3-4 hours to avoid odour. Depending on your flow, you may require a more absorbent pad; there are different levels and lengths of pads available. If you are unsure, please seek assistance on which would be best for you.

Important Note for Parents: Help your children in buying the essentials

It is essential that you help your child choose the right size and right types of sanitary pads and panty liners. There are so many products available on the market at the moment that it will be very confusing for them if they go and try to purchase them, themselves. Ensure that the child is comfortable with them and that they have enough supply. You will also have to instruct them on how they are inserted inside the underwear and how they can be kept in place.

Finally they must be taught on how the pads and the panty liners should be disposed of, whether this is at home or outside. Keep a supply of sanitary disposal bags so this can be done in a discrete manner. If there is a particular place in the home where they need to be disposed, then inform them of this as well.

Question: What is the minimum age a girl can have a period and what is the average age.

Answer: The minimum age is 9 Islamic years, any bleeding prior to this will be classed as Istihāḍa (bleeding due to illness). The average age a girl gets her first period is around 12.

Period Pains

You will also most probably experience some period pains. The medical term for period pains is dysmenorrhoea. The NHS web site has a description for this as follows:

“The pain is usually felt as painful muscle cramps in the lower tummy, which can sometimes spread to the back and the thighs. Sometimes the pain comes in intense spasms, while at other times the pain may be dull but more constant. The pain normally starts with your period and last for between 48 and 72 hours”

If the pain is severe then it is recommended that you visit your chemist and speak to the pharmacist. Inform them of the symptoms and they will be able to advise you on what pain relief you can take. Take your parent or older sister with you because sometimes, certain medication can only be purchased by adults. Ensure that you take the correct dosage.

If the pain relief is not affective then book an appointment with your GP and they can prescribe the relevant medication to help with the pain. In any case, there is no need to suffer in silence, speak to someone and tell them.

The bleeding may be heavy in the beginning and get lighter as the period is about to finish. This may be just some light spotting. Once the bleeding completely stops, make a note of the time and day, calculate how many days your cycle lasted.

Perform Ghusl and start reading your Ṣalāt again.

To be sure that you are ritually clean (Ṭāhir) you can check the colour of your discharge when it is wet as the colour can change when it dries. If the colour of the discharge is white or clear when it is wet then you are ritually clean (Ṭāhir).

Note: If you are ritually pure at the end time of any Ṣalāt, it must be read.

Remember that the Ṣalāt, in which you became clean in, is now obligatory so perform Ghusl as soon as you can and ensure you read your Ṣalāt.

Calculating your Menstrual Cycle

The normal menstrual cycle can last between 22 and 36 days, but the average is every 4 weeks so that is 28 days. Like mentioned earlier, make a note of the time and day your period started and how long the period lasted for. The following month when your cycle starts, make a note of the time and day again. Calculate how many days were between the first day your previous period started and the first day when this period started. This will now show you the length of your cycle. Once again, when your period is finished, calculate how many days your period lasted for. If it is the same as the first month, then it could be that you have a regular cycle.

There are many smartphone applications available, which can help with your calculations such as Period Diary & Period Tracker. These are very useful in helping you remember your cycle and predicting when your next cycles will occur.

Scenario

Look at the information below, and see how the menstrual cycle has been calculated.

- Period 1 started 1st January and lasted for 7 days.
- Period 2 started 29th January and lasted for 7 days.
- Menstrual cycle is 28 days.

Note: Irregular cycles

It could well be that your menstrual cycle varies and becomes irregular. As a rule of thumb, according to the Ḥanafī school of thought, the period will only last for a maximum of 10 days, after this, the bleeding is classified as Istihāḍa (bleeding due to illness). If the periods become irregular, then please consult an 'Ālimah or an 'Ālim who will be able to advise you according to your unique situation. It is also recommended that you see a GP who can help diagnose the underlying reason for the irregular cycle.

Once you have calculated your cycle length and how long your period lasts for, you can mark these in a calendar. Like we have mentioned before, there are also apps available now which can help you keep track of your cycle in a more discrete way.

So why is it important to know when you will be next on your monthly cycle?

- You can make sure you have purchased enough pads before your period starts and carry them with you around the starting time.
- You can calculate how many fasts you will need to make up when your cycle is in Ramadaan.
- You can mentally prepare and be less surprised if you start.

Important Note for Parents: Don't leave it to late to tell them

Please ensure that you speak to your child about menstruation from a young age. Explain to them that this is a natural occurrence and there is nothing to worry about. Also ensure that you tell them what they need to do if they find that they have started their period.

Nearer to the time, give them a few pads & sanitary disposal bags to keep with them in case they start their period while they are at school or while they are out. Make sure you tell them to let you know as soon as anything happens. Make sure you buy enough pads for them as well and they are never short of supply. Help them calculate their cycle and if you find they are in discomfort, help them with their pain relief as well.

Important Note: Using tampons

Using a tampon should be avoided for both married and unmarried women. Sanitary pads should be used instead.

What to do in the event of a wet dream?

Even though this occurrence is quite rare in females, it is still one of the causes for a female to become Bāligh or mature in Islām. Therefore, we have thought it would be relevant if we included a brief section in this booklet/workshop related to this subject.

The Ḥadīth below shows when the Prophet ﷺ was asked if a woman should perform Ghusl if she has a wet dream, and our Prophet ﷺ answered yes if she sees water i.e. discharge.

أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ
جَاءَتْ أُمَّ سُلَيْمٍ امْرَأَةُ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنْ
الْحَقِّ هَلْ عَلَى الْمَرْأَةِ مِنْ غُسْلِ إِذَا هِيَ اخْتَلَمَتْ فَقَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَعَمْ إِذَا رَأَتْ الْمَاءَ¹²

So what should you do as soon as you have had a wet dream?

As soon as the person has woken up and realised they have had a wet dream then they should make preparation for Ghusl. It is recommended that a person first makes Istinjā and then makes Ghusl right away. If the person has had the dream in the early portion of the night, then again it is recommended that they do not wait till the morning but have Ghusl as soon as possible.

They should take a towel, a clean set of clothes and make Ghusl according to the Sunnah method. Some of the person's clothes will also be impure now and sometimes people find it embarrassing to put them into the laundry bin as they might have a strong smell or be quite wet. In that case it is recommended to put the clothes into a plastic bag first, or wash away the impurity first, then put it into the laundry basket.

If this is the first time a person experiences this, then they should inform their parents. Most of the time children are embarrassed but once they inform their parents, this eases their worries. They will tell them what to do with their impure clothes and even help them get into some sort of routine whenever they experience this.

Note: Keep enough spares

Parents should inform their children of the possibility of this happening beforehand. So when it does happen they are prepared and know what to do. If the person's bed sheets have also become impure then these must also be removed. It is always handy to have a spare set of sheets so they can be changed quickly. If a person frequently experiences wet dreams, then it will not be practical for them to keep changing the bed sheets. The best way to protect the sheets from getting dirty is to make sure when sleeping, a person sleeps with underwear and pyjamas, in this way the probability of the sheets getting dirty will be reduced.

Note: Don't delay, do Ghusl right away

If a person is now in need of Ghusl, they must not delay at all as there could be a risk they will miss an obligatory Ṣalāt. Many times people delay the Ghusl till the morning and by the time they wake up, they realize there is not much time left for Fajr Ṣalāt and end up missing it.

Question: A person wakes up thinking they have had a wet dream but can see no signs of any discharge; does the person still need to perform Ghusl?

Answer: If there is no visible evidence that the person has experienced a wet dream then Ghusl will not be necessary.

Question: I had a wet dream while I was fasting, is my fast broken and do I have to repeat it?

Answer: A person's fast does not break if they experience a wet dream, therefore no fasts need to be made up. The person must ensure that they perform Ghusl as soon as they wake up.

Masāil for Schools – Reading Ṣalāt at school

Nowadays many children have facilities to read Ṣalāt in schools but still face practical issues. This section will cover the answers to some common scenarios.

Question: I am not allowed to wash my feet in the sink at school, how do I perform Wuḍū?

Answer: This situation also occurs in many work places. Due to health and safety, sometimes people are not allowed to wash their feet in the sink. We should be mindful that this custom can appear strange to other people who do not know what Wuḍū is and can also sometimes cause them offence when they see us put our feet in the sink. We have to be sensitive to their feelings and ensure we do not cause anyone any offence.

There are a number of alternatives to washing our feet in the sink as follows:

- If a person lives near, they could go home and do Wuḍū in the lunch break.
- If a person is able to keep their Wuḍū, then perform Wuḍū before leaving for school/work.
- If the school/workplace has a disabled bathroom, if the school/company give permission they could use that bathroom.
- Many schools/companies have first aid or quiet rooms which also have sinks which could be used.
- If there is no possible way to wash the feet then use Masah Socks. This will be covered in more detail later on.

Note: Clean up after you have performed Wuḍū

When performing Wuḍū, many people leave a lot of water on the floor, around the sink. We have to realise that other people also use these facilities so we have to make sure we clean all of the water, especially on the floor. It could cause people to slip and have a serious injury. Islām teaches us to be clean, respectful and help protect other people from harm and injury. By leaving a mess it becomes a potential hazard and we are acting against the teachings of Islām.

Question: We don't have a place to read Ṣalāt in school what can we do?

Answer: Schools & Academies are not obliged to provide prayer spaces however upon request; many schools will provide a private area to read. This could be a meeting room, a classroom or even a first aid room. Many schools based on a Christian ethos will have a chapel which you could ask to use. Failing that, the student should try and find a private space to pray where they will not be disturbed. If the student has problems finding a private space, then the next alternative would be get a group of like-minded students together and formally ask the school for a private space with the help of their parents and local school governors if necessary.

The schools in our country are very respecting and understanding and will cater for the needs of their students. All you have to do is not be shy and ask politely, do not be harsh or forceful, as they are not obliged to provide a place to pray.

Question: We have a small break for Lunch and there are lots of people waiting to read, should we read our whole Ṣalāt, in other words our Farḍ, Sunnah and Nawāfil?

Answer: If there is limited space then one should just read their Farḍ Ṣalāt and make space for the other people to also read their Farḍ Ṣalāt. They should wait until everyone has read and if there is still time, read their Sunnah and Nawāfil. If there are brothers who also share the room then please be mindful that they also need to pray so complete your Ṣalāt as soon as you can. Do not waste time sitting and talking in the room if other people are waiting. If the days are long, then you could complete your Ṣalāt when you get home if there is still time.

Question: Can we read in the prayer room when there are brothers also in the room?

Answer: Unless there is some sort of barrier, partition or curtain between the prayers spaces it is not recommended for the boys to read Ṣalāt the same time as the girls. You should arrange to have separate time slots and ensure you do not disturb one another's prayer times.

Sometimes you may be in a multi faith prayer room where there are no barriers and no separate section for females to pray. In this case, find an appropriate place in the room so you are positioned behind and away from any males who may be praying.

Note: Use a sign if necessary to inform people the prayer room is in use

If there are brothers inside the prayer room, do not keep disturbing them to see if they have finished. Wait patiently until they have finished. If time is limited you can knock lightly to inform them you are waiting. Also it may be useful if a small sign is printed on a piece of paper saying 'Sisters Inside' or 'Room in Use' so it can be hung up whilst females are reading to stop getting disturbed. As soon as they have finished they can remove the sign and the males can go in.

We have to remember that females do not have to read with the congregation so if there is no space in the normally allocated prayer room; they can always find another private space to read their Ṣalāt.

Masah over Socks

For people who find it difficult to wash their feet for Wuḍū, whether they are travelling, or at school or work, it is permissible for them to perform Masah over certain types of socks. The socks are referred to as Khuffayn as shown in the Ḥadīth below.

عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ
عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ مَسَحَ عَلَى الْخُفَّيْنِ¹³

Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to perform Masah on Khuffayn.

This section contains very important information on how to perform it correctly. If it is not done correctly, then cleanliness for prayer will not have been obtained and any subsequent prayers will be invalid.

What type of Socks can we do Masah on?

The majority of jurists have stipulated certain conditions on which type of sock can be used for Masah. This is based on the quality of leather socks which are referred to as Khuffayn. Any other sock, on which the Masah will be permissible, has to possess the same qualities as the leather socks.

There are 3 conditions, which the sock must meet for Masah to be permissible on them. These are:

- The socks must be waterproof (thick enough so water doesn't seep through)
- It must be made from a material which will allow a person to walk for approximately 1 mile without tearing
- The socks should be able to remain in position without being tied

Note: If there is a rip in the socks

If there is a hole which is equivalent to 3 small toes, then the Masah will not be permissible on them.

As mentioned earlier, the jurists have taken these conditions by looking at the condition of leather socks. If any of the above conditions are not met, Masah will not be permissible or valid on them.

Note: The socks which satisfy these conditions are normally made out of leather (Khuffayn) however if there is a sock which satisfies the above conditions then Masah will be permissible on it. Nowadays there are some socks made by companies such as SealSkinz and DexShell, which have been approved by the 'Ulema. Not ALL of the socks made by these manufacturers satisfy the conditions therefore we have to ensure we only purchase the socks, which satisfy the conditions. These socks are readily available in outdoor shops as well as Islamic Shops. If unsure, please ask the 'Ulema to verify if the socks meet the required criteria or not.

How will Masah be done on the socks?

Firstly, a person must make complete Wuḍū including washing their feet before putting on the socks. When a person then needs to renew their Wuḍū, they will simply wipe the part of the sock, which is at the top of the foot starting at the toes and working back towards the foreleg just above their ankles. They will use the right hand to wipe the right foot and left hand to wipe the left foot. They will only need to wipe each of them once.

How long will the Masah be Valid For?

For a Muqīm, a person who is not a traveller, the period of validity is 24 hours AFTER they first broke their Wuḍū. Look at the following scenario:

- Person does complete Wuḍū at 8am and puts on Khuffayn after (Masah socks).
- The person breaks their Wuḍū at 10 am.
- The Masah will be valid until 10 am the following day.

For a traveller (a Musāfir) the period will be 72 hours from the moment the Wuḍū was first broken.

What breaks the Masah?

- If 24 hours pass for a Muqīm or 72 hours for a Musāfir from the first time they broke Wuḍū.
- If the socks are taken off.
- Anything, which breaks Wuḍū. If this is within 24 hours for a Muqīm, or within 72 hours for a Musāfir (traveller) then only Masah will need to be done on the sock.
- If a person experiences ritual impurity (Janābat) then Masah will not suffice, the socks will have to be removed and the feet washed.

Question:

Can a person do Masah on Cotton Socks?

Answer:

We have to remember that we are only allowed to perform actions which are permissible and have been proved in Shari'ah. The basis of our Shari'ah is the Qur'ān and Sunnah and our scholars scrutinize each Masāil with regards to the permissibility or impermissibility of the actions. Sometimes we may see someone else performing an action which we may find desirable ourselves. We have to ensure that these actions are verified before we start to act on them. One such action is performing Masah over cotton socks. There is no Ṣaḥīḥ (Authentic) Ḥadīth which States that Masah can be done over normal socks. The only Ḥadīth, which says it is permissible, is in Sunan Abū Dawūd and has been classed as weak. Therefore it is not advisable to perform Masah over any sock, which does not meet the requirements stated at the beginning of the chapter. If a person does perform Masah over them then the Wuḍū will not be valid and the Ṣalāt will be invalid. According to all 4 jurists (Imāms), Masah will not be permissible on them. If a person is able to wash their feet then it is preferable to do this, as this is the original ruling proven from the Qur'ān.

For further explanation on this ruling our eminent scholars Mufti Taqi Uthmani and Maulānā Abdul Raheem Saab have written extensively on this subject. Links are provided below.

www.albalagh.net/qa/masah_regular_socks.shtml

www.tafseer-raheemi.com/q-is-it-permissible-to-wipe-over-thin-cotton-socks-during-Wuḍū/

Masāil for the Workplace

In this section we will deal with questions, which are common in the workplace. As more and more people start to read Ṣalāt in the offices and factories, attaining cleanliness, performing Istinjā and Wuḍū can all be quite challenging. Inshā'Allāh the following section will put some minds to rest.

Question: I went to the toilet and noticed some small specks on my underwear (lesser or greater impurity) and I am not sure what they are, can I still read my Ṣalāt?

Answer: Yes, as long as the combined area of the impure specs does not exceed the size of 1 dirham, which is equivalent to about, 2.75cm in diameter a person can still read their Ṣalāt, although it will be Makrūh Tanzīhi (undesirable).

Question: Do I need to change my underwear or remove them if I have specks on them before I can pray?

Answer: If it is possible to change them or remove them, then that would be ideal. However, like mentioned earlier if this is not possible then a person can still read Ṣalāt (as long as the area has not exceeded 2.75cm in diameter which is about the size of a 50p coin).

Question: Can I just wash the specks by wiping over them a few times with wet tissue?

Answer: The correct method of attaining cleanliness would be to wash the garment 3 times. After each washing the garment should be wrung or squeezed. It does not have to dry before you wash it again. Therefore, by just wiping over them with a wet tissue will not be sufficient.

Question: After I read my Ṣalāt, I noticed that there were specks on my underwear. Is my Ṣalāt counted or do I need to repeat my Ṣalāt?

Answer: If you are confident that there was no discharge after making Wuḍū and during the Ṣalāt then it will be valid. However, if you are fairly certain that it occurred during Ṣalāt or prior to that after you performed Wuḍū, then you will need to perform Istinjā and repeat the Ṣalāt.

Question: After I do Istinjā, I keep on passing drops of urine, especially in Ṣalāt when I go down into Ruku' or Sajdah, I can feel some slight drops of urine coming out, what do I have to do?

Answer: There are a few reasons why this could happen. Firstly, a person could have a medical condition. If this occurs so excessively that a complete prayer time does not pass without some urine coming out, then the person could be classed as a Ma'dhūr (excused). They will have to renew their Wuḍū before each Ṣalāt. Even if there is discharge during Ṣalāt, the Ṣalāt will still be valid. It is recommended that they visit their local 'Ālim/'Ālimah so they can give them the correct advice to see if they can be classified as Ma'dhūr (excused).

Another reason why this could happen is that there is too much pressure on the bladder whilst going into this position. A person should ensure that the trousers he/she is wearing are not too tight or the belt is not tied too tightly to make this happen.

Finally the most common occurrence of this is due to a person not relieving themselves properly. When a person goes to urinate they should be confident that all of the urine has now left the private part and then perform Istinjā.

Note: Females who suffer from discharge should use panty liners so they can absorb any impurities and protect the clothing from becoming unclean. If discharge occurs, the liner will simply need to be removed/replaced and Istinjā performed. If there is no discharge then the liner does not have to be removed before one prays Ṣalāt.

Question: I only had tissue to clean myself, can I still read Ṣalāt?

Answer: If the impurity has not spread on the body more than the size of a dirham (as is often the case with urine or dry stool), then using tissue or toilet paper will suffice. If the impurity has spread more than the size of a dirham (as is often the case with wet stool), merely using tissue will not suffice.

A way around this is to wet the tissue so much that water is dripping out of it, to the extent that it could be considered "flowing" water. Use this tissue to then clean yourselves.

Question: Can I perform Ṣalāt in my uniform or work clothes?

Answer: There is no harm in reading Ṣalāt in work clothes or any uniform as long as it is clean, covers the 'Awrāh and is modest. In addition, if one is able to keep clothes more suitable for the occasion along with her like an abaya or burka that would be even better. We have to remember that a condition of Ṣalāt is that the 'Awrāh must be covered.

The 'Awrāh, are those parts of the body which must be covered for both men and women in different situations i.e. the 'Awrāh for a woman will be different for her if she is with other women, or her mahram or her husband. In Ṣalāt, the 'Awrāh for a woman includes all of her body parts apart from her face, hands up to her wrists and feet up to her ankles (according to the Ḥanafī School of thought). There is a difference of opinion with regards to whether the feet are included in the 'Awrāh or not.

It also recommended to tuck in or remove any ties or any other items which may hang during Ṣalāt like ID Cards.

General Masāil for Women

Question: I started my period 10 minutes after Ṣalāt time had started but I didn't get time to read the Ṣalāt, does it have to be made up?

Answer: Your physical state at the end of the Ṣalāt time will be considered, so if you have started your period, the Ṣalāt will not have to be made up even though you were clean for some portion of the time.

Question: My normal monthly habit is only 5 days but I stopped bleeding this month after 4 days. Should I now perform Ghusl and start reading my Ṣalāt?

Answer: Once you are confident that your bleeding has stopped (check colour of discharge etc.), you should perform Ghusl and start reading your Ṣalāt and fasting. However, it will be necessary to delay the prayer until the end of the Mustahab (desirable) time. It will remain unlawful for you to have intercourse with your husband until the completion of your previous habit of 5 days due to the possibility of further menstruation.

Question: I have a normal habit of seven days but sometimes after bathing on the seventh day I bleed again, when should I take my bath?

Answer: You should delay your bath until the end of the Mustahab (desirable) time of prayer, then take a bath and pray. However, if you continue to bleed then you will not pray. You will do this for each subsequent prayer times until you are certain the bleeding has stopped.

Scenario:

Zuhr time starts at 1 pm and 'Aṣr time starts at 5 pm. A female stops bleeding at 2 pm. If she has not bled again before 'Aṣr time, then she will perform Ghusl and read her Zuhr before the present Ṣalāt time elapses. She will ensure that she has left enough time before 'Aṣr so that Ghusl can be performed and the Zuhr Ṣalāt read without rushing.

Question: If I am breastfeeding and my child vomits over me, do my clothes become unclean?

Answer: Firstly you have to take into account how much has the child vomited. If it is more than the child's mouthful, then this will be considered impure. Now if this vomit now touches your clothes, you have to determine if it is more than the size of a dirham, if it is more than that, then you will have to wash the clothes. If it is less than that then you will be able to perform Ṣalāt in those clothes but it will be Makrūh Tanzihi.

If the child vomits less than a mouthful, then that will not be considered impure and you are able to read Ṣalāt. It would be best if you did wash it though.

Question: Is my Ṣalāt counted if I wear nail varnish?

Answer: One of the conditions of Ṣalāt is ensuring that the body has been cleaned through ablution - Wuḍū. When we perform ablution, water must touch all of the relevant parts of the body. By wearing nail varnish, this stops water reaching the nails. By water not reaching the nails, the Wuḍū would be invalid; hence the subsequent Ṣalāt will also be invalid. This would be applicable to nail varnish on the toes as well as the finger nails.

There are certain products which have now appeared on the market as Halal Nail Varnish claiming that they are permeable, i.e. the water reaches the nail during ablution. We have to remember that if the water does not touch the nail then our Ṣalāt will be invalid because the condition of washing the whole limb during Wuḍū has not been fulfilled. Many people have undertaken tests which have proved negative, meaning that water has not touched the nail which would mean they would not be allowed. The advice would be that these products are not used until independent testing is carried out by an officially recognized body that has no affiliation with the products. One such test was carried out by the Jāmi'at al 'Ulema in South Africa on a certain brand and proved that the product was not permeable.

For more information on this, see the link below.

www.askilmam.org/public/question_detail/25327

Question: If an item of clothing has been worn whilst a woman has been on her Ḥayḍ (monthly cycle) or Nifās (postnatal bleeding), does it have to be washed before she can wear it for prayer when she becomes clean?

Answer: An item of clothing will only become unclean if there are signs of uncleanness on it. If a woman has worn some clothing while she was on her monthly cycle or during postnatal bleeding (Nifās), as long as it is ritually clean then it can also be worn afterwards.

Glossary

Bāligh	The term used in Islām when a person becomes 'of age' or mature. If a person passes away after this point they will be accountable to Allāh ﷻ i.e. they will be asked by Allāh ﷻ if and how well they fulfilled their Islamic Duties. If a person passes away before becoming Bāligh, they will not be held accountable and will enter Jannah (Heaven).
Fiṭrah	Pure Nature
Ghusl	The term used in Islām for taking a bath. It usually refers to washing the body whilst fulfilling the Islamic Conditions to attain a state of ritual purity.
Haraam	Impermissible
Ḥayḍ	Menstrual cycle or period
Ihtilaam	Wet dream or nocturnal emissions
Istibrā'	The process through which a person ensures that all urine has left the system.
Istiḥāḍa	Bleeding due to illness
Istinjā	The process through which uncleanness is removed/cleaned after passing urine or stool
Janābat	Ritual impurity, being in a state where one is unable to perform certain acts of prayer until Ghusl is performed
Ma'dhūr	The term used for an excused person
Makrūh	An act, which is considered undesirable in Islām
Masah	Describes the action of wiping ones hand over a certain part of the body or clothing
Mustahāḍa	The term used for a woman who experiences bleeding due to illness
Nifās	Postnatal bleeding

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