

# The Big Change

## (Menstruation, Cleanliness & Worship)

### What is Puberty?

#### *According to Islam*

Puberty is the point whereby a girl has had her first period and by which the girl becomes accountable to Allah for her actions.

#### *According to Science*

The whole process of physical changes by which a child's body matures into an adult body.

So, if you're a young girl between the ages of 10-14 years, you've probably begun to experience some bodily changes. These can be visible, including breast growth and acne, but there are also many changes happening which we can't see. This is called puberty and adjusting to this stage can be quite daunting. However, understanding what's happening to our bodies makes the process more manageable. Don't to be embarrassed. It's normal!

Although women experience the same changes, these changes can affect each person differently. Girls can experience differences in:

- Breast development
- Acne
- Menstrual cycle
- Growth spurt

### The Signs of Puberty

- Developing Breasts – First you'll get breast 'buds' and then they will grow over time. You will probably get your period 2-3 years after your breasts start developing.
- Growing Pubic Hair – Hair will be thin and soft at first then gradually become coarser. Your period usually comes around 1-2 years after the hair development.
- Discharge – Vaginal discharge that will be either white or yellowish. Your period may start 6-18 months after the start of discharge.
- Level of body fat increases. Hips and pelvis widen.

As your body changes, your emotions can be affected as well. Talk to your Mum or other adult if you get these signs. Most girls start their period between ages 11-13 years.

### **Obligations upon reaching Puberty**

It was narrated from Aishah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The pen has been lifted from three: from the sleeping person until he wakes up, from the minor until he grows up, and from the insane person until he comes to his senses." (Abu Dawood)

Puberty means you are no longer a minor. You are classed as an adult in Islam. The pen is no longer lifted and has started to write your every action. You are accountable now for your bad deeds.

You are now responsible for your salah, zakat, Hajj and fasting. They are obligatory now.

### **Modesty and Dress**

Modesty is a beautiful thing in Islam. The hijab becomes obligatory in front of non-related men once you start your period.

The *awrah* (what should be covered) of a Muslim woman is her entire body, except face and hands in front of non-related men. This means you should avoid wearing short sleeved or close-fitting clothes in front of them.

### **Worship during Menstruation**

There are some acts of worship which are restricted when a woman is on her period. This is because when you are on your period you are considered to be in a state of major impurity.

#### *Prayer*

As soon as a woman starts her period, she must stop making salah. It is *haram* to pray when you are bleeding. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said "When a woman menstruates she stops praying and fasting." (Bukhari)

However, you do not need to make up the missed prayers. Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'That [menstruation] used to happen to us and we were commanded to make up our fasts but we were not commanded to make up our prayers.' (Bukhari)

#### *Fasting*

As soon as a woman starts her period, she must stop fasting. It is *haram* to fast when you are bleeding. So, if a woman starts her period 20 minutes before iftar time, her fast is broken and it doesn't count.

Unlike the prayer, missed fasts have to be made up.

Tip: Write down how many fasts you miss and then schedule some time with your Mum and together make them up!

### *Making Tawaf*

You cannot make *tawaf* around the Ka'bah when you are on your period.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Aishah when she was on Hajj and she started her period "Do as other pilgrims do, but do not make *tawaf* around the House or pray until you are clean." (Bukhari)

### *Touching the Qur'an*

When it comes to touching the actual Qur'an, this is forbidden. Allah says in the Qur'an "... which none can touch except the purified." [al-Waaqi'ah 56:79].

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told the people of Yemen: "No one should touch the Qur'an except one who is pure." (Malik).

### *Reciting Qur'an and Dua*

It is permitted for a menstruating woman to recite Qur'an and continue to earn reward. If she doesn't, she may forget the Qur'an, or she may need to recite it for the purposes of teaching or learning.

It is known that women used to menstruate at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and he did not forbid them to recite Qur'an, or to remember Allah (make *dhikr*) and offer dua."

### *Entering Masjids*

It is not permissible for menstruating women to sit in the Masjid. It is ok if there is place specifically for them away from the prayer place. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told menstruating women to stay away from the Eid prayer-place. This indicates that menstruating women are not allowed to enter the mosque.

### Cleanliness

As Muslims, we are encouraged to maintain a high level of cleanliness and personal hygiene. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told us what acts of cleanliness we should do and how often.

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set us a time limit of no more than forty days for trimming the moustache, clipping the nails, plucking the armpit hairs and shaving the pubic hair.” (Bukhari)

1. Using water/tissue after going to the toilet. Cause for punishment in the grave!
2. Remove the pubic hair (minimum once every 40 days) by any means. This can include shaving, using creams, waxing etc.
3. Remove the armpit hairs (minimum once every 40 days) using any method of removal.
4. Cutting the nails. This should be done regularly as nails grow quickly.
5. Take regular showers as body odour tends to increase when you start puberty.
6. Frequently change your clothes and change your undergarments daily.
7. Use pantyliners in between your period if you have discharge.

Question: Can you pray if you have discharge on your underwear? Yes, you can. The discharge comes from the uterus and is *tahir* (pure). However, it breaks your wudu.

Myth: Some people believe that the person who is in a state of major impurity should not remove any of their hair or nails. This has no basis in Islam.

Tip: Keep spare sanitary pads, especially pantyliners with you at all times!

### **The Actual Period**

In the beginning it can take months before your menstrual cycle establishes a regular pattern. Once it is happening regularly, most women bleed between 5-9 days every 25-32 days.

Note: If you are bleeding for more than 12-15 days see a GP to get it checked out.

Once you have an established period, there are signs that you can look out for telling you your period is about to start. Remember everyone is different and you may only get some of these signs.

- Stomach cramps
- Tender breasts
- Increase in discharge
- Spotting
- Mood changes

### **How Do You Know You've Started?**

Sometimes, you can spot for a few days before you actually start bleeding. If the spotting is light and intermittent, then carry on praying until it gets heavier or continuous. At this point you have started your period.

Question: What if I haven't prayed Asr and then my period came? When you become clean, you need to make this prayer up.

### **Hygiene Whilst on Your Period**

It's important to maintain good personal hygiene whilst you are on your period.

Myth: Some cultures say a woman should not have a shower whilst she is on her period! This has no basis in Islam.

Menstrual blood can be quite smelly! So, it's important that you change your sanitary pad/under garments frequently and you take regular showers.

There are different types of sanitary products you can use when on your period. There are long pads for night times, pads with wings so it remains secure on your underwear. Choose the one that is comfortable and works best for you.

Question: Can we use tampons? There is nothing wrong with using tampons. Some women can find it uncomfortable. You can discuss this further with your Mum or another adult.

### **How Do You Know You've Finished?**

- Bleeding stops
- White discharge

You can wipe yourself with a tissue and if there is no more blood you have stopped your period. It can take a few hours of not bleeding before you are sure your period has stopped. It's important not to rush and it's ok to wait in order to be certain.

Question: What is the maximum number of days a woman can bleed? Some scholars say 10 days and others say up to 15 days. This is something you should ask your Mum.

### **Cleaning After Menstruation Ends**

Menstrual blood is *najis* (impure), meaning that it has to be completely removed from clothes and the body.

Myth: Everything that is worn during your period has to be washed! Only things that have been soiled needs washing. You don't have to change bedding etc. (though it's good to do this regularly anyway).

Once you finish your period, you need to have a *ghusl* (bath) in order to remove the major impurity. You cannot start praying again until you have taken a bath.

### **Performing Ghusl**

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) described how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have a bath.

1. Make the intention in the heart you are purifying yourself from major impurity.
2. Say '*Bismillah*' and wash your hands three times, then using your left hand, wash the private parts.
3. Then do complete wudu
4. Then pour water over the head three times, rub the hair so that the water reaches the roots.
5. Then wash the body, making sure that the water reaches all parts, starting with the right side of the body and then the left, and rubbing it with your hands. (Bukhari)

Question: What if I finished my period in Ramadan before Fajr started? You do not have to have taken a bath before you can start fasting. If you finish your period before Fajr starts, you should start fasting and you can have a bath afterwards.

Note: It is important that you don't delay having a bath. If know you have finished your period, the prayers are now obligatory on you again.