12708 - Marriage before Puberty in Islam

the question

I have not yet reached the age of puberty. Is it correct that a girl could get married before her menses start, or is that just a traditional myth?

Summary of answer

Marriage to a young girl before she reaches puberty is permissible according to Shari`ah, and it was narrated that there was scholarly consensus on this point.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is Marriage Before Puberty Permissible in Islam?

Marriage to a young girl before she reaches puberty is permissible according to Shari`ah, and it was narrated that there was scholarly consensus on this point.

- Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And those of your women as have passed the age of monthly courses, for them the `Iddah (prescribed period), if you have doubt (about their periods), is three months; and for those who have no courses [(i.e. they are still immature) their `Iddah (prescribed period) is three months likewise.} [At-Talaq 65:4]

In this verse, we see that Allah states that for those who do not menstruate – because they are young and have not yet reached the age of puberty – the `Iddah in the case of divorce is three months. This clearly indicates that it is permissible for a young girl who has not started her periods to marry.

At-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The interpretation of the verse “And those of your women as have passed the age of monthly courses, for them the `Iddah (prescribed period), if you have doubt (about their periods), is three months; and for those who have no courses [(i.e. they are still immature) their `Iddah (prescribed period) is three months likewise”. He said: The same applies to the `Iddah for girls who do not menstruate because they are too young, if their husbands divorce them after consummating the marriage with them. (End quote from *Tafsir At-Tabari*, 14/142)

- It was narrated from `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married her when she was six years old, and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine, and she stayed with him for nine years. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 4840 and Muslim, 1422)

Ibn `Abd Al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars unanimously agreed that a father may marry off his young daughter without consulting her. The Messenger of Allah married `A’ishah bint Abu Bakr when she was young, six or seven years old, when her father married her to him. (End quote from *Al-Istidhkar*, 16/49-50)

Can marriage be consummated before puberty in Islam?

The fact that it is permissible to marry a minor girl does not imply that it is permissible to have intercourse with her, rather the husband should not have intercourse with her until she becomes able for that. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) delayed consummating the marriage to `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

For more details, please see the following answers: 27305, 1493, 22442.

And Allah knows best.