623674 - She menstruated once, then it stopped; is she regarded as having reached puberty and the age of accountability?

the question

If a girl gets her period one time only, then it stops after that, is she regarded as having reached puberty and the age of accountability according to Islamic teachings?

Summary of answer

If menstruation occurs with its known characteristics, at an age when menstruation is expected to occur, then the girl is deemed to have reached puberty and become accountable according to Islamic teachings, even if the bleeding stops after that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

Ibn al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The scholars are unanimously agreed that once a woman menstruates, the religious duties become obligatory on her.

End quote from *Al-Ijma`*, p. 42.

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Fat-h al-Bari*, 5/277:

The scholars are unanimously agreed that menstruation signals puberty in the case of women. End quote.

The Malikis specified that the type of menses that signals puberty is that which is not induced by unnatural means, otherwise it cannot be regarded as a signal of reaching puberty.

It says in *Hashiyat ad-Dasuqi*, 3/293:

What is meant by menses is that which is not induced by unnatural means, otherwise it cannot be regarded as a sign of reaching puberty. End quote.

II.

The jurists did not stipulate in order for menses to be a sign of puberty that it should happen more than once; rather they mentioned it in general terms.

In *Al-Mabsut* by as-Sarkhasi, 3/155, it says:

In the beginning she saw blood for one day, then fourteen days passed in a state of purity, then she saw blood again on another day, so the ten days from the first day that she saw blood are menses that is to be deemed a sign of her reaching puberty. End quote.

In *Ash-Sharh* by ad-Dardir, 3/293, it says: [The sign of puberty] is either menses or pregnancy for a female. End quote.

In *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, 3/143, it says: Another sign of puberty in women is if she menstruates at a time when it is possible for that to happen, in addition to the sign of age. End quote.

In *Al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudamah, 9/311, it says: For females there are two more signs: menstruation and pregnancy.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The correct view is that what matters is the characteristics of the blood, because menstrual blood is described as a “harm” or a “painful condition”, so when there is that blood which is a harm or painful condition, that is menses.

End quote from *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 1/468.

Based on the above, if the menses has the known characteristics and occurs at an age when menses is to be expected, then the girl is to be deemed to have reached puberty and become accountable according to Islamic teachings, even if the bleeding ceases after that.

According to the majority of scholars, there can be no menses before the age of nine years.

See: *Al-Mabsut* by as-Sarkhasi, 3/149; *Hashiyat ad-Dasuqi*, 1/168; *Al-Majmu`*, 2/400; *Sharh al-Muntaha*, 1/113.

In *Al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudamah, 1/263, it says: The minimum age at which a woman can menstruate is nine years, because any female younger than that cannot menstruate... and because the reference for that is what is usually the case, and there is usually no female who reaches the age of puberty at a younger age than that. Moreover, Allah has created menstrual bleeding as a sign that the woman will be able to bear a child, so in the case of the one who is not fit to bear a child, there is no need for menses to give that sign. When there is no need for this sign, there is no reason for it to come. End quote.

Dr. Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Mukhtar ash-Shinqiti said:

The majority of scholars mention nine years, and this is the correct and strongest view. The reason why it is the correct and strongest view is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did the marriage contract with `A'ishah when she was six years old, and he married her and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine years old. This indicates that nine years is the age when a woman may start to menstruate.

There is also a reference to that in what is customary. Hence the scholars said: It is rare for a female to begin to menstruate before the age of nine, and it was narrated from the Mother of the Believers `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: When a girl reaches the age of nine years, she is a woman.

End quote from *Sharh Zad al-Mustaqni`* by ash-Shinqiti, 24/7.

And it was narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: When a girl reaches the age of nine years, she is a woman, meaning – and Allah knows best – that she begins to menstruate, so she is now a woman.

Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 1/476.

In *Jami` at-Tirmidhi*, 1109, it says: Ahmad and Is-haq said: If an orphaned girl reaches the age of nine years and a marriage is arranged for her, and she accepts it, then the marriage is valid. They quoted as evidence the hadith of `A'ishah, which says that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) consummated his marriage with her when she was nine years old, and `A'ishah said: When a girl reaches the age of nine years, she is a woman. End quote.

And Allah knows best.