112271 - Can You Do Tawaf on Your Period?

the question

In sha Allah, I am going to do the obligatory Hajj this year. What should I do if I get my menses during the pilgrimage? I know that I should do the rituals like any pilgrim, except for circumambulation of the Ka`bah.

My question is: I want to use medication to prevent menstruation. My husband is a doctor and he does not want me to do this, because he says that it is possible for some women to experience unexpected bleeding. This is causing me a great deal of anxiety, but I want to ask about tawaf al-ifadah: what should I do if I get my menses, because I will be going with an organized group, and my husband has work after Hajj.

I am from the city of Hail, and I have children; in other words, it will be difficult for my husband to leave me with his siblings in Jeddah until I become pure and can circumambulate the Ka`bah after I become pure [following the end of my menses]

Please advise me as to the best thing to do, because I am confused.

Summary of answer

The menstruating woman is not allowed to do tawaf and she should remain in Makkah until she becomes pure; if she leaves, then she must come back and do tawaf. Ibn Taymiyyah views that if a woman gets her menses and cannot remain in Makkah or come back to it if she leaves before doing tawaf, then either she may have an injection to stop the bleeding, and then do tawaf; or she may put on a sanitary pad to prevent the blood contaminating the mosque, and do tawaf, as this is a case of necessity.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Tawaf done by a menstruating woman is not valid , because of the report narrated by al-Bukhari (305) and Muslim (1211) from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), according to which she got her menses just before entering Makkah during the Farewell Pilgrimage. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to her: “Do everything that the pilgrims do, but do not circumambulate the Ka`bah until you become pure.”

Al-Bukhari (4401) and Muslim (1211) also narrated from `Aishah that Safiyyah bint Huyayy, the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) got her menses during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Is she detaining us?” I said: She has already done tawaf al-ifadah, O Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and has circumambulated the Ka`bah. So the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Then let her depart.”

This indicates that the menstruating woman is not allowed to do tawaf and that she should remain [in Makkah] until she becomes pure; if she leaves, then she must come back and do tawaf. This is the view of the majority of scholars.

If a woman fears that her menses will come before she does tawaf al-ifadah , and it is not possible for her to stay in Makkah or to come back to it after she leaves, then she may take medicine to prevent menstruation, so that she will be able to do tawaf, and any harm that may result from that is something that may be overlooked for the sake of doing this important act of worship and performing it in the prescribed manner.

‘Abd ar-Razzaq narrated in his Musannaf (1/318) that Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked about a woman whose menstrual bleeding was lengthy in duration, and she wanted to take medicine to stop the bleeding. Ibn ‘Umar did not see anything wrong with that, and he recommended arak water [that is, he prescribed that medicine for her]. Mu‘ammar said: I heard Ibn Abi Nujayh being asked about that, and he did not see anything wrong with it.

It was narrated from ‘Ata that he was asked about a woman who was menstruating , then she was

given some medicine to stop her menses before it ended naturally; could she do tawaf? He said: Yes, if she sees the tuhr (white discharge signalling the end of menses). But if she sees traces of blood, and does not see the white tuhr, then she should not do tawaf.

What is meant by traces is a little blood or light bleeding when the menses has nearly ended.

If she cannot take this medicine or she fears that she may be harmed by it, then Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was of the view that if she cannot stay in Makkah because she is part of a group that will leave soon, and she cannot come back in order to do tawaf , then in that case she has no choice, so she should take measures to prevent the blood from falling onto the ground, and do tawaf. Some of the scholars have issued fatwas to this effect.

The Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas was asked: A woman came in ihram for ‘umrah, and after reaching Makkah she got her menses. Her mahram has to leave immediately and she does not have anyone in Makkah. What is the ruling?

They replied:

“If the matter is as described, that the woman got her menses before doing tawaf , and she is still in ihram, and her mahram has to leave immediately, and she has no mahram or husband in Makkah, then the condition of being in a state of purity and free of menses in order to enter the mosque and do tawaf is waived in her case, out of necessity, and she should put on a sanitary pad and do tawaf and sa‘i for her ‘umrah, unless it is easy for her to leave and then come back with her husband or mahram because she does not live too far away and it is easy for her to come back. In that case, she should leave and come back as soon as her menses ends in order to do the tawaf of her ‘umrah in a state of purity. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship” [al-Baqarah 2:185]

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity” [al-Baqarah 2:286]

“[Allah] has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty” [al-Hajj 22:78]

“So fear Allah as much as you are able” [at-Taghabun 64:16].

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If I instruct you to do a thing, do as much of it as you can.” And there are other religious texts which confirm that making things easy and avoiding hardship are religious objectives. What we have mentioned was also indicated in fatwas issued by a number of scholars, including Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his student, al-‘Allamah Ibn al-Qayyim (mem them both).” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 2/238)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: A woman got her menses when she had not done tawaf al-ifadah, and she lives outside the Kingdom (Saudi Arabia). The time has come for her to leave the Kingdom; she cannot delay her departure and it is impossible for her to return to the Kingdom once more. What is the ruling?

He replied:

“If the matter is as described, a woman has not done tawaf al-ifadah, and she has got her menses and cannot remain in Makkah or come back to it if she leaves before doing tawaf, then in this case she may take one of two measures: either she may have an injection to stop the bleeding, and then do tawaf; or she may put on a sanitary pad to prevent the blood contaminating the mosque, and do tawaf, as this is a case of necessity. The view that we have mentioned here is the most correct view, and is the one that was favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah.

Or the other alternative is to do one of two things: either to remain in whatever state of ihram she is in, in which case she is not permissible for her husband, and it is not permissible for a marriage contract to be done with her if she is not married; or she is to be regarded as being like one who was prevented from reaching the Ka`bah, so she should offer her sacrifice and exit her ihram. In that case, her Hajj will not count. Both of these options are difficult, so the correct view is that of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) regarding such cases of necessity. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“[Allah] has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty” [al-Hajj 22:78]

“Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship” [al-Baqarah 2:185].

But if this woman is able to travel then come back when she has become pure, there is nothing wrong with her leaving, then when she becomes pure (following the end of her menses), she may come back and do the tawaf of Hajj. But during the intervening period, she cannot be intimate with her husband, because she has not completed the second stage of exiting ihram.” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 2/237)

The ruling allowing a menstruating woman to do tawaf in the case of necessity may also apply to a woman who comes from a distant land and is not able to remain in Makkah or to come back again to do tawaf. But if she lives in the land of the two holy sanctuaries (i.e., Saudi Arabia) or one of the Gulf countries, then it is possible for her to come back to Makkah in order to do tawaf al-ifadah. So if she cannot stay in Makkah until she becomes pure, then she may leave, then when she becomes pure she may come back and do tawaf, but during the intervening period she should avoid intimacy with her husband, because she has not completed the second stage of exiting ihram.

This is applicable in your case, so it is not permissible for you to do tawaf whilst menstruating; rather you should come back to do tawaf after you become pure (following the end of your menses).

Shaykh Dr. Khalid ibn ‘Ali al-Mushayqih, a member of faculty at the University of al-Qasim, was asked: A woman got her menses before doing tawaf al-ifadah, and she has to leave with the Hajj group with whom she came before her menses ends; what should she do? Please note that she cannot stay behind from her group when they go back. May Allah reward you with good.

He replied:

“With regard to the woman who got her menses before doing tawaf al-ifadah, one of the two following scenarios must apply:

1. That she came from a distant land, such as Morocco, Pakistan, India and the like. In this case, according to the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him),

she should take measures [to avoid any blood contaminating the mosque, by putting on a sanitary pad] and do tawaf, because this is a case of necessity.

2. If she came from a nearby land, such as if she resides in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or she is from a Gulf country, then in this case it is not permissible for her to do tawaf whilst menstruating; rather she should wait until she becomes pure, or she should leave then come back after that, when she has become pure. If she leaves, then she is still in a state of ihram and she has not completed the second stage of exiting ihram, so it is not permissible for her husband to be intimate with her until she has completed the second stage of exiting ihram."

And Allah knows best.