642107 - She is over 50 and her menstrual cycle is not regular; when will her `iddah end?

the question

I am divorced, and the first divorce (talaq) was issued on 2 Dhul-Qa`dah 1447 AH (18 April 2026 CE). Before the divorce, I had left the marital home because of some harm, and now I have been living in my family's house since 10 November 2025. I am 51 years old, and my menstrual cycle is not regular. I get my period once every few months, and recently, since I left the marital home, my period has come only once, on18 November 2025, and it has not come again since that, not even after the divorce. How should I observe my `iddah?

Summary of answer

If you have not had a period for six months and have also passed the age of 50, it appears that you have reached menopause, so you should count your `iddah by months, and in that case your `iddah is three lunar (Hijri) months, and your `iddah ended on 2 Safar 1448 AH.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The `iddah of a pregnant woman ends when she gives birth. If she is not pregnant and is a woman who menstruates, her `iddah is 3 menstrual cycles. The `iddah of a postmenopausal woman is 3 months. There is no specific age for menopause according to the correct view, which is the view of the Hanafis and was also favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah.

Some of the jurists are of the view that the age of menopause is 50. This is one view among the Hanafis, and is the view of the Hanbalis.

See: *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah*, 7/197; *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 13/362.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There is no maximum age for menstruation for a woman. If it so happens that after the age of sixty or seventy, she sees the usual type of bleeding from the uterus, it is menses.

The women who no longer expect to menstruate, as mentioned in the verse {And those who no longer expect menstruation} [at-Talaq 65:4], are not those who have reached a particular age. If what was meant was reaching a particular age, Allah and His Messenger would have explained it. Rather menopause is when a woman no longer expects to menstruate. So if her monthly bleeding stops and she does not expect it to resume, then she has reached menopause, even if she is 40 years old. Then if after a while she bleeds again, it will become clear that she has not yet reached menopause.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 19/240.

Based on that, if you have not had a period for six months and have also passed the age of 50, it appears that you have reached menopause, so you should count your `iddah by months, and your `iddah is three lunar (Hijri) months.

So if the divorce took place on 2 Dhul-Qa`dah 1447 AH, then your `iddah ended on 2 Safar 1448 AH.

For information on how to work out the `iddah by months, see the answer to question no. 189336.

II.

If we assume that your bleeding had the characteristics of menstrual blood, then that was a period, and if that happened during the time when you were counting three months for your `iddah, then that counting becomes invalid and you must count your `iddah by menstrual cycles.

It says in *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, 5/82: If she menstruates during that time, meaning during the months [that she is counting as `iddah], she must now count by menstrual cycles, according to scholarly

consensus, because she has become able to revert to counting her `iddah in the manner that was originally prescribed, before the alternative counting ended. This is like one who does tayammum and finds water whilst doing tayammum [that is, he must revert to the original ruling of doing wudu]. End quote.

But if that bleeding occurred after you had observed `iddah for (three) months, do you have to start over, counting your `iddah by menstrual cycles or not?

Concerning that there is a difference of scholarly opinion.

See: *Al-Mughni*, 8/113; *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*, 8/237; *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah*, 7/197.

And Allah knows best.