



GATE THIRTEEN

حكم رطوبة فرج المرأة  
Ruling on Vaginal Discharge

Jurisprudential Study

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him, and we ask Him for guidance and forgiveness; may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon Muhammad, his family, his companions, and his followers. O Allah you are the Arbitrator between Your servants in the matters in which they have differed, guide us to the truth by Your leave for verily You guide whom You will to the straight path. To proceed,

Regular vaginal discharge is amongst the frequent complaints and queries raised by women. And seeing that the believing women is keen to please Allah and is concerned about the acceptance of her worship, it is important for her to know whether this discharge is impure or pure and whether this discharge nullifies wudu. As the question regarding the purity of vaginal discharge dictates whether the believing women is to wash herself and affected undergarments before prayers, whereas the question of it being a nullifier of wudu necessitates performing wudu for most if not every prayer. This ruling is even more important seeing that these discharges constantly flow out of women, and since they are uncontrollable, it has become increasingly important to clarify the religious ruling with its evidences.

This ruling is one of the perplexing issues to women based on the strong differences of opinion among the jurists. Therefore, it is important to shed light on this issue, being that most questions of the women in our time are directly related to vaginal discharge; either on its ruling of purity or whether it nullifies wudu.

This research paper will aim to mention the opinions and discussions of the four jurists (Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmed ibn Hanbal (رحمهم الله جميعا) as well as the views of our contemporary scholars.

Additionally, I will rely on the works of women scholars who have written extensively in this issue and will be a primary source of reference for this article:

Dr. Ruqiyah alMahaarib (مسائل خاصة بالمرأة-كتاب حكم الرطوبة)

Dr. Fatimah Naseef (الإفرازات الطبيعية عند المرأة بين الطهارة والنجاسة)

Dr. Ismahan Hassan (أحكام الاستحاضة والإفرازات المهبلية في الفقه الإسلامي)

Dr. Hanaa Ridwan (ما يشكل على المرأة من أحكام الحيض والنفاس وما يلحق بهما)

I pray to Allah that this paper offers the best help to women so that they can worship Allah upon clarity and with a peace of mind based on the correct ruling with its evidences.

## Conceptualization of this Issue (تصوير المسألة)

What is vaginal discharge?

First, let it be known that all women have vaginal wetness or discharge throughout the day. Some have more, some have less; some women always have clear discharge and some have white discharge, and some may even have yellowish discharge. Additionally, this also varies based on many factors, like age, hormonal changes, marital status, birth control, pregnancy, stress, psychological tension, physical fatigue, ovulation etc.

The Medical Definition:

In medical literature, vaginal discharge is defined as: fluid produced by glands in the vaginal wall and cervix that drains from the opening of the vagina. The character of the discharge tends to be clearer with a stretchable consistency around ovulation, then may be thicker and slightly yellow during the luteal phase. Normal healthy discharge should not be associated with symptoms such as itching, redness and swelling, and does not have a strong odour. Vaginal discharge can increase during higher oestrogen states, such as ovulation, the luteal phase, puberty, and pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

The Islamic Juristic Definition:

Imam anNawawī رحمه الله defines رطوبة فرج المرأة vaginal discharge as white fluid that in terms of its characteristics is between pre-seminal fluid and sweat and originates from the cervix.<sup>2</sup>

## Differences of Opinion Regarding Vaginal Discharge:

The Muslim Jurists differed regarding the purity of vaginal discharge as well as whether it nullifies wudu.

- With regards to whether it is pure or impure they differed into two opinions;

1- Vaginal discharge is impure (najis)

This opinion is held by a faction of the Hanafiyah\*<sup>3</sup> as well as the Shafi'iyah\*<sup>4</sup> and Malikiyah<sup>5</sup> and is one of the opinions of the Hanabilah<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vaginal Discharge: Evaluation and Management in Primary Care: Michelle Sim, Susan Logan, and Lay Hoon Goh.

<sup>2</sup> Imam anNawawī, alMajmoo'

<sup>3</sup> AlJawhartat alNira Sharh Mukhtasar alQuduri. Both Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn Hassan view the vaginal discharge that comes from the vaginal walls (الرطوبة الظاهرة) as pure whereas vaginal discharge that comes from the cervix (الرطوبة الباطنة) is impure.

<sup>4</sup> Tufatul Muhtaj fi Sharh AlMinhaj. Imam aShafi'i holds the same opinion as Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn Hassan.

<sup>5</sup> AlMukhtasir, pg. 7. The Malikiyah view any vaginal discharge as impure.

<sup>6</sup> AlMughni.

From the scholars of our time; Shaykh Ibn Baaz<sup>7</sup> رحمه الله and Shaykh Saalih alFawzan<sup>8</sup> حفظه الله .

Evidences for this opinion:

- a. Hadith: "Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه reported: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about a man who has sexual intercourse with his wife but leaves her before orgasm. Upon this he (the Prophet) said: He should wash the secretion of his wife off of himself, and then perform ablution and offer prayer."<sup>9</sup>
- b. Zayd ibn Khalid alJuhany رضي الله عنه asked Uthman ibn 'Affan رضي الله عنه about the ruling of men who have intercourse but don't ejaculate, so he answered: he should make wudu like the wudu of prayer and wash his private parts, he then said: I heard this from the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>10</sup>  
-These ahadeeth illustrate that the command to wash his private parts indicates that vaginal discharge is impure since he must purify himself from it.  
---counter argument: it could be argued that the command to wash their private parts is due to it mixing with alMathi (pre-seminal fluid) which is unanimously considered impure by the scholars.
- c. Qiyas (analogy or shared judicial conclusion due to new ruling sharing the same essential reason for the original ruling) on excretions from both passageways (passageways of both urine and feces). Therefore, vaginal discharge is considered najis (impure) sharing the same ruling as excretions from both passageways.<sup>11</sup>

\*side note: both rulings in the above ahadeeth are considered mansookh (nullified) in terms of allowing prayer after intercourse with just wudu, read AlMajmoo' Sharh AlMuhathab of Imaam anNawawi for full clarification.

## 2- Vaginal discharge is pure (tahir)

This is the opinion of Abu Hanifa<sup>12</sup>, the stronger opinion of the Shafi'iyah<sup>13</sup> and the opinion of the Hanabilah<sup>14</sup>, as well as Ibn Hazm (Dhahiriyah)<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Fatawa of the Permanent Committee, 5/258.

<sup>8</sup> Fatawa for the Muslim Women, 1/222.

<sup>9</sup> Sahih Muslim, hadith 346.

<sup>10</sup> Sahih Bukhari, hadith 179.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni, vol.1, pg. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Maraaqi alFalah sharh Nur al-idah, vol.1, pg.64: "وأما رطوبة الفرج المرأة فهي طاهرة عند أبي حنيفة كسائر رطوبات البدن"

<sup>13</sup> anNawawi, AlMajmoo' sharh AlMuhathab: "نص الشافعي في بعض كتبه على طهارة رطوبة الفرج وحكي التجسس...والأصح: طهارتها"

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni, vol.3, pg.461.

<sup>15</sup> alMuhalla, vol.1, pg.183.

From the scholars of our time; Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen<sup>16</sup> رحمه الله and Shaykh AlAlbaani<sup>17</sup> رحمه الله .

Evidences for this opinion:

- a. Hadith: "Aisha رضي الله عنها would scratch off semen from the garment of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."<sup>18</sup>  
-This hadith indicates that this semen was from intercourse since the Prophets do not experience wet dreams.<sup>19</sup> And it is deduced that if this was from intercourse then it undoubtedly mixed with vaginal discharge so if vaginal discharge was najis then it would have made the semen najis therefore necessitating Aisha to wash the garment as opposed to simply scratching it off.<sup>20</sup>
- b. The scholars who view al-Mani (semen-which the jurists unanimously rule as pure) as pure must also view vaginal discharge as pure, because if they were to rule vaginal discharge as impure that would necessitate them ruling semen as impure since semen undoubtedly mixes with vaginal discharge during intercourse.<sup>21</sup>
- c. Qiyas on the rest of the regular discharges of the body (i.e. sweat, saliva, tears etc.).  
-This qiyas is stronger than the qiyas on the excretions from both passageways.<sup>22</sup>

Discussion:

After presenting both opinions with their evidences, the stronger opinion is that vaginal discharge is pure and not najis for the following reasons:

1. Those who state that vaginal discharge is impure because it is comparable in ruling to the excretions from both passageways (urine and feces) is not a strong qiyas/analogy since not everything that comes from both passageways is impure, namely al-Mani (semen) which is pure. Read Dr.Fatimah Naseefs research paper pg. 12-20.
2. From the foundational principles of Fiqh is that the original ruling for all things (excluding legislated acts of worship) is permissibility and purity and to consider something impure requires strong evidence. (الأصل في الأشياء الحل ) (والطهارة وأن الحكم بنجاسة شيء أو تحريمه يحتاج إلى دليل شرعي قوي Therefore vaginal discharge is considered pure upon its original ruling until evidence proves it impure.

<sup>16</sup> Fataawa for the Muslim Women 1/224.

<sup>17</sup> In a direct telephone call between Shaykh AlAlbaani and Dr. Ruqiyah alMaharib. مسائل خاصة بالمرأة pg. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Sahih Muslim, hadith 288.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni, vol.2, pg. 491.

<sup>20</sup> anNawawi, Sharh Saheeh Muslim, vol.3, pg. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Qasim, Hashiyah Rawdh alMurbi', vol.1, pg. 364.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni, vol.3, pg.461.

3. Vaginal discharge is from amongst the issues that affect all of women ( مما (عمت به البلوى) So if it was impure the Prophet ﷺ would have clarified its ruling. In addition to the great difficulty women would face in trying to distinguish whether her discharge is sulling her body and clothing which necessitates her to clean herself and change her clothing in order to pray (since it is not permissible to pray with najis/impurity on our clothes or body). Therefore, the ruling of its purity is a facilitation that makes it easier for the women believers, as Allah تعالى says in Surah Hajj: "and We have not made for you in religion difficulties."<sup>23</sup>

والله تعالى أعلم

- With regards to whether vaginal discharge nullifies wudu, they differed into two opinions:

The scholars differ with regards to vagina discharge nullifying wudu or not into two opinions;

1- Vaginal discharge nullifies wudu

This is the opinion of the Malikiyah, Shafi'iyah and the Hanabilah who all hold that anything that exits from the passageways as nullifiers of wudu. And one of the opinions of Ibn Taymiyyah.<sup>24</sup> This is also the view of some contemporary scholars.

Evidences for this opinion:

- Vaginal discharge is considered amongst the excretions from both passageways.
- Vaginal discharge shares the same ruling as irregular bleeding.

2- Vaginal discharge does not nullify wudu

This is the opinion of the Shafi'iyah in the case this discharge is only in area that is visible when a woman is in the sitting position<sup>25</sup>, the Hanafiyah<sup>26</sup>, and the Dhahiriyah. And one of the opinions of Ibn Taymiyyah.<sup>27</sup> This is also the view of some contemporary scholars.

Evidences for this opinion:

- Ibn Hazm states that there is no evidence from the Quran or Sunnah or consensus of the scholars that necessitates wudu from anything other than what is already established as a nullifier.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Fatimah Naseef pg.25-33

<sup>24</sup> Majmoo' al Fatawa, 21/221.

<sup>25</sup> Tuhfatul Muhtaaj sharh alMinhaj: "أو خرجت رطوبة فرجها إذا كانت من وراء ما يجب غسله في الجنابة يقينا وإلا فلا ينقض الوضوء"

<sup>26</sup> al'Inayah fi Sharh alHidayah vol.1, pg.44. The Hanafiyah view any discharge that is impure as a nullifier of wudu, whereas discharge that is pure does not nullify wudu.

<sup>27</sup> Ikhtiyaraat, pg.27.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Hazm, alMuhalla, vol.1, pg.255

\*Note: It is important to mention that some scholars have categorized vaginal discharge into three categories: the first being discharge or wetness from the external vaginal opening, this is the area that is visible when a woman is in the sitting position which is unanimously considered pure and not a nullifier of wudu. The second is discharge that originates from the area that extends from the vaginal opening until the cervix; this is where the scholars have differed. And lastly, discharge that originates from the cervix and uterus; this also is where scholars have differed (medically this typically is the source of blood or irregular discharge and not regular vaginal discharge). With regards to this differentiation between the origins of vaginal discharge it is considered by gynecologists impossible to distinguish between where this discharge originates from by the naked eye. And in applying the principle in usul al-fiqh لا يجوز التكليف بما لا يطاق (approximate meaning: it is not permissible/possible to impose an Islamic requirement/obligation that is impossible to fulfill). Thus, being that it is impossible to differentiate for the average woman let alone a medical professional it is not likely that being able to differentiate between discharges is an obligation upon women made by the shari'ah.

#### Discussion:

After presenting both opinions with their respective evidences, the strongest opinion is that vaginal discharge does not nullify wudu, for the following reasons:

1. There is no evidence, strong or weak, that necessitates wudu after vaginal discharge. Nor were any women instructed by the Prophet ﷺ to make wudu for every prayer like the woman is ordered to for irregular bleeding. -Seeing that numerous women companions had inquired about the rulings regarding irregular bleeding, it is unlikely that they did not inquire about the ruling of vaginal discharge (which is more common than irregular bleeding and would too require wudu for every prayer) had it been a point of contention for them. Therefore, this potentially indicates they did not see vaginal discharge as a nullifier of wudu.
2. The qiyas that vaginal discharge is comparable to irregular bleeding is weak since the Prophet ﷺ in the hadith of irregular bleeding states إنما ذلك عرق (the bleeding) is from a vein. Also, irregular bleeding is an unnatural occurrence that happens to only some women whereas vaginal discharge is a natural and normal occurrence for all women. So, comparing them in ruling is قياس مع الفارق (i.e. they cannot be compared in ruling due to the innate differences between them)
3. The female companions are like every other woman physically and in terms of natural disposition. Nor is vaginal discharge considered an occurrence that is specific to this century or something that only affects a percentage of the female population. Rather it is something that affects all women and is a sign of her reproductive health. Therefore, it is not possible that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not explain this matter as it pertains to all

women. And according to the famous principle in Fiqh; the Prophet (ﷺ) would not delay the explanation of a matter from the time that it is needed. (لا يجوز تأخير البيان عن وقت الحاجة).

4. The female companions used to pray with the Prophet (ﷺ), and it was narrated that he would often lead prayers with exceptionally long recitations, but it was never narrated that any female companion left the prayer to clean herself and make wudu. Which is the case for many women who pray taraweeh in Ramadan or perform Umrah (as wudu is a condition of tawaf).
5. The evidential source of the nullifiers of wudu is evidence from either the Quran or Sunnah. And because there is no clear evidence regarding whether vaginal discharge nullifies wudu then it must return to its original ruling which is not nullifying wudu. Shaykh Uthaymeen handwrites in response to the research paper of Dr. Ruqiya alMaharib: I retract my original opinion (that vaginal discharge nullifies wudu) and I view that the strongest evidence of vaginal discharge not being amongst the nullifiers of wudu is the lack of evidence considering it a nullifier of wudu.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dr. Ruqiya alMaharib, pg. 40-48 "راجعته فرأيت أقوى دليل على أن الرطوبة لا ينقض بها الوضوء أن الأصل عدم النقص إلا بدليل"



### **My Standpoint & Comments:**

I hold the opinion that vaginal discharge is pure, following the majority of scholars who hold this view, and that it requires neither ghusl, nor the washing of affected clothing and that it does not nullify wudu in the case this discharge is what is normally around the labia. And this is by and large due to the lack of direct textual proof indicating vaginal discharge is impure or a nullifier of wudu. If the textual proof had existed clearly distinguishing vaginal discharge as impure or a cause for nullifying wudu, then we would have withdrawn from rational arguments and would have “heard and obeyed” by Allah’s permission. However, the lack of textual evidence is a strong indication that, as Ibn Uthaymeen famously states in many issues that lack evidence: (الدليل عدم الدليل) “The proof is the lack of proof” i.e. the proof that vaginal discharge is pure and does not nullify wudu is the lack of evidence stating that it does. In addition to the discussion points mentioned above, Shaykh Uthaymeens retraction after having read Dr. Ruqiya alMaharibs research paper strengthens this opinion. And being that this is a very pertinent matter, especially since this discharge is something that affects all women, from the time of the Prophet ﷺ up to today, if it had been impure or if it had nullified wudu, this would have been clarified.

With that being said, as for discharge that exceeds the labia, I do advise my sisters in Islam to tread caution when it comes to matters that have strong differences of opinion. And in following the principles of Fiqh ( الاحتياط والخروج من ( الخلاف أولى); taking the safest opinion and exiting differences of opinions amongst scholars takes precedence. In this case I advise sisters to make wudu in the case she experiences discharge that exceeds the labia/vulva (i.e., enough to reach her pelvic area/inner thighs) so as to leave this difference of opinion.

Also, the believing women should not confuse this regular vaginal wetness/discharge for al-Mathi (discharge when aroused) and al-Mani (female ejaculation). She should seek to understand the rulings of these discharges and the physical differences so as to not consider every and any discharge she experiences as regular vaginal discharge or wetness.

I was also asked by a number of sisters to clarify the ruling of discharges that are a result of bacterial vaginosis, yeast infection and other abnormal discharges. I intend to research the matter and answer in due time, inshaAllah.

I ask Allah to accept this deed for His sake alone, to forgive me for any mistakes or errors, to make this work beneficial for myself when I am in the grave, and to allow this work to benefit Muslim women, Ameen.

Completed on Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in Ottawa, Canada.

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