

IDDAT

**Period of waiting and
mourning for a Muslim wife**



Iddat literally means to count. In Islam, iddat refers to a waiting period that a woman is obliged to observe in the event of her husband's demise or a divorce. She is required to stay within the confines of her home for a specified duration and cannot marry someone else in the iddat.

There are two types of iddat:

1. The iddat upon the husband's demise

The Noble Quran says: ***“For those amongst you who pass on, and leave behind wives, then they should wait (not remarry) for four months and ten days....”*** (Surah Baqarah)

It is obligatory for a woman whose husband has passed away to serve her iddat of four months and 10 days.

The iddat of a pregnant woman whose husband passes away terminates upon the birth of her child.

2. The iddat of divorce

The Noble Quran says, ***“Those that are divorced should wait (not marry) for three menstrual cycles.”*** (Surah Baqarah)

It is obligatory for a divorcee who menstruates to serve her iddat of three complete cycles.

The iddat of a divorcee, who does not naturally menstruate, is three lunar months (90 days). The iddat of a pregnant woman terminates upon childbirth.

There is no iddat for a woman who was divorced before the Nikah was consummated.

Commencement of iddat

Iddat begins immediately upon the husband's demise or upon the issuing of a divorce, even if the wife is not aware of this.

If she receives the news about her husband's death or the divorce at a later stage, then her iddat had commenced immediately from the time of

his demise or from when the divorce was issued. Upon knowledge thereof she will abide by the rules of iddat for the remainder of the iddat.

If she was not informed at all and only came to know of her husband's demise or of the divorce much later, then the iddat is over. She will not be required to repeat the iddat nor is there any Qaza or penalty. She should engage in Istighfar and repentance.

Calculation of the iddat

If the husband dies on the first day of the Islamic month, then the four months and ten days of the Iddat will be calculated according to the lunar months that follow, though certain months may be twenty-nine days and others may be thirty.

If the husband passes away anytime during the month then a total of 130 days shall be calculated - each day will be counted in 24-hour units from the time of demise.

Place of iddat

A woman shall observe her iddat in the house where she was residing at the time of the death of the husband or the termination of the marriage. She may move around freely within the home and its precincts without restricting herself to just one room.

In the event of need, the Jurists have outlined certain circumstantial reasons when a woman may move from her residence to serve her iddat elsewhere.

Maintenance during iddat

Principally, it is the duty of the husband to continue maintaining his wife after divorce for the duration of her iddat. Once the iddat period is over, the husband is not responsible for her maintenance thereafter.

After the iddat the father of the children will remain fully responsible for the maintenance of his children.

The widow shall not be entitled to any maintenance from the estate of her deceased husband during the period of her iddat, by virtue of her

being an heir. She will, however, inherit from the estate of her deceased husband.

Mourning during iddat

It is natural and permissible for a woman to mourn the death of her husband. A widow will not adorn herself with bright clothing, jewellery, perfume, henna, surma, make-up, etc. However, she will maintain her cleanliness. If certain oil, surma or substance needs to be used for medicinal purposes, this will be permissible.

Miscellaneous rules of iddat

- A woman in iddat cannot leave the home to visit the sick, attend a funeral or any other family or social event. Instances of dire need and emergency are an exception to the rule.
- Travelling for Hajj or any other journey is not permissible during iddat. She may vacate the house of her late husband, in the event of some circumstantial need, e.g. fear, loss of property, danger to her honour, health risks, etc. She may move to a place where she can spend her iddat comfortably.
- A woman in iddat is forbidden from entering into a contract of Nikah or accepting a proposal for marriage whilst in iddat.
- Regrettably, some women choose to continue life as normal in iddat without observing the laws and requirements of this important injunction. One should adopt Taqwa and reflect over accountability to one's Creator.
- A woman in iddat should set out a routine of recitation, Duas, Zikr and reading of Islamic literature etc. to utilise her time beneficially and assist her emotionally in the iddat.

This publication outlines some basic rules of iddat. One should refer to the Ulama for more details.

NB. These rulings are in accordance to the Hanafi School of Jurisprudence.



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About **Darul Ihsan**

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre provides education, guidance, social, empowerment and welfare services to the community. In providing this service, we adopt a holistic approach, that gives due importance to basic needs as well as human rights and dignity of those that we serve.

Founding **Philosophy**

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre is a multi-purpose, humanitarian-services providing organisation. 'Ihsan' means compassion towards mankind and to act with excellence. The Centre was established in the year 2000 with the primary objective of serving humanity and alleviating poverty and hardship locally and abroad. Since its inception, it has developed and established many humanitarian projects and provides a variety of free services to the community.

Key **Objectives**

One of the key objectives of the Centre is to promote a better understanding of humanity and peace, thereby serving as a bridge-builder between faiths and communities. Through guidance, Ubuntu and empowerment, the organisation hopes to train and develop the youth to become torch bearers of hope, peace and compassion to humanity.

