

That is, women whose husbands have divorced them ﴿should wait concerning themselves﴾ that is, they should observe the 'iddah or waiting period

﴿for three menstrual cycles﴾, whether that is counted from the beginning or the end of the bleeding; there was a difference of scholarly opinion concerning that. However, the correct view is that what is meant by the menstrual cycle is the beginning of the menses. There are several reasons for this waiting period, one of which is to establish the absence of pregnancy. If the woman has three menstrual cycles, it will be known that there is nothing in her womb, so there will be no mixing of lineages (if she remarries). Hence Allah (ﷻ) has commanded women to speak of ﴿what Allah has created in their wombs﴾, and He has forbidden them to conceal either pregnancy or menses, because concealing that leads to very negative consequences. Concealing a pregnancy may lead to attributing the child to someone other than his real father, if the woman likes another man and wants to hasten the end of the 'iddah. If she attributes the child to someone other than his real father, that will result in severing of ties of kinship, prevention of inheritance, and his real *mahrams* observing hijab in front of him; he may even end up marrying one of his *mahrams* unwittingly. On the other hand, if he is attributed to someone other than his real father, then he may end up being inherited from or himself inheriting from people with whom he is not entitled to have this kind of inheritance. It also makes the relatives of the one to whom he is attributed his relatives, which will lead to evil consequences the extent of which no one knows except the Lord of humankind. If nothing else resulted from it except her (the divorced woman) staying with a man whom it is not permissible for her to marry (because she is pregnant from her first husband), which involves persisting in the grave major sin of *zinâ* (fornication or adultery), that would be sufficient evil.

With regard to concealing menses, by lying and saying that she had her period when she did not, because she wants to hasten the end