

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

SUNNAH WHEN A CHILD IS BORN

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the family of the lord Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and all the Companions of our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

It is indeed a joyous occasion when parents are blessed with the birth of a child. However, the extent of the joy will be enhanced even further if the laws of Shariah are observed. It is generally found that people celebrate on the birth of a boy and show dissatisfaction when a girl is born. Islam disapproves of this kind of behaviour. Children are great gift from Allah (The Exalted) and we should be thankful and rejoice irrespective of the gender of the new-born child. The birth of a daughter is a blessing and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that they would be a shield for the parents from Hell. *Subhanallah!*

Those parents who give birth to a girl as their first child are indeed fortunate as the first born of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was a girl.

Delivery

Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) reports that, *“When it was time for me to deliver my child, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) sent Umme Salmah and Zainab (may Allah be pleased with them) to me with the instruction that they read Aayatul Kursi, the Surah Al-Falaq and An-Naas.”*

Adhan and Iqamah

After birth when an infant has been properly washed, *Adhan* (call to prayer) should be recited in the right ear and *Iqamah* in the left. When Husain (may Allah be pleased with him) was born, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) recited *Adhan* and *Iqamah* in his ears. ⁱ

The Wisdom

The reason and objective for the creation of humankind is to worship Allah (The Exalted). For this reason, a person is encouraged to recite the declaration of faith (Shahadah) before leaving this world as the last thing uttered and also it should be the first thing heard upon entering this world. As a result he or she will begin his or her life with the name of Allah (The Exalted) and will also end his or her life with the name of Allah (The Exalted).

It is also a warning to parents who do not offer the prayer and are disobedient to Allah (The Exalted). They should remember that when they were born, the instruction of prayer and good deeds was also recited into their ears. If they at this moment do not offer the prayer, how are they daring to have a call to prayer recited into the child's ear and how will they face Allah (The Exalted) in the hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“When a child is born, the devil pinches the body with two fingers, except 'Isa (upon whom be peace) son of Maryam (may Allah be pleased with her) whom the devil tried to pinch but failed, for he touched the placenta cover instead.”* ⁱⁱ

This is the reason why babies cry when they are born.

Make supplication

Asma (may Allah be pleased with her) daughter of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *“She conceived 'Abd-Allah bin Zubair (may Allah be pleased with him) in Makkah and gave birth to him in Qubah,¹ then took him to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and placed him in his lap. He called for a date, chewed it and paced it in his mouth, after which he rubbed his palate and then made supplication for him and invoked a blessing on him...”* ⁱⁱⁱ

Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that, *“I was blessed with a son and I took him to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who named him Ibrahim, and put in his mouth the juice of a date (which he himself had chewed), and invoked Allah's (The Exalted) blessing upon him, and then gave him back to me.”* ^{iv}

¹ Just outside Madinah

He was the eldest son of Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him).

Tahnik

With the entering of a sweet thing and saliva of a pious person into the newborn's stomach, it can be hoped that Allah (The Exalted) shall make hi or her talk sweet, dulcet and pleasant and make his or her character enriched with piety and virtue.

Blessings and benedictions are gained by taking the child to a virtuous and pious person. Just as the prophetic Companions were accustomed to taking their children to the noble Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) so that he may offer the tahnik and supplicate for their blessing.

Breast-feeding

A newborn infant has the most right over the mother's milk and the mother has the most right over breast-feeding her newborn. Breast-feeding her own child is embedded within the nature and personality of the mother. This is one of those natural practises that can be found to exist in animals too, and hence animals suckle their suckling and feel comfort in doing so.

The mother's milk is pure from bacterium and as a result does not become the cause for any illness. This is because the milk goes directly from the mother's breast into the child's stomach whereas, the milk from cows and goats passes through many stages, containers and bottles; and at any point it can be affected by bacterium and microbes that can be harmful to the health of the child.

The other's milk is neither too cold nor too warm; rather, it is completely in line with the child's temperament. Whereas, the milk from cows and goats is warmed up. Hence, it can fluctuate and can harm and be uncomfortable for the child.

The possibility of breast cancer is less in the mother who breast-feeds her child. Whereas, chances of breast cancer are greater in those mothers who do not breast-feed their children.

The best nourishment for a newborn is the mother's milk as it contains everything that a newborn requires. No artificial milk can pose as a replacement for the mother's milk.

Mothers do not only provide physical nourishment to the children with their milk; rather, they transfer and pass on tradition, morals and characteristics.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated, "*Suckle children the milk of good and virtuous mothers.*"^v

First words

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that "When your children begins to speak, then teach him or her to repeat, "*There is no deity but Allah (The Exalted)*" *being unmindful as to when he dies. And when children lose their milk teeth, enjoin upon them to pray Salaah.*"^{vi}

If a child dies before his father or mother, the child will intercede for the parents.^{vii} *Subhanallah!*

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "*If a man has two daughters or sisters and teaches them good manners up to their marriage, he and I will be like these two fingers.*"^{viii}

Meaning he will be close to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) the index finger with the middle finger.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "*Allah (The Exalted) says, 'I have no reward but paradise for a believer of mine who displays patience when I take away his favourite one, from the things of the world.'*"^{ix}

It is natural and difficult for the parents when they loose a child; however, Allah (The Exalted) has paradise for their patience. When the son of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) passed away at a very young age, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was also sad and he shed tears too.

Khatna – Circumcision

The meaning of circumcision is *“to cut off the foreskin that is at the tip of the reproductive organ.”* In Islamic law it is the *“round part on the edge above the conical vascular body of the penis.”*^x

To have circumcision is a Sunnah. Allah (The Exalted) states in the Qur’an: *“Then We have revealed to you that follow the faith of Ibrahim who was separate from all falsehood and was not a polytheist.”*^x

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that, *“I heard the Prophet the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying that, “Five practices are characteristic of the Fitrah²: circumcision, removing the pubic hair, cutting the moustache short (not shaving), clipping the nails and trim the hair of the armpits.”*^{xi}

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, *“Ibrahim (upon whom be peace) did his circumcision with an adze (hand tool with steel cutting blade) at the age of eighty.”*^{xii}

The Wisdom

1. Circumcision differentiates a Muslim from a non-Muslim.
2. Cleanliness and purity is attained by it.
3. Chances of sever illnesses such as cancer are restricted and reduced by it.

Manners when a child is born

1. The placenta and umbilical cord should be buried with due care since they are parts of the human body.
2. Upon birth, the newly born child should be given a proper bath.
3. Thereafter the first words to reach the child’s ears should be the affirmness of the Greatness and Oneness of Allah (The Exalted) and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). The giving of Adhan near his right ear and Iqamat in his left ear by a scholar (Alim) or a pious elder of the family is sufficient for this.^{xiii} This, however, should not be delayed.
4. There is nothing better for a mother who has just given birth to a child than fresh grapes.^{xiv} Subhanallah! Grapes increases strength^{xv} and cleans the stomach.
5. To perform Tahneek (the placing of a date, softened by chewing, on the tongue of the newborn). An Alim or a pious elder of the family can carry this out. If such a person is not available then any Muslim male may perform this act. Honey may be substituted for dates, if dates are unavailable.^{xvi}
6. To give the newborn an appropriate name on the seventh day.^{xvii}
7. To make Aqiqah on the seventh day,^{xviii} if this is not possible then fifteen or twenty-one days after the birth of the child.^{xix}
8. Aqiqah is a form of Sadaqah whereby the child is safeguarded against misfortune, Insha-‘Allah.
9. Gifts of alms should be distributed among the poor, voluntry Salaah should be prayed instead of parties, playing music and distributing sweetmeats, which is totally unnecessary. It is preferable to have a Meelad/Mawlid or Fatiha on the birth of a child and all other unnecessary customs, which has no basis in Islam, should be completely stopped.^{xx}
10. It is Mustahab (preferable) to remove the baby’s hair on the seventh day after birth. Silver equivalent to the weight of the removed hair may be given as charity to the poor; otherwise its equivalent value in money will suffice.
11. Saffron can be put on the head after shaving it.^{xxi}

² Sunnah of all the Prophets (upon them all be peace).

12. The hair should be buried with due care and respect.
13. The age for circumcision is from seven till twelve. Some scholars have said from birth till the seventh day and after.
14. If an elderly new Muslim does not have the strength to have it done, then there is no need. However, if a young person embraces Islam, if he can do it himself then do so. If not possible then there is no problem. ^{xxii}
15. When circumcising a boy, if half of the foreskin is cut then the circumcision is done. However, if less than half is done then it be done again. ^{xxiii}
16. If circumcision has been done, however, the foreskin has grown again and the head of the penis is hidden then perform circumcision again and if the foreskin has grown that much then there is no need. ^{xxiv}
17. If a child is born where he has no foreskin then there is no need or circumcision. If there is some skin, show the person who carries out the circumcision, if it can be pulled out get the circumcision done, but if not then do not give the child difficulty. ^{xxv}
18. It is the father's job to perform the circumcision. If he is not present than the one who looks after his affairs when absent should do it. Then it is the grandfather's job and if he is not present then the one who looks after his affairs when absent should do the circumcision. It is not the job for the child's uncle (father's brother's or the sister's husband). However, if they are responsible for the child's upbringing then it can be done." ^{xxvi}
19. To castrate (remove the testicles) is forbidden in Islam. ^{xxvii}

Science is today saying that if you have circumcision than many diseases are prevented and is very hygienic, but Islam told us fourteen centuries ago!

May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to follow the Sunnah and obtain many virtues and benefits in this world and the hereafter, Ameen.

ⁱ Tabrani

ⁱⁱ Bukhari

ⁱⁱⁱ Mishkat

^{iv} Bukhari

^v Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, Vol: 1, p. 203

^{vi} Tirmidhi

^{vii} Ihya ulum adeen

^{viii} Ihya ulum adee

^{ix} Bukhari

^x Surah An Nahl 16:123

^{xi} Bukhari

^{xii} Bukhar

^{xiii} Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud

^{xiv} Ihya ulum Ad-din

^{xv} Medicine of the prophet, p. 61

^{xvi} Bukhari

^{xvii} Abu Dawud

^{xviii} Abu Dawu

^{xix} Guide to Muslims Islamic & social affairs, p. 6

^{xx} ibid

^{xxi} Abu Dawud

^{xxii} Alamgiri

^{xxiii} ibid

^{xxiv} ibid

^{xxv} ibid

^{xxvi} ibid
^{xxvii} ibid