

## **Birth In Islam**

### **What is meant by Birth in Islam?**

- Birth is a blessed moment in the life of a parent.
- Birth signifies the start of life in the worship of Allah.
- Birth is among the ceremonies that must be based on Shari'ah
- The birth of a child must be out of a legal marriage known as Nikah.
- There is no superstitious idea such as eclipse of the sun or moon behind birth in Islam.

### **Describe the ceremonies that follow the birth of a baby in a Muslim family.**

Birth in Islam is one of the most important moments and blessings for a couple. The couple is delighted when it comes to be parents. According to Islam there are some steps which are recommended to be followed.

**At the outset**, it is recommended for the future mother to continue with her 'ibaadah as far as her condition and state allow her and to make the Tilaawat Qur'an the more often. Accordingly, the baby in her womb will be positively and spiritually benefited from that tilaawat. Any act of piety will benefit the child and the mother. It is also true that any evil act or food consumed will have a negative impact on the child. It is said that there is no flesh raised that develops from the unlawful except that the Fire is more appropriate for it.<sup>1</sup>

**Secondly**, soon after the birth, the call to pray (adhan) must be recited in the right ear to imprint the basic faith on the baby's memory and the call to stand up for prayer (iqamah) must be recited in the left ear. It can be done by any one such as an 'alim (scholar) or any member of the family or relative / friend. It is said that the prophet (s) gave the Adhaan in the ear of Al Hasan when he was born.<sup>2</sup> As such it is a Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (s).

**Moreover**, it is the Sunnah of the prophet (s) to put something sweet in the baby's mouth known as Tahneek. This symbolises a sweet nature. If there is a scholar or a real believer, then it is Sunnah to allow him to chew a date and then give to the baby. If there is no date, then honey or sugar can be used. It is said that the prophet (s) chewed a date and put it with his saliva in the mouth of Abdullah bin Zubair when he took birth at Macca.<sup>3</sup>

**Furthermore**, it is recommended as Abdul Muttalib did and as many 'Ulama advocate to bring the baby to the Ka'bah or in the mosque of the locality to present the baby to Allah and to leave it in His care. There are prayers and du'a which will be said invoking Allah's help for baby's future whether it is health, prosperity, knowledge and spiritual growth. It is said that the prophet (s) invoked Allah to bless Ibrahim (son of Abu Musa) when he took birth.<sup>4</sup>

**Fifthly**, there will be the naming ceremony which is held soon after the birth. Accordingly, it is recommended by the prophet that a good name is to be chosen. This name will have effect on the child. He / she will be framed as such. Then a beautiful and meaningful name must be chosen. The best names are those of the prophets and the pious people. It is said that the prophet gave the name of Ibrahim to the son of Abu Musa (r) when he took birth.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tirmidhi 614

<sup>2</sup> Tirmidhi 1514

<sup>3</sup> Bukhari 5469

<sup>4</sup> Bukhari 5467

<sup>5</sup> Bukhari 5467

**Sixthly**, there will be the slaughtering of an animal for the ‘Aqiqah which is done on the seventh day.<sup>6</sup> If it is a boy, 2 animals will be sacrificed but if it is a girl, an animal will be slaughtered. It is said in hadith that the prophet said that whoever wants to offer sacrifice for his child, let him do so, for a boy; two sheep and for a girl; one.<sup>7</sup> The prophet (s) offered the ‘Aqiqah for Al Hasan and Al Husain.<sup>8</sup> In that sacrifice Allah does not need the money, blood or meat but He wants the intention of the sacrifice that is the love of Allah after all. It is a means to protect the child from any kind of problem or calamity. However, everything is upon the decision of Allah.

**Added to the above**, the meat of the animal will be distributed to poor. Either the raw meat is distributed of any kind of dish can be prepared from it. The parents and family members also have a right on the meat. It is a way to strengthen family ties. Sharing and distributing meat to the poor signifies sharing of the joyful and blessed moment. It is said that the bones of the animal are broken and the family eat the meat and give some of it away as Swadaqa.<sup>9</sup>

**More to the point**, it is Sunnah of the prophet to shave the head of the baby. Shaving the head is a means of purification. It is said in Hadith that the prophet commanded us to shave the head of the child on the seventh day.<sup>10</sup> The hair will then be weighted and an equivalent amount of money based on the weight of silver will be given to the poor as Swadaqa. The prophet (s) told Hazrat Faatima (r) to shave the head of Al Hasan and give the weight of his hair in silver as charity.<sup>11</sup> The hair will then be buried in a clean place.

**Ninthly**, it is Sunnah of the prophet for boys to be circumcised (khitan / khatnah) soon after the birth and to read the first five verses of surah al ‘Alaq. Circumcision is also a Sunnah of the prophet Ibrahim (as). This is applied only for boys. Girls don’t go through this process. It is a means to purify and protect the child from infection. It is said in hadith that circumcision is one of the natural things to be done by Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

**Last but not least**, it is recommended in the Qur’an<sup>13</sup> as the right of the baby to be breastfed for a duration of two years by the mother or any available woman or a wet nurse. This will protect him / her from illness and this will reinforce his physical immune system. It has been scientifically proven that it is beneficial for both the mother and the child.

### **Explain the significance of Birth in Islam.**

The birth of a baby is a blessing from Allah. It is said in the Quran that “your wealth and your children are only a trial, and by Allah with Him is an immense reward”<sup>14</sup>. Through our children and our efforts to meet their needs we will be rewarded. Spending to educate our children is another type of spending in the path of Allah. It is the duty of each parent to strive as such and to consider it as a blessing from Allah. It is a means to reach Jannah.

It is said that the birth of a baby is a purity and as such by nature a baby purifies the mother from her weaknesses or mistakes at birth. According to the prophet (s), all babies are born pure without sin. Allah says that we must “be just, that is nearer to piety and fear God”<sup>15</sup>. Having children is a means for parents to reach salvation. Be afraid of Allah and be just to our children<sup>16</sup> in all of their affairs and spheres will help us to be purified and thus reaching piety and fear of Allah.

The significance of birth is like an opportunity for the parents to guide the children on the path of Islam. According to the Qur’an there is great lesson to be derived from the prophet Luqman who advised his son to

---

<sup>6</sup> Nasa’i 4220

<sup>7</sup> Nasa’i 4112

<sup>8</sup> Nasa’i 4213

<sup>9</sup> Al Muwatta Book 26 No. 7

<sup>10</sup> Nasa’i 4220

<sup>11</sup> Tirmidhi 1519

<sup>12</sup> Bukhari 5889

<sup>13</sup> Qur’an 2: 233

<sup>14</sup> Qur’an 64: 15

<sup>15</sup> Qur’an 5: 8

<sup>16</sup> Bukhariy 2587

worship Allah in jama'ah / congregation and to be grateful<sup>17</sup>. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children are accustomed to the right path shown by Allah and the prophet (s). It is said that correct action comes from Allah but Adab comes from parents.<sup>18</sup>

Having babies and upbringing them is rewarded with Jannah. According to the prophet if someone has one girl and set her on the right path till she gets married, then the parents will receive a Jannah as reward. If they have 2 or 3 or more children, the reward will be proportionately. The Prophet (s) said that whoever raises 2 girls, then I and he will enter paradise like these two, and he indicated with his 2 fingers.<sup>19</sup> It is said that a man is the guardian of his family (household) and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband's home and of his children and is responsible for them.<sup>20</sup>

The mere fact of pronouncing the adhan and iqamah in the ears of the baby confers to the baby the importance of Islam. There is the protection of Allah that the child receives at that time. The first part is the importance in believing in Allah and his prophet through the adhan and the second part is to get ready to worship Allah through Iqaamah. At this early age, the child is thus invited to Allah the Majestic, to Islam and to the worship of Allah. This call prevents temptation by Satan and ensures an pure faith

Attached to that, the birth of a baby means the sending of the baby to this world and the reason for our existence on earth is to worship Allah as He says that “and we have not created the jinn and Man but only to worship”.<sup>21</sup> Our main aim and objective on earth is to testify the uniqueness of Allah and to accomplish His commanded Fard upon us. we have been created to serve Allah and to keep ourselves in His remembrance. This is our mission on earth as we will be returned to Him for accountability.

The significance of birth is in why we were sent to earth. Allah says in the Qur'an that “I am going to create a vicegerent on earth”.<sup>22</sup> This means that the birth of a baby signifies his future mission in accepting Allah and to represent the religion of Islam. In fact, the prophet (s) is the real vicegerent of Allah. We, the followers of the prophet (s), are the vicegerent of Rasouloullaah (s). This means that through our birth, we are bound to follow the Sunnah of the prophet (s) and to honour him (s)

The birth of a child and the sending of the baby to earth is to remember the pact we made with Allah when our souls were in 'Aalamul Arwah (the world of souls). As such Allah asks these souls in the 'aalamul arwah as “am I not your Lord?” and we did reply by “yes, verily we testify”.<sup>23</sup> We were sent to complete our vows. Our birth represents a trial by which we must remember the pact we did with Allah. We were created obedient Muslims before our sending on earth. It is time to remember the vow.

The birth of a child is a comfort and company for the parents. Allah himself says in the Qur'an as an invocation “our Lord, bestow upon us from our wives and children the comfort of our eyes”.<sup>24</sup> Children bring joy in the family. It is said that ‘your parents and your children, you know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit’<sup>25</sup> meaning both benefit each other as comfort and company. Each one, at their specific time, acts as support to each other.

The birth of a child is an occasion and opportunity allocated to the parents to gather their relatives and to share their joy over a meal through the 'Aqiqah. This will renew ties among members of the family. It is said that the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family.<sup>26</sup> As such, the act of gathering the family members, relatives and friends around a meal to share one's happiness through the institution of 'Aqiqah is praiseworthy.

---

<sup>17</sup> Qur'an 31: 12

<sup>18</sup> Adab ul Mafrad 92

<sup>19</sup> Tirmidhi 1914

<sup>20</sup> Bukhariy 7138

<sup>21</sup> Qur'an 51: 56

<sup>22</sup> Qur'an 2: 30

<sup>23</sup> Qur'an 7: 172

<sup>24</sup> Qur'an 25: 74

<sup>25</sup> Qur'an 4: 11

<sup>26</sup> Muslim 995