



What to do after a child is born

It is the desire of married couples to experience parenthood. When Allah Ta'ala fulfills this wish we should forever remain grateful to him and express our gratitude by following the holy sunnats of our beloved Prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam. We should try our utmost to begin the newborn's life in the way which the Prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam has demonstrated. This will bring blessings and barakah throughout the life of the newborn insha Allah.

Adhaan

The first practice which should be carried out is to perform adhaan in the right ear and iqamat in the left ear.

It is narrated in the hadith that Abu Raafee (R.A) says, "I saw the prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam giving adhaan in the ears of Hadhrat Hasan when he was born" (Tirmidhi).

The wisdom behind this is that the first words which enter the baby's ears are the words of ALLAH.

Tahneek

The term 'tahneek' means 'placing of a piece of date, which is softened by chewing by a pious person on the palate of the new born'. The practice of tahneek is sunnat.

It is narrated in the hadith that Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Zubair was brought to the holy prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam and the holy Prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam did Tahneek, prayed for him and blessed him. (Bukhari)

In another narration it is reported; "New-born children would be brought to the Messenger of Allah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam and he would supplicate for blessings for them, and rub a chewed date upon their palate." (Muslim)

Imam Nawawi (R.A) says, "Scholars are agreed upon the recommendation of performing tahneek upon the baby after its birth."

The purpose of tahneek is that the first item that should enter a baby's mouth is the saliva of the pious.

Note: The date should be prepared, softened and chewed prior to the labour. The method of placing the date on the baby's palate should be learnt before-hand.

Sunnats to be performed on the seventh day after the child's birth.

Removing the hair of the child

It is sunnat to remove the baby's hair. The hair should be weighed and an equivalent amount of silver should be donated to charity. Rather than undertaking this procedure the scholars have prescribed an easy and more practical method; to donate an amount of £10.

It is stated in a hadith, 'when Hadhrat Hasan (R.A) was born, the prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam instructed his daughter Hadhrat Faatimah thus, "Shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver to the poor" (Ahmad).

The hair being an aspect of the human body should be buried due to respect.

Applying saffron to a child's head

It is reported in a Hadith, 'in the days of ignorance it was a distasteful habit to apply the blood of a sacrifice on the child's head. The Prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam prohibited this action, and instead instructed us to apply khalooq on the child's head' (Aboo Dawood). 'Khalooq' is the name of a fragrance made from a combination of saffron and other Ingredients.

This sunnat is to be carried out in the following manner. Place saffron in a bowl of water. Dip hands into this water and apply it to the baby's head.

Aqeeqah

After the arrival of the new baby it is also sunnat to slaughter an animal. If the new-born is a boy then two animals should be slaughtered and for a girl the sacrifice of one animal will suffice. (Those animals which are permissible to slaughter on eid up adhere are also allowed in aqeeqah) And it is also desirable to perform aqeeqah in the country where the child is born. And if a person performs aqeeqah in the UK it is compulsory for him to give sadqah, the amount equivalent to the skin. Enquiries should be made regarding this on the day.

In a hadith Hadhrat Aayesha (R.A) narrates, 'the Nabi Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam instructed us to sacrifice two goats in favour of a boy and one goat for a girl' (Tirmidhi).

In another Hadith the Holy Prophet Sallallahu A laihi Wasallam said "two aqeeqah should be offered on behalf of a boy and one for a girl" (Nasa'i and Aboo Dawood).

It is permissible for anyone to consume the meat of aqeeqah but it is desirable to divide the meat into three portions; one for the poor and two-thirds for friends and family. This meat can be distributed cooked or uncooked.

Circumcision

To perform khatnah (circumcision) on the seventh day after the child's birth has been recommended if possible. However it is acceptable to delay this action if any problems arise on this day.

May Allah Ta'alah give us the ability to act upon these sunnats. Ameen.

By Maulana Gulam Desai