

The sacrifice on behalf of a boy is two goats (or sheep) and for a girl is one goat (or sheep). (Ahmad, Tirmizi). According to the traditions, it is commendable (mustahab) to do a child's aqeeqah on the seventh day. The Prophet (SAS) performed aqeeqah of Hasan and Husain (his two grandsons) on the seventh day after their birth. It may also be done on the 14th or 21st. day. It is also permissible if done on the 4th, 8th, or 10th day after the birth of the child. If done at a later date, this will be permissible.

In case of a boy, if a person sacrificed only one goat (or sheep) then the aqeeqah will be valid. According to a hadith recorded by Imam Abu Dawood, it states that the bones of the sacrificial animals must not be broken (that is, animals for Qurbani and Aqeeqa). The act of not breaking the bones is a sign of good omen of health and strength of the child.

However, no harm is done if someone inadvertently breaks the bones of the animals. The meat can be divided by giving a part to the poor and needy. A part can be given to relatives, friends, neighbors, and a part kept for oneself. A portion can also be given to the midwife or nurse. (Baihaqi). One can use the meat to celebrate the Aqeeqah feast by cooking it and inviting others to eat.

According to a hadith, while slaughtering the animal of Aqeeqa, one should say, 'I sacrifice in the name of Allah. O Allah, it is for you alone, and it will return to you. O Allah, this aqeeqah is on behalf of the child- _____ so-and-so (the child's name should be mentioned). (Ibn Mundhir).

While explaining the wisdom behind the Aqeeqah, scholars have written that on the birth of a child, an animal is offered in aqeeqah to obtain nearness to Allah and to offer a ransom for the child. The child later intercedes for his parents.

7) Circumcision should be done for the boy child. Based on the traditions of the Prophet (SAS), the scholars have mentioned that it is Mustahab to do the circumcision of a boy before he attains maturity. It is advisable to do it at the time of aqeeqah, since, at this age the child does not suffer much pain. It is narrated in a tradition that the Prophet (SAS) had the aqeeqah and circumcision of his grandsons, Hasan and Husain, performed on the seventh day after their birth. (Baihaqi).

While highlighting the wisdom of circumcision, the scholars have written that:

- it distinguishes Muslims from the followers of other religions.
- it also indicates to one's submission to the injunctions of Allah, and a willingness to carry out His commands.
- it ensures perfect cleanliness.
- it prevents many illnesses.

These are the instructions which are given to parents/guardians upon the birth of a child which send a signal (to them) that a child must be reared correctly from birth. Observance of these instructions guarantees the health, as well as the proper upbringing of the child.

Thus, Islam establishes itself in the heart of the child. It strengthens the faith of the child, and encourages the child to be gentle, well-mannered and pious.



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Islamic Practices for a New Born Baby



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1) When a baby is born, then it is commendable in Islam (Mustahab) to congratulate the parents on the birth of the child. It is also encouraged to give gifts to the child.

2) Azaan should be said in the right ear, and the Iqaamah in the left ear. This is done immediately after the baby is given a bath. It is narrated that on the birth of Hasan (son of Ali (RA) and Fatimah (RA)), the Prophet (SAS) said the Azaan in his ear. (Abu Dawood, Tirmizi). While writing on the wisdom of this, Hafiz Ibn Al Qayyim has stated that the significance of saying the Azaan and Iqaamah in the ears is that such words declare the greatness and majesty of Allah. In other words, this is prompting the creed of Islam, and through the Azan and Iqaamah, the Satans distance themselves from the child.

3) Tahneek should be done with the child. This is the practice of chewing and softening a date, and placing a little of it on the palate of the child, so that it goes down the infant's throat easily. Care must be taken to remove the skin of the date. If the date is not available, one may apply anything sweet (like honey or syrup) to the child's palate.

The scholars have written that through this Sunnah act of tahneek, the veins and muscles of the child are strengthened. The dental palate, the jaws and mouth are made active, thereby making it easy for the child to draw milk from the breast of the mother.

Tahneek is commendable (Mustahab) and a pious and righteous scholar of Islam or a religious person should carry it out.

In this regard, it is narrated from Abu Moosa (RA) that he said, 'A son was born at our place, I bought him to the Messenger of Allah (SAS) who named him Ibrahim, and performed his tahneek with a date. He then made dua of barakah (blessings for him) and handed him to me'. (Bukhari, Muslim).

4) The head of the infant should be shaved. The hair on the head of the child must be shaved on the seventh day. It is commendable (Mustahab) to give silver (or its value in money) in Sadaqah (charity) to the poor and needy equal to the weight of the child's hair.

It is narrated that Fatima (RA) distributed silver as Sadaqah equal in weight to the hair on the heads of Hasan, Husain, Zainab and Umme Kulthum. (Muwata of Imam Malik).

Ibn Ishaq has also narrated that on the birth of Hasan (RA) the Prophet (SAS) requested Fatima (RA) to have the hair of the infant shaved and offer silver equal in weight to the hair as Sadaqah. The hair weighed a dirham or a little less. (Ibn Ishaq).

The entire head must be shaved. To leave some hair, while shaving some is prohibited. While writing on the significance of shaving the infant's head, the scholars have written, 'shaving the hair of the head provides the child with strength, and opens the pores of the skin. It is also beneficial to the child's eyesight, hearing and sense of smell.

5) The child should be given a good name. According to a hadith, a child is pledged to its Aqeeqa, which is sacrificed on behalf of the child on the seventh day, then it is given a name, and the hair is shaved. (Abu Dawood, Tirmizi). From this, it shows that a child must be named on the seventh day. It is also permissible to name a child at birth. In this regard, it is narrated that when Munzir bin Abu Usaid was born, his father took him to the Prophet (SAS), who took the child in his lap and asked the father its name. On being told, he said, 'No, call him Munzir'. (Bukhari, Muslim).

It is also reported in a hadith that the Prophet (SAS) said (at the time of the birth of his son Ibraheem), 'last night a son was born to me, and I have named him Ibraheem after my grandfather, Ibraheem (AS)'. (Muslim).

From these, it shows that it is permissible to give the child a name at birth. It must be remembered that the name given to the child must be good, lovely and meaningful. The Prophet (SAS) mentioned that 'on the day of judgement, people will be called by their names and the names of their fathers. Therefore, a good name must be selected'. (Abu Dawood).

Children should not be given names that might later on detract from their personality or become a cause of ridicule. The Prophet (SAS) always changed names that were derogatory. (Tirmizi). One must not give names that allude to an ill omen or bad character.

The name selected for a child must not be a name that is used for Allah. For example, one should not be named with Ahad (The One), Azeez (Mighty), Khaliq (Creator), Razaaq (Nourisher) and other similar attributes which are used for Allah. Instead, while using such names one should compound it with the word Abdul (which means 'the servant of'). So, Abdul Ahad means the Servant of the One Allah. Abdul Azeez means Servant of the Mighty One, etc. etc.

When naming children, parents must ensure that the names they select signify servitude to Allah Alone, and not to a false diety.

6) The Aqeeqah of the child should be done on the seventh day of its birth.

The Aqeeqah refers to the sacrifice of a goat or sheep on behalf of the child. Regarding this, the Prophet (SAS) is reported to have said, 'Every child is pledged to its aqeeqah which should be slaughtered on its behalf on the seventh day, the child must be named and have its head shaved on the same day'. (Abu Dawood, Tirmizi).