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# **Chapter 5: Conception**

# **Recommended Foods**

The food one eats not only has a great impact on the physical aspect of a person, but on the soul and psyche as well. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that parents-to-be stay away from forbidden food, and even those that food which is doubtful. 1 Additionally, some foods have also been specifically recommended by the Imems for a beautiful and righteous child.

Before the conception of Harrat Freima (sa), the Prophet (S) by the command of Allrh (SwT) stayed away from Harrat Khadria for 40 days. During these 40 days, he performed acts of worship and fasted, and his ifter consisted of food that had been brought from the heaven.

It is recommended to eat the following foods before trying to conceive:

#### 1. Chichory2

a. It has been recommended that the father should eat chicory.3

#### 2. Pomegranate

- a. It is narrated from the Prophet (S): "Eating pomegranate is a cause of increased sperm production for men and makes the child beautiful and healthy as well."4
- b. It is narrated from Imm al-Rim : "Eating sweet pomegranate makes a man powerful in the sexual act and greatly affects the beauty of the child."5

#### 3. Qawoot

a. Qawoot is a powder made by grinding and sifting the following ingredients in relative quantities: Roasted wheat, Roasted Barley, Roasted Sun-flower seeds, Roasted Water melon seeds, Roasted Melon seeds, Roasted Purslane seeds, Roasted Coriandor, Roasted Hemp-seeds, Roasted Fennel seeds, Roasted poppy seeds, Roasted Peas, Sesame, Pistachio, Coffee, Cardamon, Cinamon, Almond, Sugar.

As this mixture is not readily available in most countries, it is suggested that the above contents are eaten on their own, e.g. pistachios and almonds.

b. It has been recommended that both the father and mother should eat gawoot:

It is narrated that a man told Im m as—Indiq (as): "O son of the Messenger of All h (SwT), a son has just been born who is weak and simple—minded." Im m replied: "Why didn't you eat qawoot? Eat that and recommend your family to do so too. Surely, qawoot makes flesh grow and makes the bones firm, and a son will not be born from you except that he is strong."6

c. It is narrated from Imm as-Indiq (as): "Eating qawoot with olive oil and meat fattens a person, makes bones firm, makes the body bright and with NIr (Noble light) and increases the sexual power."7

#### 4. Quince

- a. It is narrated that Im m as mdiq (as) saw a beautiful child and said, "It is very likely that the father of this child ate the fruit quince on the night of conception."8
- b. It is also narrated from him that: "Eating (quince on the night of conception) makes the face (of the foetus) beautiful and good, and the heart strong and firm."9
- c. Another tradition from Imim as-indiq (as) narrates "Anyone who eats quince on an empty stomach, the source of his seed production (sperm) becomes pure and healthy, and his child will be beautiful and decent." 10
- d. It is narrated that the Prophet (S) © cut his quince into pieces and gave one to Ja°far ibn Ab® © lib and told him: "Eat! This quince gives colour lustre and makes the child good."11

# **Recommended Acts**

It is important to note that many of the acts mentioned in this section are similar to those outlined in the Sexual Etiquette section, with the addition of how it affects the conceived child.

### State of mind

The state of mind and soul of the parents has an important effect on the child. The following incidents reflect the importance of the state of mind when conceiving, and its consequences.

a. While Prophet (S) Mss was working as a shepherd for Prophet (S) Shuaib, they made an agreement that any sheep from the flock that were parti-coloured (both black and white) would be paid to Prophet (S) Mss as his wage. After this agreement, Prophet (S) Mss covered parts of his stick with coloured skin and left some parts as they were, hung a similar parti-coloured cloth (Aba) on the stick and then put this stick up in the sheep's pasturing ground. At the time of reproducing, the sheep would look at this.

At the end of the year, when it was time to collect wages, Prophet (S) Shuaib noticed that most of the children of the sheep were parti-coloured! Prophet (S) Mss explained that this was the direct effect of looking at the stick and cloth at the time of reproduction. 12

b. In an African family, where both husband and wife were black-skinned, they had a tan-skinned child (like that of an American Indian). When researching this, scientists found that the husband had an American Indian friend and had stuck a picture of that friend on the wall. At the time of conception, his gaze fell on the picture and he thought of his friend; this very thought had an effect on the sperm and a tan-skinned child, similar to his friend, was born. 13

Therefore, when trying to conceive, it is strongly recommended in Islam that the recommended acts below are adhered to in order to conceive a pure and good child:

- 1. Try and be relaxed, as this results in increased blood circulation and thus, a normal child. It is narrated from Im®m Hasan: "(If) at every time of conception, the heart is relaxed, blood circulation is normal and the body is without agitation and anxiety, the child will resemble his father and mother." 14
- 2. Likewise, a healthy relationship between husband and wife and a strong physical attraction is beneficial for the child, whereas fear and worry will have a negative effect on the child. 15
- 3. Be in Wull and in the remembrance of All (SwT) as this results in relaxation and calming of the heart and has positive effects on the sperm and thus the child. 16 All (SwT) states this in the

Noble Qur'an, in Surat al-Ra°d, Verse 28:

"Those who have faith and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of All®h (SwT); Look! The hearts find rest in All®h (SwT)'s remembrance!"

4. Start with the following Du° ::

It is narrated from the ImIm al-Bigir (as) that before the act, recite the following:

"O All h (SwT)! Bless me with a child, and make him pious. Let there not be in his creation any excess or any defect, and give him a good destiny." 17

### State of body

The state of the body of the parents too, has a perceptible effect on the child, and can lead to weaknesses and illnesses in the child if one is not careful.

- 1. Do not make love the night that you return from a journey, or the night that you intend to leave for a journey, as one is usually stressed and tired on these nights. It has also been narrated that this results in the child being a wanderer and a pedlar, 18 and the child will use up his wealth in the wrong ways. 19
- 2. Do not make love in the first hours of the night, with a tired body and a full stomach, as this results in the child being a sorcerer and choosing the world over the hereafter. 20 Rather, make love in the late hours of the night, when your tiredness is almost gone, and your stomach is empty. It has also been found that a child conceived in the late hours of the night is more intelligent.21

### **Protection from Satan**

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In order to prevent the effects of Satan on this important night, the following acts are also recommended:

- 1. Make intention that you are trying for a child, for the sake of the pleasure and nearness of All®h (SwT)
- 2. Before engaging in the act, recite Qur'an and thank All®h (SwT) for the blessings He has given.
- 3. Before engaging in the act, start with:

"A'udhu billahi min ash-Satan ir-rajeem"

because this ensures that the child conceived will not have qualities of Satan.

4. Recite:

"Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim"

5. Remember All®h (SwT) often, especially during the act. It is narrated from Im®m as-®®diq (as): "Whenever a person makes love to his wife, Satan is present. Then, if the name of All®h (SwT) is remembered, Satan goes far from there, but if the act occurs and the name of All®h (SwT) is not taken, Satan takes part in that he is one with the sperm."23

It is also narrated from Imm as-Indiq (as): "Anytime you want to make love to your wife, remember AllTh (SwT). Because anyone who does not do so and a child is born from him in that state, he/she is from the polytheism of Satan. And the purity or lack of purity of the child is determined by the love and enmity of us, the Ahlul Bayt."24

#### 6. Recite the following Du°s:

"In the name of All®h (SwT), the Beneficient, the Merciful. The one whom there is no God but He, the creator of the heavens and the earth. O All®h (SwT)! If you have decreed for me in this night a successor, then don't let Satan have any part, share or portion in him, and make him a sincere believer, pure from Satan and his evil deeds (great is Your praise)."25

"In the name of All®h (SwT), and with All®h (SwT). O All®h (SwT)! Keep Satan away from me, and keep Satan away from that which you bless me with."26

7. Inculcate the love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) in yourselves. It is narrated from Imm as—Indiq (as): "Sometimes Satan comes near to the wives like their husbands." When asked how to determine whether Satan has a part in the conception of our children or not, Imm replied: "By the way of love or grudge to us. So anyone who loves us, Satan has no part in the conception, and anyone who is our enemy, his seed (sperm) is from Satan."27

It is narrated in a tradition that Satan has said: "Anybody who is an enemy of Im®m "Al®, without a doubt I took part in the act between his father and his mother." 28

It is narrated from Imm as-Indiq (as): "Inspire (teach) your girls and women friendship of the family of "Alm (as) and (thus) leave them with the state (of pure heart and far from crooked Akhliq)."29

NOTE: Love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) does not simply mean professing a liking for them, but rather taking them as a role-model for every aspect of our daily lives and striving to work towards their example.

8. Ensure your relationship is permitted and legitimate. The Prophet (S) said to Im m °Al (as): "Oh °Al Anyone who likes me and you and the Im ms from your offspring (should) then thank All (SwT) for his legitimacy, because nobody but those who are legitimate (born) likes us and nobody but those who are illegitimate (born) are our enemies."30

Indeed, during the time of Im m °Al (as), the method of distinguishing whether children were legitimate or not was by bringing them near the Im m and seeing whether they liked him or not.31

# **Acts not Recommended**

It is important to note that many of the acts mentioned in this section are similar to those outlined in the Sexual Etiquette section, with the addition of how it affects the conceived child.

#### Makrsh acts

As some actions have a negative effect on the child such as spite against the Ahlul Bayt <u>32</u>, it is recommended that the acts mentioned below are refrained from:

- 1. Looking at the private parts of the woman during the actual act, as this leads to blindness in the child.33
- 2. Speaking during the actual act (with the exception of dhikr of All®h (SwT)), as this leads to dumbness in the child.34
- 3. Having henna on (the man), as this leads to effeminacy of the child (i.e. a girl has characteristics of a boy and vice versa).35
- 4. Thinking of or desiring another woman during the act, as this leads to insanity of the child.36
- 5. Making love in the presence of a child, who can either see, or hear the sounds of the act, as this results in that child never being delivered (from the fire of hell) and becoming an adulterer.37
- 6. Making love when someone is awake in the house that can see, or hear the sounds of the act, as this results in the child never being delivered (from the fire of hell), and becoming an adulterer.38
- 7. Making love standing, as this results in the child having a bed-wetting problem.39
- 8. Making love on the rooftop, as this results in the child being hypocritical, and a heretic (innovator).40
- 9. Making love under a fruit tree, as this results in the child being an executioner and a leader of oppression.41
- 10. Making love directly under sunlight, as this results in the child being poor, even until his death.42
- 11. Making love when the man is muhtalim (i.e. become in the state of janabat during his sleep) and before doing Wutt or Ghusl, as this results in the child becoming insane.43

It is important to also keep in mind the other Makr®h acts during normal sexual etiquette (as mentioned in Chapter 2: Sexual Etiquette). These are:

- 1. Having Qur`an or the dhikr of All®h (SwT) on you.
- 2. Making love bare (without a covering).
- 3. Making love on the road or in a boat.
- 4. Facing, or having one's back to, the Qibla.
- 5. Refusing to have sexual intercourse (for various reasons).

NOTE: Once the woman has conceived, it is recommended to refrain from making love without Wull, as this results in the child being miserly and inwardly blind.44

# **Recommended Times**

It is important to note that many of the times mentioned in this section are similar to those outlined in the Sexual Etiquette section, with the addition of how it affects the conceived child.

Mustarab times

- 1. Sunday night (next day Monday). A child conceived on this night will be content with whatever Allsh (SwT) gives him, will have an excellent memory and will be 'sfidh (memorizer) of the Qur'an.45
- 2. Monday night (next day Tuesday). A child conceived on this night will have the prosperity of Islam, the opportunity of shahadat and he will not be punished with the polytheists. He will have a good smelling mouth and a merciful heart. He will be someone who gives in charity and his tongue will be clean from lies, back-biting or making false accusations.46
- 3. Wednesday night (next day Thursday). A child conceived on this night will be a ruler from the rulers of Shar®ah or a scholar from the scholars of religion.47
- 4. The day of Thursday, at the time of decline of the day. This is the best time and is highly recommended for conception. Satan will not go near the child conceived on this night until he/she becomes old and the security of religion and the world will be his/hers.48
- 5. Thursday night (next day Friday). A child conceived on this night will be a preacher, orator and reciter.49
- 6. The day of Friday, after the time of °Asr. A child conceived will be well known amongst the wise and learned people.50
- 7. The day of Friday, after the time of Isha. A child conceived will be from the good and suitable people.51
- 8. 1st night of Rama®n.52

### **Times not Recommended**

It is important to note that many of the times mentioned in this section are similar to those outlined in the Sexual Etiquette section, with the addition of how it affects the conceived child.

#### Harnm times

1. During the woman's menstruation, even on the last day, until the last drop of blood. Pregnancy is still possible, and a child conceived will be troubled with phagedenic ulcers and leprosy. 53 It is also narrated from Im®m as-®diq (as): "There is no enemy to us, Ahlul Bayt, except one who is illegitimate and one who was conceived during <code>@aydh."54</code>

It is important to also keep in mind the other farfm acts during normal sexual etiquette (as mentioned in Chapter 2: Sexual Etiquette). These are:

- 1. During Nifs.
- 2. During fasting in the month of Ramassn.
- 3. During the state of irr.
- 4. When it may cause serious harm to either husband or wife.

#### Makr®h times

- 1. Between Sube as-redig (as) (Adhen of ealet al-Fajr) and sunrise.55
- 2. Between sunset until the redness of the sky has gone.56
- 3. The night of a lunar eclipse.57
- 4. The day of a solar eclipse.58
- 5. At the time of an earthquake (or other events necessitating @al@t al-Ay@t).59

If a child is conceived in the above times the parents will not see any qualities that they like in their child, because they did not consider these signs of All®h (SwT) as important.60

- 6. On the first of the month (with the exception of the 1st of Ramattn, where it is Mustata), the middle of the month (full moon) and the end of the month (when there is no moon), as it will become a cause of insanity, black leprosy and paralysis of the mother and child. 61 Another tradition relates that conception at the beginning and middle of the month results in insanity and the child being possessed by Jinn 62, and conception at the end of the month increases the likelihood of miscarriage. 63
- 7. After <sup>2</sup>uhr (until around the time of °A et n), as this results in the child being squint-eyed.64
- 8. Between Adhin and Iqimah, as this results in the child being greedy to kill.65
- 9. The night of °Eid al-Fier, as this results in the child being the source of evil.66
- 10. The night of °Eid al-Anhi, as this results in the child having 6 or 4 fingers.67
- 11. The night of 15th Sha°b n, as this results in the inauspiciousness of the child, and a black mark on

- 12. The last day of the month of Sha°b⊡n, as this results in the child's being a helper and tax–collector for oppressors.69
- 13. °Ashere night.

# **Planning Pregnancies**

We can conclude from all of the above that the aim of sexual relations is two-fold: satisfying one's natural desires and procreation.

Guidelines from the Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (as) clearly indicate the lengths one has to go to to have desirable offspring. Sexual relations for purposes of conception have to be treated differently, both mentally and physically.

Sometimes, it may so happen that due to lack of information or other reasons, the circumstances of the conception of a child are not planned. The above information may then be a source of worry for the parents as to the possible consequences of conception at times and with acts not recommended. It is necessary to keep in mind that there are many factors that contribute to the physical and psychological make-up of the child, such as genetics, nutrition, social status, etc. The information mentioned above are just some of these factors that may affect the conceived child.

- 1. Serat al-Baqarah, Verse 168: "O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and pure in the earth."
- 2. Also called succory, this is a perennial herb of which its dried, ground and roasted roots are used as an adulterant of or substitute for coffee.
- 3. Bittr al-Anwtr, vol. 62, pg. 215
- 4. Wasil ash-Shi-a, vol. 25, pg. 104, no. 31499
- 5. al-Kff, vol. 5, pg. 355
- 6. Bittr al-Anwtr, vol. 66, pg. 278
- 7. Ibid., vol. 104, pg. 80
- 8. Makgrim al-Akhlgq, pg. 88
- 9. Barg 1'1, pg. 549
- 10. Birr al-Anwr, vol. 81, pg. 101
- 11. Was il ash-Sh a, vol. 25, pg. 165, no. 31538
- 12. Behdesht Izdawej az Nazr Islam, pg. 89
- 13. Izdawīj Asīn, pg. 245
- 14. Bittr al-Anwtr, vol. 14, pg. 379
- 15. Raysin-e Beheshts, pg. 33
- 16. Ibid., pg. 39
- 17. Was il ash-Sh a, vol. 20, pg. 117, no. 25180

- 18. lbid., vol. 20, pg. 253, no. 25560
- 19. °alliyatul MuttaqIn, pg. 112-114
- 20. Ibid.
- 21. Raysen-e Beheshts, pg. 40
- 22. Niyezhe wa Rawebith Medaren wa Janen, pg. 72
- 23. al-Kff, vol. 5, pg. 502
- 24. Sharh Man LT Yahdhural FaqT, vol. 8, pg. 202
- 25. al-Kff, vol. 5, pg. 503
- 26. Ibid.
- 27. Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, pg. 183
- 28. Niyezhe wa Rawebith Medaren wa Janen, pg. 76
- 29. Sharh Man Laa Yahdhural Faq1, vol. 3, pg. 493
- 30. Al-Ameli of Shaykh Badeq, vol. 7, pg. 383
- 31. Menaqibe Ibn Shahr Asheb, vol. 3, pg. 207
- 32. Biffr al-Anwfr, vol. 39, pg. 278, no. 87
- 33. Was il ash-Sh -a, vol. 20, pg. 122, no. 25197
- 34. Ibid., vol. 20, pg. 121, no. 25195
- 35. Ibid., vol. 20, pg. 125, no. 25205
- 36. °alliyatul Muttaq1n, pg. 112-114
- 37. Wasnil ash-Shn~a, vol. 20, pg. 133, no. 25223
- 38. Niytzht wa Rawtbith Jinst was Zantshut, pg. 64
- 39. °alliyatul MuttaqIn, pg. 112-114
- 40. Ibid.
- 41. Ibid.
- 42. Ibid.
- 43. Wastil ash-Sht-a, vol. 20, pg. 148, no. 25271
- 44. Ibid.
- 45. °alliyatul Muttaqnn, pg. 112-114
- 46. Ibid.
- 47. Ibid.
- 48. Ibid.
- 49. Ibid.
- 50. Ibid.
- 51. Ibid.
- 52. Ibid.
- 53. Ibid., pg. 110
- 54. Niyฐzhฐ wa Rawฐbith Jinsฐ was Zanฐshuฐ, pg. 69
- 55. Was il ash-Sh a, vol. 20, pg. 126-127, no. 25207
- 56. Ibid.
- 57. Ibid.
- 58. Ibid.
- 59. Ibid.
- 60. Niytzht wa Rawtbith Jinst was Zantshut, pg. 59
- 61. Wastil ash-Sht~a, vol. 20, pg. 129, no. 25214
- 62. Ibid., vol. 20, pg. 129, no. 25212
- 63. Ibid., vol. 20, pg. 127, no. 25208
- 64. °alliyatul Muttaqen, pg. 112-114
- 65. Ibid.

- 66. Ibid.
- 67. Ibid.
- 68. Ibid.
- 69. Ibid.
- 70. Confirmed with the office of Ayatull®h Sesten®, Qom

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