

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh (SwT), the Beneficent, the Merciful

Only when we ponder and reflect on the guidance and traditions narrated to us by the Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (as), do we realise the treasures they have left behind for us. These pearls of wisdom light the path to Heaven by providing us with advice and knowledge at every step in our lives.

Unfortunately, the majority of these treasures are only available in Arabic and Farsi, leaving English-only readers with just a fraction of what is available, thus forcing them to rely on solely secular information to fill this gap.

Two of these treasures are the Islamic teachings of sexual etiquette between a man and a woman, and the creation of a 'heavenly' child. This information has therefore been translated from various Farsi texts and compiled into this manual. It is our hope that this will provide the English reader with an Islamic manual to be incorporated and utilised side by side with all the other information available, allowing one to not only receive its benefits in this world, but to bring one closer to Allāh (SwT) and heaven.

The information in this manual is based on the authentic and original sources of the teachings of the Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (as). Wherever possible, traditions from these Noble persons have been included to highlight the strong Islamic basis behind the recommendations made, as well as to encourage the reader to become familiar with the words of our leaders in Islam. In addition the inclusion of these traditions highlights the importance Islam places on every single aspect of our lives, never leaving us without guidance at any stage.

At this stage it is necessary to mention that it is possible that the Ahlul Bayt (as) have narrated these traditions at a specific time, place or situation, which information unfortunately has not reached us. We have tried our best to bring the tradition to you as narrated in the sources, in order that they may be useful and beneficial.

This manual begins with a discussion about the wedding night, including the A°m that have been recommended for this night, allowing the bride and groom to start this stage of their life in the best possible way. This is then followed by sexual etiquettes and its importance in Islam, as well as recommendations for the acts and times in which a sexual union is particularly advisable or not.

A section on important fiqh rules laying out essential information in a simple manner follows. All the fiqh rules are in accordance with Ayatullah al-°Uzm Sayyid °Al al-°Husain as-S°st°n. Muqallid of other mujtahids are recommended to refer to their own Ris°lah for these sections.

With respect to sexual etiquette, family planning and the conception period, Islamic recommendations have been highlighted with regards to foods, acts and times, preparing the ground for the making of a righteous and beautiful child, insha-Allah.

Once pregnant, both the mother and father need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities, allowing them to fulfil these in the best manner possible. Once again, recommendations for foods, acts and supplications have been outlined, to begin the nourishing and fostering of the child from these early stages in the womb.

Recommended acts for a safe and easy delivery and for the period immediately after delivery are then discussed, continuing on to breastfeeding, which is known as one of the rights of a child. This is then followed by some additional important fiqh rules for the mother, dealing mainly with the issue of Nif°s (the blood seen by the mother after childbirth).

Last but definitely not least, this work closes with a chapter on raising children, including 40 Akhl°q points on interacting with your child, instilling the love of the Ahlul Bayt (as) in them and tips on memorisation of the Qur`an for both parent and child. This section is filled with important and interesting information that if adhered to, can only serve to have a positive and beneficial impact on the child.

It is necessary to mention certain points that may crop up in the reader's mind when going through the vast amount of information available. Firstly, certain recommendations may seem very specific and narrow, such as that of the times when one should and should not conceive; however, it is essential to remember that Islam is not a difficult religion, and these recommendations are not there to impose unnecessary restrictions on us.

Rather, these recommendations are placed there for our benefit, by a Creator who knows us better than we know ourselves. A little effort on our part will have long term consequences that we may not even be aware of. Indeed, it is important to note that the majority of the recommendations are just that, recommendations. All we have to do is to approach this with the right niyyat, ensure that the obligatory acts are performed and try our best with the rest, and insh-Allah, He will guide us the rest of the way.

Secondly, Muslim women in particular have an added responsibility during pregnancy and beyond, as not only do the medical factors and advice have to be adhered to, but the spiritual factors too. This is especially hard if the pregnancy is a difficult one. Once again, one must keep in mind that the benefits

outweigh the costs.

Additionally, it is not necessary that every single recommended act be carried out; rather a mother must see what is most suitable to her timetable and carry out what she can to the best of her abilities, and leave the rest to Allāh (SwT), who is All-Knowing. This is especially pertinent considering that the recommendations will only have the desired effect if carried out with a calm and peaceful soul, rather than one with worry and stress.

Indeed, in all aspects of life, Islam has given importance to the ‘middle path’ and forbidden extremes. Likewise, it is wise to remember that the recommendations in this manual each have their time and place, and should not be overly indulged in, nor completely ignored. For example, one of the recommendations for a beautiful child is that the father should eat pomegranate; however, this does not mean that the father should make pomegranate his only fruit, and even substitute it for his main meals as this is harmful and dangerous.

It is only when the middle path is treaded upon that the inner, spiritual benefits of these recommendation come into play and affect our lives.

In closing, for a comprehensive approach to these areas, we would like to recommend that this manual be read and incorporated side by side with the supplications in *A Mother's Prayer*¹ by Saleem Bhimji and Arifa Hudda.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to this manual in one way or the other, and supported it throughout. May Allāh (SwT) reward you for everything.

Lastly, we ask for your forgiveness if there are any shortcomings or errors in this manual; please let us know and insha-Allāh, we shall try to improve it for future readers. Any other comments or suggestions would also be welcome.

When using this manual, please remember our families in your Duʿas, and all Marhumeen with a Surat al-Fatiḥah.

We humbly pray to Allāh (SwT) to accept this effort, and if accepted, we present it to Haʿrat Maʿḥmah (sa), in whose Noble neighbourhood we completed this work, and our Noble Imām of the time, Imām Mahdī (aj).

“All Praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of all the Worlds.”

Abbas and Shaheen Merali

1st July, 2005

The Noble City of Qom

¹. This book can be purchased from the Islamic Humanitarian Service at www.al-haqq.com [1]. To contact the authors, you can email them at iph@iph.ca [2].

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