

# Muslim Mums



Issue 11 December 2010/Muharram 1432

## WELCOME NOTE

Salam Alaykum mums and readers. As mums we always worry about whether we are doing the right thing for our children, or whether we could be doing more.

But have you spared a thought for those mums who have to go that extra long mile to ensure their children are cared for in a certain manner? Look out for our Rizwan Friendly and Special Needs article. It'll give you a different perspective on life with a child.

Enjoy reading!

Send your comments to [mumslimmums@madressa.net](mailto:mumslimmums@madressa.net)

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## FEATURE ARTICLE THE STAGES OF CHILDHOOD

The third and  
final stage  
15-21 years old



Khanwadeh wa Niyazmandihaye Kudakan (The family and the needs of children).

**Over the last few issues, we have been looking at the Stages of Childhood. This is the last stage written by Tahera Kassamali, giving us an insight into the teenage years.**

This is the stage when the child now becomes a young adult. The term child actually does not apply to him anymore. He has gained some experiences, learned about people and societies, and has developed a somewhat strong world view. It is an important stage that can have a lot of effect on how the child perceives his role in the world and the path he chooses to map out for himself. It also sets the type of relationship the child will have with the parents.

The points outlined in this article may not apply to all those who are passing through this stage. They are just a general understanding of this stage according to what most people go through. It is mostly based on the book by Dr. Ali Qaemi,

The human being during this stage can now make his own choices, but not completely independently. He is still under the guidance and influence of the parents, and they should work alongside with him. Although he may think he is old enough to make his own decisions, he continues to be vulnerable to misguided reasoning and the influence of others. What is required from the parents at this stage is a balance; not controlling him so much that he feels suppressed and imprisoned, nor leaving him to himself with no form of controls and restrictions. To tread this middle path is a skill that the parents need to acquire.

The third stage involves changes in all aspects of a human being's life.

Physical growth – the child grows very fast during this age. A lot of changes which had started in the second stage now become more pronounced. The child becomes taller, sometimes quite lanky, with arms

and feet becoming much longer. The change in voice, the appearance of hair on certain body parts, the increase in breast size, all become an obvious sign of rapid physical growth. Often these changes create an awkwardness in the child as he and those around him struggle to adjust to these continuous and fast paced changes.

**Mental Understanding** - During this stage the child can understand and learn a lot of new ideas. He is able to digest and analyze issues, compare different ideologies and world views, and learn about various perspectives on different matters. He gains more awareness and is able to increase rapidly in mental perceptions. Society, friends, education, and exposure to media.... all play a role in this rapid escalation of his mental prowess.

Because of the fast pace in the increase of knowledge and awareness during this stage, he thinks he is mentally very fit. He considers himself capable of making decisions based on his own intelligence and reasoning. He often disagrees with the opinions of others and relies on his own thinking. He likes to find fault with others, even with those who are learned in their fields. It is a dangerous mentality as if he is left to himself, he will make all his decisions based on his own understanding. What he fails to understand is that even though his intelligence is more proficient than it has ever been before, he is still far from wisdom and true understanding of things. There is a lot that he will see and experience in life that will change his thinking and his reasoning. Life

is a great teacher and experience cannot be underestimated. According to the Holy Quran, wisdom is attained after maturity of age:

*...until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years, he says: My Lord! grant me that I may give thanks for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents . . . (46:15)*

However because the child at this stage cannot fully comprehend that and is unwilling to accept that his understanding may be flawed, he challenges the thinking of those around him. He often suffers from a feeling of vanity, a form of ghurur, which makes him think he can take on the world and win. He believes he can move mountains and can do it by himself. The onset of physical strength, and the increased knowledge and understanding he gains so rapidly during this stage, create this false sense of superiority. His thinking and opinions are also quite selfish and shallow. Because they are mostly confined to his own mind and its rationalizing, they are limited in their scope.

Parents have to deal with this wisely. They should directly, and indirectly, point out different ways of thinking and the wisdom behind them. Exposing the child to a variety of views that differ from his own but that can be respected for their intelligence and understanding can be very helpful. Allow the child to see that many different ways of thinking exist. The decision to choose the appropriate one comes with a lot of reflection and insight, qualities that are not readily available at this

stage.

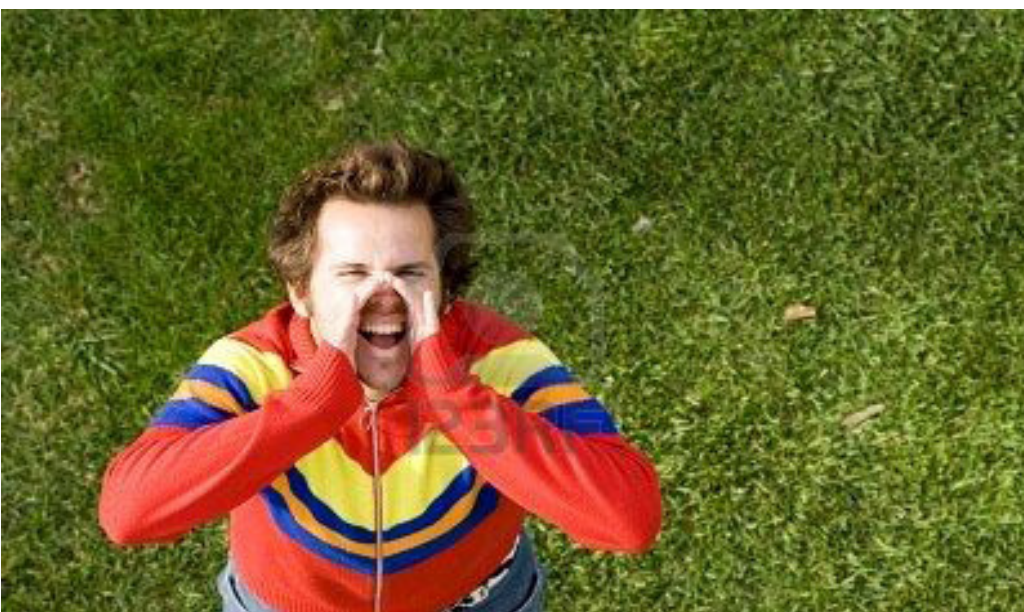
**Emotional Upheavals** – a child at this stage goes through a variety of moods. Sometimes he is very positive and upbeat, especially when with others. At other times he is sad and dispirited, especially if he is alone. He becomes quite sensitive and is quick to take offense, even when unintended. He is very concerned about what others think of him, especially the opposite gender. This desire to establish himself in the eyes of the other gender stems from the awakening of sexuality and the need to fulfill physical desires. Islam stresses on correct guidance of dealing with these types of emotions and staying away from all potentially corrupt situations.

**Relationship with Parents**

This is a critical stage when the child begins to resist and challenge the parents. He disagrees with their opinions and opposes their ideas. He is willing to argue his point and show why he thinks the parents are wrong. It is an attempt at independence, a striving to find his own niche in life. Many parents react angrily to this type of attitude and their anger and frustration only increases the negativity in the relationship.

The child at this stage also thinks very highly of his own friends and is fiercely loyal to them. He spends a lot of time with them and is ready to defend them at all costs. The same type of loyalty can also be given to any cause that he thinks is worthwhile. Such unbending loyalty to friends and causes outside the home can create conflict within the family. Parents find it hard to understand why he is so pleasant with his friends and very difficult with the parents. This also increases the tension between them.

This is also the stage when according to ahadith, the child is now a deputy of the parent. He should be able to perform many of the tasks that are the duty of the parent. He learns how to interact with others, how to serve guests, how to answer people... all under the guid-



ance and care of the parents. The parents should not control the child strictly at this time. Instead they should remind him often, discuss with him, and consult with him in household affairs. It is good for the parents to ask and respect his opinion in matters that affect him as part of the family.

What parents can do to help the child weather the storms of this stage include:

- a) Respectful listening to what he has to say
- b) Constant communication that is gentle but firm. After all it is the parents who are the authority. They must make that gently known.
- c) Occupying the child with leisure activities, social outings, hobbies, etc. all of which are ways of being mentally involved in satisfying pursuits.
- d) Giving the child responsibilities at home. Hard work is good for the child and makes him less selfish and allows him to belong more to his surroundings.
- e) Making sure the child plays and enjoys physical exercise.
- f) Discussing mutual issues of interest with the child. These could range from family matters, religious issues, current affairs... etc.
- g) Not allowing the child to be obsessively involved in his own affairs only. These could be his studies, his job, his friends... etc. Complete immersion in things that matter only to himself creates a selfishness in the child. It is necessary to insist that he set aside time for things that are important for the family and that he sacrifices his own interests sometimes if necessary.

At the end of this stage the child has now become an adult. If the parents have done their work well they can enjoy the fruits of their efforts. There is not much that can be done by the parents to change the child after this stage. Now their role is to provide support if required, and to give occasional reminders. No longer do they play a vital role in the child's life. But most parents will remain an anchor in the lives of their children, and can continue to influence and encourage in different ways.



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## GROWING FEET

Providing parents with “Pearls of Wisdom” (Islamic and Secular) through the growing years

**PREGNANCY – THE EXPECTANT FATHER**  
(Based on Conception, Pregnancy and Birth, By Dr. Miriam Stoppard)

Finding out you are going to be a father is one of the most exciting moments of your life. The emotional impact of the news will be just as strong on you as it is on your partner. However, the effect on men is often underestimated and you are likely to find that once the initial excitement has worn off, people will stop asking you how you are feeling. It's therefore important to talk about your emotions, especially to your wife, and to get involved in the pregnancy and birth plans. Allow the unborn baby to be as big a part of your life as you can – this, after all, is something that is happening to both of you, not just to your wife. This will be covered in 3 parts inshallah.

**Part 3 – Plan for the birth together**

Discuss with your partner the type of birth that she wants and together decide what your involvement will be. Plan to talk to your employer about taking time off to go to the antenatal appointments as well as the birth,

so that you can spend some time at home with your partner after the baby is born. The Birth Plan – Talk over the issues raised by the birth plan with your partner but don't impose your views. If she feels strongly about certain issues, such as trying for a drug-free labour, respect her feelings but make sure you discuss the pros and cons. Don't assume you will be squeamish at the birth. Witnessing the birth of your child is probably one of the most moving things you will ever experience, and holding your baby in the first few seconds of life not only helps bond the two of you but is a tremendous emotional experience.

#### INFANCY (0-12 Months) - Talking parentese (or babytalk)

(Based on Jan Parker and Jan Stimpson, Raising Happy Children)

Many parents use 'parentese' instinctively, though some find the shift hard. Understanding why babies worldwide respond and flourish with it may make the transition easier. Saying 'horsy' or 'doggy' for example, emphasises the 's' and 'g' sound for the child to hear and repeat. Focusing on individual words – 'spoon' instead of 'Look, here's your spoon, let's put it in your hand' – helps a baby identify sounds and meanings and name objects more easily.

Dr. Sally Ward, a specialist paediatric speech and language therapist, explains: 'Parentese is very, very important. When you have a very small baby that you know isn't understanding your words, the natural thing is just to chat and tell the baby what you're doing, as you do it, for example "I'm putting washing in here". But when the adult perceives the child is beginning to understand the words, around eight or nine months, then mothers tend to modify the way they speak. At this point, you don't continue to speak in long sentences but use more shorter utterances, for instance, "It's a cup, a cup". Mothers will speak slower and louder, hopefully, with lots of repetition. Basically you are helping the child map the meaning on to the words. If that modification of how the parent speaks doesn't happen, if the parent speaks to the child as they would to a much older child or an adult, then it causes big problems. Children can have a lot of difficulty then figuring out what we mean.'

#### THE TODDLER YEARS – Tidal Wave Tantrums (Based on Jan Parker and Jan Stimpson, Raising Happy Children)

After a tantrum, children often need a hug and call out for mummy. At that stage, the child just needs to be hugged unconditionally without any 'No, you've been a naughty boy'. They just need to be held. Then if things need to be talked about or boundaries set, leave a space, wait until everyone is calm, then talk about it. I think there is a tendency towards tantrums in children because there are few other ways to release their aggression, frustration or anger – they can't just take themselves outside and kick a football. Also, when they are in their twos, their feelings are so much a part of their bodies and a tantrum shows itself like this with kicks and screams and flying arms. Often, if they are allowed to have that tantrum, it's like a wave of energy that is then gone. If this is stopped it can get pushed

down and maybe this leads to later problems. It takes someone with good self-esteem and maturity to allow a tantrum, especially in a public place.



#### THE OLDER YEARS – 5 Nonverbal Communication Cues Parents Can Use - Keep the Lines of Communication with Your Teen Open and Positive (By Denise Witmer, <http://parentingteens.about.com/od/talktoyourteen/a/communicating.htm>)

When talking with your teen, it is important that your non-verbal communication cues support what you are saying verbally and not get misconstrued with how frustrated you are at work, for example. No one wants to talk to a grouch or someone who isn't really paying attention, which is what your nonverbal cues could be saying to your teen. Here are five actions you can practice to keep communication with your teen positive and ongoing:

Use an upbeat tone of voice. The intonation, volume and pitch of your voice can change the whole meaning of your words. Using an upbeat positive tone of voice will get you more attention than using a pessimistic tone of voice.

Use eye contact when listening to your teen. Eye contact shows the person who is speaking that you are interested in what she is saying and encourages more communication.

Smile as much as possible. Research shows that the face is the primary mode of communicating a person's feelings and the act of smiling can even boost a person's feelings. So when you smile, it will uplift your attitude toward what you and your teen are talking about, as well as your teen's outlook on what you are saying.

Use open gestures. Avoid finger pointing, crossing your arms and putting your hands on your hips. More positive movements like leaning forward and nodding will encourage your teen to share more about what she is thinking.

Don't be afraid to touch your teen. Hugs and goodnight kisses are still important, although your teen may wish to be asked first. Hold her hand when she needs to be consoled or give her a pat on the back when you are praising her. These touches convey our unconditional love for our children and should not be stopped just because your teen has gotten older.



OUT OF INTEREST  
**EXCESSIVE  
LIVING**

Do we waste too much?  
Farhanaz Merali looks at  
cutting down on wastage

Images on the news of poverty and starvation have always affected me deeply. These days however, they also leave me feeling very guilty. Guilty because I live in a society where more is better. 'Moderation', a value of utmost importance in Islam, is a word now more often referred to when talking about the latest fad diet. Excess is now a way of life in the west. The consumerist society we live in lures us day in day out, so much so that we no longer realise when we have fallen prey to the constant bombardment of advertising. The 'latest' mobile phone, the 'must have' gadget, the 'freshest' perfume, the 'hottest' handbag this season, the 'stylish' shoes worn by the celebrities of the moment, the 'trendiest colour' to wear this autumn...where does it end?

Do we need it? No we don't! Do we buy it? Yes we do! Consumers don't even need money anymore, they just need credit! 'Buy it now' they say, but 'pay us later'. We have all seen the downward spiral this has led to in the world economy. How ironic when we're told that no-one saw it coming as fast as it did. Well how could they? They were all too busy spending!  
Okay, so we can't control what's happening in the world, but as

mums, we can surely control what's happening in our homes. Our children are watching us, and more importantly, learning from us. Material satisfaction will never be achieved, everyone knows this - we'll always want more. Yet we keep trying, and surely our children will emulate us too and end up with nothing but disappointment.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an (17:26-27)

".....But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the Shayatin (devils), and the Shaitan is ever ungrateful to his Lord".

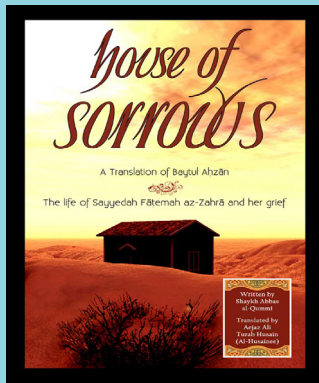
Islam does not forbid us from spending on things we enjoy; rather it encourages us to be aware and to be accountable not just for our own needs, but also the needs of those less fortunate.

Coincidentally, during the time when I was writing this, at one point I was on my way to collect my son from nursery when I saw a black bag fall out from a rubbish truck. As it hit the ground, the contents spilled out on the road; the majority of it was food. I was shocked at the quantity, yet when I went home and looked in my own fridge, I realised the yoghurt pots I had bought for my children had expired and I too would have to

dispose of them. Furious at myself for picking up the 'extra' six pots that were part of an offer, I vowed to myself that I would not succumb again. The saving I thought I had made only went in the bin. When it takes approximately £15 to feed a desperate family for a month in Africa, how can I ever justify my actions to my Creator? Shockingly, statistics show that every year 18 million tonnes of edible food (with a value of £23billion) end up in landfill and yet, recent figures released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization state that 1.02 billion people are undernourished. How can this ever be justified? Gandhi once said "There is a sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed". So while obesity rates are high in the West and natural resources are running low, it's time to for us mums to make choices; choices that will allow us to fulfil our obligations as servants to the Almighty and in turn to teach our children to be mindful, grateful, and content with all that they have been blessed with.

If you are interested in reading more about this check out:  
<http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com>  
<http://www.worldhunger.org>

# BOOK REVIEWS

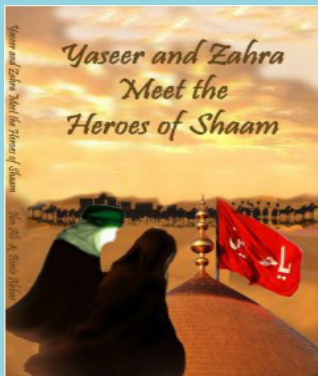


## ADULT BOOK REVIEW

**House of Sorrows**  
By Shaykh Abbas al Qummi  
Published by Islamic Publishing House

Where would you go after your father had been killed and his body lay in the masjid waiting a proper burial? Where would you go when your inheritance was stolen from you and your honour and dignity had been challenged? Where would you go when your husband's rights were violated and he was being dragged through the streets with chains around his neck? Where would you go when you were physically attacked, had a miscarriage and yet no one was there to help and assist you? Where would you and your two young children go to escape the mayhem and insanity of a community hell-bent on removing the name of the faith of Islam and the legacy of the Messenger of Allah for eternity?

Written by Shaykh Abbas al-Qummi, translated by Aejaz Ali Turab Husain and published in Canada by the Islamic Publishing House ([www.iph.ca](http://www.iph.ca)), House of Sorrows is the first ever book in English to graphically detail the last 6 months of the life of the only daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, Lady Fatema az-Zahra, peace be upon her. This 300 page work focuses on the status of Lady Fatema from the Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions and then delves into the events immediately preceding the death of the Messenger of Allah such as the Saqifah, the taking of Fadak and then, in vivid words, goes through the last months of the daughter of the Prophet's life - including the attacks against her husband, the attempts to burn her house down, the physical assault against her ending up in her miscarriage and the untimely death of the Mistress of the Women of Paradise. Be prepared to shed tears as you read the heart-wrenching saga of what happened to al-Zahra, peace be upon her, as recounted not only in the books of the Shi'a but as narrated in the major books of the Ahlus Sunnah.



**CHILD BOOK REVIEW**  
**Yaseer and Zahra Meet the Heroes of Shaam.**  
By Binte Abbas  
Published by Binte Abbas Creations

It's a story that happened a long time ago. A story that's been told over and over, and yet one we never get tired of hearing. A story that always brings our eyes to tears and our hearts to sadness. A story that makes us ask ourselves: What would I have done if I was there when Shareekatul Hussain (AS) stood up and addressed the tyrant Yazid? How would I have felt when the Adhan was being recited, and Ali ibn Hussain (AS) addressed Yazid? It's the story of the Aftermath of the Tragedy of Kerbala, the story of the Heroes of Shaam. Join Yaseer, Zahra and their Grandfather as they travel back into time to the lands of Kerbala, Kufa and Shaam and meet the Heroes of Shaam. "Grandfather you promised we would go back to the land of Kufa and Shaam to meet the Heroes of Shaam!" Yaseer and Zahra plead to their dear Grandfather. Grandfather tells them he has a surprise for them. Yaseer rushes to get the magic rug. "Sorry Yaseer, we won't really need that right now, but you have the right idea. Here take this," Grandfather says, as he hands them each an envelope. Zahra opens hers and reads: "Zuljanah Airlines to Kerbala, Iraq." They were going to be the Zawar of Imam Hussian (AS)...but why was Grandfather packing the magic rug? Join Yaseer and Zahra for a trip of a lifetime!

## PRODUCT REVIEW

### The Baby Bathing Apron / Towel

Third time round I realised an ordinary bathing baby towel just wouldn't do. I have 2 hands and if I'm picking up my baby out of the bath, who is going to hold the towel for me? So I invested in this amazing apron towel. Not only does it keep me dry during bath time but it is attached to me as I wear it so I don't need to grip it with my chin! It is so easy to get a baby out of the bath without them feeling cold, just un-pop and wrap them up close to you. Priced at £18.95 on Amazon but if you are planning to visit the baby show, go with a friend as they normally reduce items if you are buying 2 of the same product.



# BLOG SPOT

A place for mums to air their thoughts!



## SWEET SLEEP

By Farhanaz Merali

As I peer through the door, I see them sleeping - so sweet and so angelic. I have always loved to watch them while they sleep, I guess all mums do. It's as if their innocence just shines through the darkness and you just want to hold them, whether they are eight or six or three, as mine are. At times during each chaotic day, I sort of wait to get through it and crave the peace and quiet that comes with night time. Yet standing there and watching them, I miss them. Their laughter, constant chatter and yes, sometimes even the noise! Perhaps it's what God has placed in a mum's heart, that no matter what has gone on in the day, as crazy as they may have driven us, at the end, when you see them looking so peaceful, you forget. In a strange way it gears you up for the next day.

a Stamnding there gives me a moment or two to just scan over in my mind the time I spent with them that day. Yes, they each did their Qur'an and the older ones prayed with me (huge bonus points in making me feel like a half-decent mum!), they did their homework, they ate their dinner well and they got a little free time to play (while I quickly tidied up!). Perfect! Or is it? While watching them, I ask myself if I hugged them enough? If I talked, I mean really talked to them? My heart sinks as I struggle to remember the busy few hours I spent with them that day. I love them implicitly, I know that, I think they do too, in fact I'm sure they do, but I just can't help but question myself! I decide that tomorrow I will take a step back from all that we have to do and make a conscious effort to do what I feel I may not have done today...

## SMALL THINGS

One day when Nabi Moosa (a.s) was sick, he asked Allah (S.W.T) to help him. He was directed to a bush to collect a special type of herb to use for his sickness. He did accordingly and was cured. The next time he was ill, he went directly to the bush, collected the herb and used it, but this time with no effect. Enquiring with Allah (S.W.T), he was told that the first time, he sought help from Allah and he was successful but the other time he did not do so, and that was the reason. This shows us that as well as all the precautions and treatments we take, we must also seek help from Allah (S.W.T) because no medicine can work without his permission.

This issue focuses on small ways in which we can encourage our children to turn to Allah from a young age and use the precious dhikr of Allah to help them get better during an illness.

If a child has a temperature, encourage them to recite Surah Shams (no. 91) on a glass of water and drink it.

If a child has a headache, encourage them to recite Surah Takathur (no.102).

If a child's eyes are hurting, encourage them to recite Surah Humazah (no. 104) or Ayatul Kursi.

If a child falls over and hurts themselves, encourage them to recite Surah Fatiha (no.1) or Ash-Shaafi.

If a child has a stomach ache, encourage them to recite Surah Asr (no. 103) or Surah Lahab (no.111).

If a child has an earache, encourage them to recite Aoodhubilaahil-Ladhee Sakana Wahuwas-Sameeul Aleem.

If a child is sick, encourage them to recite Ya Salaamu 111 times.

## NEW MUSLIM MUMS GROUP OPENS IN LEEDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL SISTER MARYAM KHADIJA:

MUSLIMAHMUMS@YAHOO.CO.UK

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senses. While doing this I developed really amazing tricks for children who could not sit still.

Ever gone to mosque and struggled with what to put in your bag to keep the kids occupied apart from a packet of crisps and a DS? Well, why not put in some Montessori activities to keep them occupied?!

The key to this is to find out what your child is interested in and then find materials which they like. A good example is my daughter, who likes beads of different shapes - these could be small shiny ones, square ones, funny shaped ones or round ones that allow a thread to be passed through. What I did was to find a collection of different beads made from different materials. On one occasion I even used pasta penne shells out of the packet and put these in a tin for her to use to do her threading. She was completely absorbed and fascinated with this activity.

Some children love opening and shut-

ting all sorts of containers. Carry a collection of tiny containers. These could include a small lipstick container, glue stick bottle, jewellery box, sample bottles, etc, that could easily fit in your handbag.

Dressing up buttons, buckles and laces can also be entertaining to young children. They can get totally absorbed on their own coat or an old jumper. Your coat is ideal for this and it doesn't need space in your handbag!

If you have a taste for collecting and you happen to have a Russian doll, it's compact and seems to also appeal to boys. Russian dolls are ideal for problem solving and enhancing fine motor skills, which are later needed for writing.

You do not have to go buy materials. Fed up of laundry? Get the kids to help! Have your child match the pairs of socks. My daughter loved doing this. She would find pairs and fold them away. In the beginning, other mothers watched with surprise; soon their own children started to play with my socks as well! You could also bring nuts and bolts to fix in a small tin.

To introduce numeracy, write numbers on cards and provide objects such as shells for them to count. Lay each number out and the pre-schooler can place the corresponding number of shells below it. A similar activity can also be used for literacy. Give your child several objects. Write the letters they begin with or even the word of the object on a card and allow the child to match the object with the card.

Montessori is not only about materials but about following the child in every step of their development.

Maria Montessori saw that children learn best by doing things that they enjoyed. Happy, self-motivated learners form positive images of themselves as confident, successful people. She created specially designed resources to foster independence and a love for learning from an early age.

As a curious teacher and enthusiastic mum, I wanted to excite my child with all the different ways to learn using their



## MUHARRAM QUIZ

How well do you know the tragedy of Kerbala?

1. When did Imam Husayn (as) leave Madinah for Makkah?
2. When did Imam Husayn (as) reach Kerbala?
3. Name the martyr who protected Imam Husayn (as) during Salatul Zohr?
4. How old was Imam Husayn (as) when he was martyred?
5. Which ziyarat mentions the names of the martyrs of Kerbala?
6. Who is the only female martyr in Ker-

bala who accompanied her husband from Kufa to join Imam Husayn's (as) army?

7. What is the name of the evil man who raised Imam Husayn's (as) holy head on a spear?
8. What does Imam Husayn's (as) title Abal Ahraar mean?

Answers 1. 28th Rajab 60 AH, 2. 2nd Muharram 61AH, 3. Said bin Abdullah 4. 56 years, 5. Ziyarat Nahiyya, 6. Wahab, 7. Khawli bin Yazeed, 8. Father of freedom



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## PERSONAL MOMENTS

# RIZWAN FRIENDLY

By Asiyah Jamal

It all started when Rizwan turned three months old. We started seeing raw red patches of skin on his face. He would be constantly scratching and wriggling his body to gain some relief; in my mind he went from a happily quiet baby to constantly crying at the blink of an eye. The need to scratch became so severe that he couldn't allow himself to fall asleep. My husband, Mohamed, and I would take turns at night pacing the room trying to placate him. When he finally did go down, he would only last for 30 minutes. Upon waking he would struggle to tear away his swaddling clothes to scratch his body. Everyone seemed to have a theory on the cause and my own internet research led me to believe it was baby eczema, which would soon pass.

However, as the days went by it seemed to go from bad to worse. Eczema ran in Mohamed's family so we thought that might be it, but we didn't know for certain. A family friend recommended taking him to see a South African pediatrician by the name of Dr. Indira Dhunoo. We made an appointment and met with him one sunny afternoon. With one look at Rizwan he knew it was Eczema. For those not in the know, Eczema is a chronic, recurring skin inflammation that appears as blisters that dry to become a scaly, itchy rash. After lifting Rizwan's shirt he made his second conclusion,

eczema inflamed by allergies. The doctor explained that if a baby appears to have eczema along with having a red chest then there is a strong likelihood it is irritated by a food allergy.

To confirm the food allergy theory he sent Rizwan for a blood test and suggested I immediately stop eating from the five main food groups to which children are often allergic: dairy, soya, nuts, wheat and eggs. Before leaving his office, he prescribed a steroid cream (cortisone) to control the rashes, an antihistamine to reduce the itching and antibiotics to cure an infection that he saw in Rizwan's open skin pores. Later on he would come to reveal that during that first meeting he was actually quite scared that had we waited any longer before seeing him, he would have had to send us to emergency to treat Rizwan's infection. Thank God he had remained calm for my sake.

What startled me was that although only 1% of what I ate was transferred to Rizwan during breastfeeding, even then he was suffering so noticeably. Overnight I changed my diet to eating pretty much rice, beans, vegetables and fruit. A week later the results of his blood test came back stating he was allergic to all the aforementioned items along with fish! I was dumbstruck, I had never heard of anyone with so many allergies.

The doctor told us that it was possible to put him on a hypoallergenic formula, but the benefits of breastfeeding were so great that I should try to carry on and change my diet. There was no doubt I would continue to breastfeed. As they say the biggest reward from Allah is the sacrifice that you make for your kids. It wasn't easy to stop all the foods. As soon as I changed my diet it felt like everywhere I went people were eating all the foods that I loved: pizza, ice cream, sandwiches, cakes, the list was endless. What kept me going was the difference I could see in Rizwan as the weeks went by. After a month, he started to smile again, sleep through the night, his

face cleared up, and his personality came back. He was happy again.

This wasn't a normal diet where one could sneak in a chocolate and still carry on, any trace of milk or wheat in my diet would manifest in Rizwan instantly at the next feeding. I think Allah gave me the strength to keep going with such limited food selection. I became an expert on reading ingredients; it was unbelievable how many foods have wheat, soya and dairy in some form. I thank God for stumbling upon quinoa, a wonderful ancient grain which provides a balanced protein. I made many mistakes at the beginning, but got better as I went along. For breakfast every day I used to eat rice milk with cornflakes. I even tried rice bread but it was like eating cardboard! Whenever we went out I would take my own food, it was easier than asking everyone the list of cooking ingredients. It was arduous to say the least, but the result was a tremendous positive change in Rizwan.

When Rizwan started eating solids, we had to be extra cautious because the allergic impact was at 100% potency. All store bought baby cereals contained some allergic ingredient so we made sure that all food was homemade. I used to cook crushed brown rice with water and mix it with fruit for his breakfast. His lunch and dinners included steamed vegetables, beans or rice and curry.

At one of our regular appointments, the doctor told me that some kids could eat goat cheese. Finally, a possible milk source, I thought to myself. With hope and anticipation I bought a block of goat cheese and cut a tiny piece for him to try. The moment it touched his lips he spit it out, probably because he didn't like the taste. What followed drained the blood from my face. He started to break out in hives; his lips ballooned and his eyelids swelled and went bright red. I dashed to grab his antihistamine and quickly administered a dose. It took two hours for the swelling to go down and three hours for me to stop shaking. I hadn't cried like that in some time. Thank

God he didn't swallow any of the cheese otherwise the consequences would have been dire. It was only then that I realized the extent of his allergies and how careful we had to be with what we gave him to eat.

As Rizwan got older, everywhere we went we took his food. It was hard visiting friends; I had to make sure I took enough snacks while also ensuring that no one offered him anything to eat. Mosque was the same. I had to keep him with me at all times. Initially when anyone used to kiss him after eating eggs or nuts he used to break out on his face. It

was horrible having to stop people from showing their affection, just to ask them if they could first wash their mouth and hands before touching him.

However, every cloud has a silver lining. As people began to learn of Rizwan's condition they took it upon themselves to watch over him in public and keep an eye out for what we could eat during their grocery runs. We had friends calling us at all hours after spotting some 'Rizwan friendly' food in the store. I fondly remember hearing from the pediatrician that he stumbled upon

a pancake mix at the supermarket; honestly, how many doctors do you know with that sort of bedside manner? Mohamed's best-friend, Omar, would routinely bake up 'Rizwan friendly' granola bars made of honey, seeds and sugar crisp, allowing me to snack on something while breastfeeding. At gatherings, friends would keep salad dressing separate, stock up on friendly foods and keep the blacklisted items out of reach. It felt like the entire community was made up by Rizwan's friends. I was humbled. The city I moved to after marriage had finally become my home. God works in mysterious ways.

Rizwan is now a toddler and the difficulty I face is in having to explain to him why he can't delight in the foods his friends enjoy. We try to explain to him that being allergic is like having an 'owie'. Additionally, we've taught him that if anyone offers him food he should respond by saying, "I'm allergic, ask my mummy". We have reduced going out to restaurants and typically only go on holidays to where family can be found. It makes it easier to find friendly foods. For now I believe his allergies is more a test for us than for him. It is us who feel sorry for him. He doesn't know any better. I guess we should be grateful as his diet is so healthy. He loves lentils and snacks on vegetables. When you ask him what he wants to eat he says, "dal, beans, potatoes and rice".

Each day brings new challenges and I wonder what will happen when he goes to school. I ask myself, will he accidentally eat something causing a worse episode than the goat cheese incident? Only God knows. I take solace in his cheeky smile. We've come a long way since that first doctor's appointment. No one could tell he has eczema now by looking at him. He's happy as can be and a joy to everyone around him. I pray to Allah to cure him of his allergies. I don't know what other mothers dream for their children, but I dream of sharing a laugh with Rizwan over a hot pizza. Inshallah.



Rizwan with eczema



Rizwan cured



## HEALTH FOCUS

# READING THROUGH COLOUR

By Asifa Padhani-Raza

It is now established that coloured filters help different sorts of people, for example, those with Dyslexia, and those that suffer from Visual Stress, Headaches and Fatigue when reading text for long periods. There is no one colour that helps everybody - the best colour needs to be individually selected.

Visual Stress is also known as Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome and Meares-Irlen Syndrome and is a visual discomfort some people experience when viewing written text. The contrast between black text against a white background makes:

- Letters and words appear to move or jump
- Letters and words appear to go in and out of focus
- Letters and words appear to fade and disappear
- The background appear bright and reflective
- Gaps between words or letters appear large or small
- Coloured halos appear around the text

People who suffer with this may be poor readers and poor at under-

standing text, they skip words and lines. They may also be poor at spelling, clumsy, have untidy writing and generally avoid reading. They may be poor at judging distances, poor at catching skills and may also have poor behaviour. Some children thought to be Dyslexic may actually be suffering from Visual Stress. Dyslexia is a Specific Learning Difficulty and is defined as a problem with literacy skills. Dyslexia is NOT related to intelligence, race or social background and it affects 5-10% of the school age population. The main features of Dyslexics are: difficulties in sounding out words, poor understanding of written text, poor spelling skills and poor writing skills. Although visual factors do not cause Dyslexia, certain visual problems can be a contributory factor. Only an educational psychologist or a special needs teacher can formally diagnose a child/adult with Dyslexia. A specially trained optometrist can examine to what degree visual factors are contributing to the person's difficulties. Once these visual factors have been found and managed, only then the affects of colours can be tested.

In the early 1980's it was discovered that visual distortions which lead to Visual Stress was reduced in some individuals by the use of coloured paper or by using coloured plastic overlays. The colour chosen differs between individuals. In children, the reading speed and fluency can be then compared with and without the chosen overlay in place; hence the benefit of the overlay can

be rapidly ascertained as an increase in speed and fluency. People who benefit from viewing text through coloured overlays usually prefer coloured lenses. Coloured lenses provide a practical advantage over overlays because lenses are easier to use when writing, reading a white board and using a computer. They are also chosen with precision using an instrument called The Intuitive Colorimeter. Hence, coloured overlays are usually used as a screening tool, with tinted lenses as the preferred choice of treatment. For people who are prescribed with precision tints, the exact colour of the tint can change over time, so re-examination is advised on a yearly basis.

If you or your child is having the symptoms described in this article then the first line of action is to get a full eye examination with an Optician/Optomestrist who is specialised in this field. You can find them on the web site for the Society of Coloured Lens Prescribers. They will carry out a full eye examination and if the results indicate that colours may help, they will trial overlays before suggesting coloured spectacle lenses. Children who are having learning problems at school should see their Special Needs Teacher who can refer them to an Educational Psychologist for formal diagnosis, and they too will suggest they see a Specialised Optician/Optomestrist.

For Further information:

Video- 'Reading with Colour'  
Institute of Optometry Sales  
02072349641

Book- 'Vision and Dyslexia' by Professor Bruce Evans

Asifa Padhani-Raza (MCOptom. BSc(Hons).FBDO(Hons)CL) is a Senior Optometrist in Specific Learning Difficulties at The Institute of Optometry and Fiona Watt Optometrist (private practice). She is also a Member of the Society of Coloured Lens Prescribers

# HAIR REMOVAL LASER OR IPL?

Could this be the answer to our prayers? Have we finally found a permanent solution to the endless problem of unwanted hair? Could a few months of consistent treatment offer a long term solution? Read on and find out more about the current rage: Laser vs IPL.



## LASER

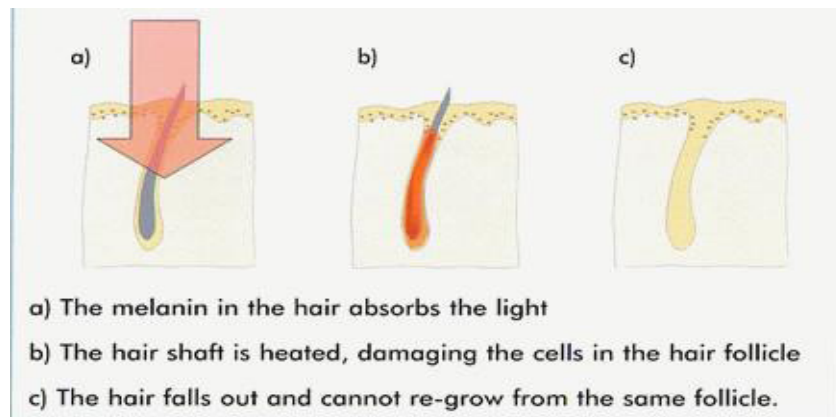
Lasers are capable of specifically targeting dark areas or melanin and follicles that cause growth of the hair without affecting other skin areas that do not need to be treated with the process. There are different types of laser hair removal machines that are designed specifically for the type of treatment that is needed. Laser can treat:

- Fractional Skin Rejuvenation
- Skin/Photo rejuvenation
- Skin tightening
- Vascular and pigmented lesions
- Treatment for leg veins
- Hair removal
- Wrinkles and Acne scars
- Tattoo removal
- Psoriasis, vitiligo, stretch marks and hypopigmentation
- Body contouring and weight loss.

## IPL- INTENSE PULSED LIGHT SYSTEMS

These are not lasers but have similar indications to lasers. Intense pulse light systems use a high intensity flash source to produce non-coherent 'broad band' light. IPL's can treat:

- Unwanted hair - in all skin and hair colours (except for white hair) on all body parts
- Ingrown hair, 'razor bumps' - as well as the associated skin darkening and pimples
- Rosacea
- Facial Blood Vessels including Port Wine Stains & Hemangiomas
- Freckles and Skin Darkening
- Sun Damage
- Wrinkles
- Scars - elevated and depressed
- Acne
- Tattoos



## WHICH ONE WILL YOU CHOOSE?

## THE PROS AND CONS

### LASER

Laser light starts with Pulsed Light but eliminates all but one wavelength (or color) of light. Laser can deliver only one color (or wavelength) of light at a time.

The area that can be treated in one go and the treatment speed is slower with lasers because of the small spot sized treatment head.

More painful

Targets only the area needed to be treated, hence heating of the surrounding skin cells is minimised.

### IPL

Pulsed Light can deliver hundreds or thousands of colors of light at a time including green, yellow, red and infrared light. Pulsed Light machines use "cut off" filters to selectively deliver the desired wavelengths. These wavelengths can be customized to reach the specific hair, blood vessels, or skin component being treated; and can be modified with each pulse.

The area that can be treated in one go and the treatment speed is much faster with IPL because the treatment heads are up to 8 times larger than the small spot produced by lasers and therefore treatments are much quicker.

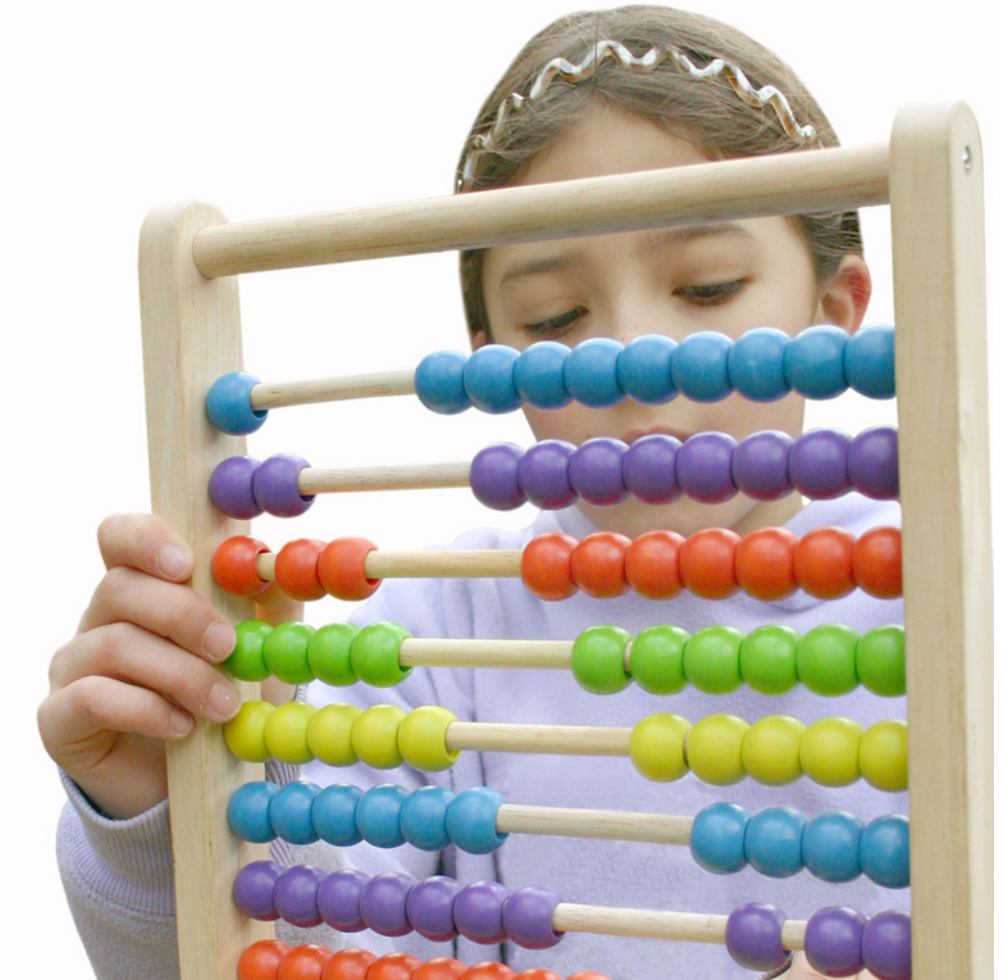
Less painful

Targets larger treatment areas hence spreading heat to the surrounding skin cells.

# THE CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

## The Stigma that Shouldn't be

By Dr Rumina Hassanali Mulji



We have come a long way in the words we use to describe children (and adults) who are not what we perceive as “normal”. Such individuals are seen to achieve less physically, mentally and emotionally than the perceived “norm”, and as such, the words and terms used to describe them have always reflected negativity. From mental and physical “Retardation” (How could we call other human beings “Retarded”?, but we did, not so long ago!), “Handicapped” (Better, not so degrading, but still implying inability), “Disabled” (Even less degrading, still used colloquially within our society, but still implying negativity) and now currently, the more PC descriptions, “Learning Difficulties” (still with a negative term but perceived as OK in the PR world) and “Special Needs” (the only term without a negative implication!).

But what is a child with special needs? And are they so special? What makes them so special?

The term “Special Needs” is an umbrella underneath which a staggering array of diagnoses is wedged. Children with special needs are de-

scribed as so if they have intellectual, physical, medical or emotional needs that are outside and beyond “normal”. They may have anything from mild to severe learning difficulties and developmental delay; medical conditions like Thalassaemia, food allergies or a terminal illness; and behavioural conditions like Autism or ADHD or even serious psychiatric problems. The designation is useful for getting needed services, setting appropriate goals, and gaining understanding for a child and stressed family. Special needs are commonly defined by what a child can't do -- by milestones unmet, foods banned, activities avoided, experiences denied. These minuses hit families hard, and may make special needs seem like a tragic designation. Some parents will always mourn their child's lost potential, and many conditions become more troubling with time. Other families may find that their child's challenges make triumphs sweeter, and that weaknesses are often accompanied by amazing strengths. Although every special needs child is different and every family is unique,

there are some common concerns that link parents of challenged children, including getting appropriate care and accommodations; promoting acceptance in the extended family, school and community; planning for an uncertain future; and adjusting routines and expectations. Parents of children with special needs are often more flexible, compassionate, stubborn and resilient than other parents. They have to be.

Although Islamic teaching always emphasises compassion of the less able and vulnerable, many children and their carers, and especially many adults with special needs, have felt shunned and alienated from our community centres and mosques. When have we ever thought to make our mosques accessible to wheelchairs? Or always make accessible the Qur'an in Braille? Or have Majaalis translated into sign language for the Deaf? It is only recently that we have as a society become more aware of the special needs that the more vulnerable people of our society have. Many individuals with special needs have not been able

to access and enjoy amenities and facilities in our centres because we have not thought to make it possible for them. Or we have perhaps made them and either carers feel uncomfortable by staring, or pitying their situation.

It's so important NOT to see these children and adults as specific labels but as individuals, as humans, created by Allah, having a role within our society, just as all of us do. DON'T be ashamed of them or their diagnosis. Caring for them positively and welcoming and accepting them into our society is a sure way to achieving Taqwa, a way to acquire righteousness. Individuals with diminished mental capacity don't have the capability to do anything wrong. Imagine always being Masoom (Innocent), never accountable, unlike typically-developing children. This is how special these children (and adults) are. We do therefore have a duty to educate people around us and the Muslim community about different aspects of people with special needs. Learning about some of these medical, developmental, emotional and psychiatric conditions that children and adults with special needs have may help many of us understand the best way to help and react to them. A lot of our prejudices and pre-conceptions are based on a lack of understanding and education, causing us to sometimes be insensitive and unwelcoming. Children (and adults) with special needs are unique. As with typically-developing children, every special needs child has his or her own personality, temperament, strengths, and abilities. Every child has his or her God-given potential. This is from the mercy of Allah and one of the signs of His strength that He created such diversity among human beings. We should rejoice in the creative power of Allah and accept His Qadr, or decree. I believe that Allah created these Special individuals so that those of us who are able-bodied would not become complacent and ungrateful. Taking care of a child (or an adult) with special needs brings out the best in all of us. Let us embrace this opportunity!

## TWO COURSE MEAL

Getting stuck for meal ideas? Try this easy two course meal!



### SAUCY STEAK

#### Ingredients

1kg minut steak  
1 teaspoon each of salt and pepper  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
2 teaspoons ground chilli  
2 teaspoons ground garlic  
2 tablespoons of ghee  
1 cup fresh single cream beaten  
1 small tin of tomato puree

#### Method

1. Wash and dry steak pieces well.
2. Mix chillis, garlic, salt, pepper and lemon juice together and coat the steak with this.
3. In a pot, heat the ghee and add the steak to it. Cook it until it is almost done, adding a little water if necessary.
4. Once it's almost done, pour in beaten cream and tomato paste mix and allow the steak to simmer on a low heat until the sauce has thickened.

Tip: You can add peppers/ onions to this to give it extra flavour

Serves 4



### OREO COOKIE CHEESECAKE

#### Ingredients

Base  
100g butter  
200g oreo cookies (crumbed)  
50g sugar

Topping  
1x300g tub of Philadelphia  
60g icing sugar  
1tsp vanilla extract  
Spritz of lemon juice  
250ml of double cream  
Roughly chopped oreos

#### Method

1. Make base by melting the butter in a pan, add oreo cookie crumbs and sugar.
  2. Flatten base into a loose bottom tin and press down firmly to cover the bottom. Refrigerate base.
  3. To make the topping, mix the Philadelphia, icing sugar, vanilla extract and lemon juice.
  4. Beat the double cream until thick and fold into the above mixture.
  5. Add the chopped oreos into the base and place on top of the base mixture.
  6. Refrigerate overnight.
- Serves 6-8

# KIDS PAGES

## Muharram activity



### Design a prayer mat

*The Importance of Salaat*

*In Kerbala, Imam Husayn (a.s) showed us the importance of salaat. Even though the battle was underway, when the time for Salaat came, he stopped everything and fulfilled his duty to Allah (S.W.T) - he prayed his salaat.*

*Activity: Design a Prayer Mat*

*You will need:  
An old pillow case  
Some fabric paint  
paintbrush*

*Design your own prayer mat by painting on the pillow case. You can paint patterns round the edges, paint a mosque, anything to make it your own special design.*



### Design your own water bottle

*From the 7th of Muharram, Yazid's army stopped any water from reaching Imam Husayn (a.s)'s camp. This left them very thirsty. Even the little children didn't get any water. In this month, when we drink water, let us remember the thirst of Imam Husayn (a.s), his family and companions.*

*Activity:  
Label a Water Bottle*

*You will need:  
a water bottle  
scissors  
colours / crayons  
label  
glue  
clear sticky plastic*

Dua For Drinking Water

S'ALAWAATULLAAHI A'LAL HUSAYNI WA AHLI BAYTIHEE WA AS'H'AABIHEE WA LA'-NATULLAHI A'LAA QATALATIHEE WA A'-DAA-IHEE

Blessing of Allah be on Husayn, his family and his friends; may Allah curse those who killed him and opposed him.

*Use scissors to cut out the label above. Use the crayons / colours to colour in the label. Then glue it onto the bottle. Cut out a piece of clear sticky plastic a little bigger than the label and stick over it. Each time you drink from the bottle, try and recite the dua, keeping in mind how thirsty Imam Husayn (a.s), his family and friends were on the day of Ashura.*