

Muslim Moms



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Sibling Birth Order

By Shaheen Merali

We have a tendency of generalising, and when it comes to our children it is no different - we expect older children to be more responsible, and call our little ones 'mastikhors' lovingly. There may be a scientific background

to this however, with research showing how birth order affects our personalities, job choices and even marriage choices! Therefore being aware of this may enable us to adjust our parenting methods and allow us to give all our children equal chances in life. "Birth order, even on a rudimentary level, gives you a jump start on understanding each other," says Cliff Isaacson, an Iowa-based psychotherapist and author of five books on birth order. "Each place in the birth order has a unique thinking pattern, how he or she processes information." This birth order information below explains how personality traits and everyday lives are affected by being the firstborn, middle-

born, or last-born child.

Personality Traits of Firstborn Children:

(<http://www.suite101.com/content/how-birth-order-changes-your-life-a34596>)

- Smarter? Firstborn children appear to be smarter than youngest and middle children. Firstborns' IQ points are on average 3 points higher than their younger siblings; in fact, IQs tend to drop as more children are born in the family. However, Aaron Wichman of Ohio State University found that it's not pure birth order that affects intelligence, it's family size (from a research study called "Older Children Not Smarter Than Younger Sibs, Study Finds"). Big families can't offer the same advantages to all the kids that small families can; firstborn children mentor their younger siblings and thus learn more, and the bigger the family, the less time that can be spent with each subsequent child. Therefore it is genetics and the family environment that affects IQ more than birth order.

- Better educated. Firstborn children are more likely to go to college or university than youngest or middle children. If parents can afford to send one child to school, it's more likely to be the firstborn. Families invest more in firstborn children than middle or

youngest children.

- More money - Firstborn children may earn more money and be more likely to hold a high-paying, white collar job. Firstborns are more likely to be surgeons, chairs in boardrooms, and hold MBAs.

- Favourites - Firstborn children are more likely to enjoy resources (food, parental time, emotional nourishment, attention) than youngest children. It becomes a cycle: the more firstborns are nurtured, the stronger they become – prompting parents to invest even more time, money, and attention.

Personality Traits of Middle children:

- More mysterious - Middle born children are more difficult to define because their identity growing up changes (from last born to middle child). This affects their personality and environment in unpredictable ways.

- Peacekeepers - Middle born children may be more likely to keep peace in the family, to restore connections and relationships.

- Less decisive - Middle children may take longer to choose a career than firstborn or later-borns. They may deliberately make opposite choices than firstborns; if the firstborn is a doc-

tor, the middle child may choose to be a fire-fighter or policeman.

- Less connected - Middle children may not be as attached to the family as first-borns or later-borns.

Personality Traits of Last Born or Youngest Children:

- More adventurous - Last born or youngest children are more likely to be "loose cannons", according to an article in Time magazine ("The Power of Birth Order", Oct 29, 2007). Youngest children are more likely to be an artist, entrepreneur or adventurer – and more likely to participate in physically risky sports.

- Funnier- Last born children are more likely to be comedians or satirists. They'll be outrageous or funny as a power strategy in the family.

- More agreeable - Younger children tend to get along in the world better – a trait known as "agreeableness" in the Big Five Personality Traits. Compared to firstborn children, last-borns are less likely to provoke people.

Factors affecting these traits

(<http://www.suite101.com/content/factors-that-can-influence-birth-order-behavior-a135273>)

According to psychologist Dr. Kevin Leman, author of The Birth Order Book, critical parents, gender, health and age gaps in particular, can also alter the personalities of children, as they have a big effect on the way youngsters learn to function within the family and the outside world.

The Critical-eyed Parent

Dr. Leman says a parent who relentlessly criticizes a child, especially the eldest, can dramatically alter the youngster's path to becoming a reliable, conscientious leader. "If the firstborn grows up with a critical-eyed parent, guess what? The firstborn doesn't fill out the paradigm or the model of what a



firstborn should be like... When you see that, a couple things happen. If there's a child...two or three years behind them, for example, that second born will leap frog over the firstborn to, of course, the firstborn's detriment. You'll see what we call a role reversal." Dr. Leman says the firstborn will often shun responsibility. "The firstborn is messy. The firstborn starts a lot of projects and doesn't finish them. They're procrastinators par excellence... The critical-eyed parent is one that should be addressed and dealt with in a serious manner because it can have a very detrimental effect on the firstborn child." Thus the critical-eyed parent is a "huge variable" that he sees a lot in families.

Gender, Health & Big Age Gaps

Gender and health issues also affect birth order traits. "Sex is one of the variables that effect birth order." According to Dr. Leman, there can be two or more firstborn personalities within a family. For example, an eldest daughter will assume a leadership role. If she's followed by the birth of a male sibling, the boy will often also exhibit the traits of a firstborn child. Likewise, if the firstborn is physically or emotionally challenged, the number two child is going to function as a firstborn.

If parents wait long enough to have their last child, the baby of the family could also have a firstborn or even an only child personality. "If there's a large gap – a gap of five years – between the births of especially same sex children, you can draw a line psychologically and start a new family. In many families, you'll find more than one firstborn personality in that given birth order," says Dr. Leman.

Our Role

As we can see, while birth order does have a very real effect on your life and personality traits, these birth personality charac-

teristics and lifestyle traits are not set in stone; firstly, they are one of many factors that affect our children, others also being very important, such as genetics. Secondly, birth order traits can be affected by things like family size, the environment, age-gaps between children and, quite importantly, parenting styles. Some of the above factors are linked and can be adjusted by us, for example - parents spend more time with firstborns, and this then affects how 'smart' they are, how far they go in their education, and how much they earn. Therefore, in order to give your later children the same IQ boost and other perks, try to spend more time with them too and help them along the way.

We can also see evidence to suggest this in our ahadith, where the Prophet has invoked us to be just to our children when giving them gifts, or even kissing them. The following hadith highlights this quite clearly: al-Ayal, narrating from al-Hasan (a) who said: "the Messenger of Allah (s) was once speaking with his companions when a child entered and went to a corner of the mosque to his father. The father patted his son's head and made him sit on his right knee. After a while, his daughter entered and went towards him, and he patted her on her head and made her sit on the ground." The Prophet of Allah (s) said: "Why didn't you seat her on your other knee?" Then the man seated her on his other knee, and the Prophet of Allah (s) said: "Now you have done justice." (al-'lyal V1 Pg 173) Analysing our parenting styles too, is quite essential to ensure that we are not stunting our children, but allowing them to grow to their potential. Again, Islam provides guidelines for us here too, and tells us not to ridicule the actions of our children, nor order or forbid them too much, as this emboldens them and leads to rebellious behaviour in

the future. The Messenger of Allah (s) once said: "May Allah bless him who helps his child in doing good". He was asked: "How can he help him in doing good?" He (s) answered: "That he accepts the little that he can do, he forgives whatever he cannot do, he does not overburden him and does not demand too much from him, for there is nothing between him and entering a dimension of disbelief other than [due to the behavior of his parents] he disobey his parents or cut ties with his kin." (Al-Kafi, V6, page 50).

For those characteristics that come naturally from being born in a certain order and whose variables we cannot control, such as age gaps and the gender of the children, it is important that we embrace these differences in our children and not expect them be equal and the same, as each will have their own talents and will bring something special to the family mix. After all, which family doesn't need a comedian?!

A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

Salaam Alaykum.

The devastating plight of Muslims in the world today fills our hearts with anger and sadness. Take a moment to read and reflect on our Spiritual Focus, which highlights a beautiful dua by our Fourth Imam for People of the Frontier and the many invaluable lessons that we Mums can learn from it. We hope you enjoy it as well as the rest of the issue!

GROWING FEET

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

PREGNANCY – JOURNALING YOUR PREGNANCY (Extracted from Deepak Chopra, *Magical Beginnings, Enchanted Lives*)

We suggest that you take some time every day of your pregnancy to jot down a few paragraphs about how you feel. Even on days when you believe you have nothing to say, take a few moments to write down your thoughts. Some women create a specific time each day to write, while others carry a journal with them, writing when they feel inspired. Let your journal be a truthful expression of your experiences. You might be inspired to draw pictures or doodle in your journal. Remain open to what comes to you.

Journaling will help you gain insights into your thoughts and feelings. Listening to your inner dialogue, you will connect to your baby and to deeper places inside you. Journaling can aid you in becoming more present in life. Far too often people look outside themselves to discover who they are, seeking out teachers, lectures, and workshops for the answers to the questions about how they are supposed to feel. Through journaling, you can tap into the flow of inner wisdom, insights, and answers that are accessible deep in your own being. As you attend to yourself in this way, you will be more conscious of your unborn baby's development and witness yourself blossoming as a parent.

Close your eyes and pay attention to how it feels to have a baby growing in your body. Become aware of your joys, concerns and fears. Write them down without holding back. Don't worry about your spelling or grammar. Enjoy yourself! You may discover feelings that you haven't acknowledged before. Some of these feelings may even surprise you. Be open to and write about whatever comes to you.

INFANCY (0-24 Months)

(Based on http://www.dads-space.com/Managingbehaviourbirthto2?gclid=CLfGia_dw6cCFYob4Qodoz22DQ)

Managing Behaviour (0-2) Introducing boundaries and



routines at an early age sets the stage for how your child will behave in the future. At the age of 9 months, you can start to say "No" to certain behaviours. You can also take objects away from the baby and you can distract a child or withdraw stimulation. They won't necessarily stick to the limits that you're introducing, but keep them consistent and keep calm when they break the rules (again and again). Catch your child being good – praise for when they are behaving well is more effective in the long run than telling them off.

Quick guide

- Set clear limits (but expect them to be breached).
- Be consistent.
- Keep calm; don't shout or spank.
- Praise good behaviour.
- Provide alternatives: "You cannot play with the phone, but you can play with this toy".
- Make a verbal separation between the child and its behaviour: "I love you, but I do not like it when you bang your spoon."

THE TODDLER YEARS – ADAPTING YOUR HOME TO A GROWING CHILD

(Based on Tim Seldin, *How to Raise an Amazing Child – the Montessori Way to bring up Caring, Confident Children*)
Making your home child-friendly does not always mean what we think. Having lots of toys and safety features around a home is important, but more important is the need to foster the innate need for independence that children have. This independence in turn can be nurtured by having a neat and orderly environment, one in which the child can also reach things and carry out tasks by themselves. Keeping in mind your own environment at home, here are some suggestions on how to truly make your home child-friendly:
Family Room – The room in which the family tends to congregate. Provide child-sized furniture like tables and



chairs, and have toys and books in shelves that the child can access easily. Avoid putting too many toys and books out – these can be rotated to ensure your child does not get bored of them. Small rugs can also be used to define play areas on the floor.

Kitchen – If possible, set aside the bottom shelf in your fridge for your child – store small drink jugs, pieces of fruit and prepared snacks such as yoghurts that they can then help themselves to. Have a cupboard for them with utensils such as bowls, spoons, glasses and napkins.

Bathroom – Provide a sturdy stool for your child to be able to reach their brush and toothpaste and turn on the taps. Ensure they can reach their towel as well.

Bedroom – Encourage your child from a young age to make their own bed and fold their clothes – even if it is not perfect, it is a firm positive step towards encouraging responsibility and self-discipline. Let the room reflect your child's personality and current interests. Provide a space/equipment for creative work and a bulletin board where they can display these works of art. Avoid clutter.

Hall – Try and have low hanging coat hooks whereby children can hang their coats themselves.



THE OLDER YEARS – 8 TIPS FOR PARENTING OLDER CHILDREN (ADOLESCENTS AND TEENAGERS)

(Based on <http://www.vainavafamilyresources.org/content/8-tips-parenting-older-children>)

You've heard it before and may be experiencing it now:

Parenting an adolescent or older child can be tough.

Frequently, older children can shock you with their self-centered, rude, irrational, ungrateful, lazy and defiant behavior. Believe it or not, these characteristics are not rare in the confusing and uncertain period of adolescent growth and development. Here are some thoughts to help you on this journey. (In two parts.)

Part 1:

- Read and study some of the available scientific information about adolescence and the teenage syndrome. Read magazine articles about the physiological and mental changes that adolescence brings. In this way, you will become familiar with the developmental stages of adolescence, understanding that there are specific feelings, attitudes, physical changes (including brain and other metabolic/hormonal transformations) that will give you insight into the very real challenges accompanying the growth and development of your older children.
- Clarify in open, clear terms what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Make sure there is a clear understanding of the consequences of unacceptable behavior. When possible, let the children share in identifying suitable consequences. Give your adolescent or teenager some things that he or she can have charge over (for example, their bedroom with certain oversight by parents). Sit down and review the rules for visits to and from friends, curfew, television time, chores (every adolescent /teenager should have some regular daily and weekly chores), allowance. It's a good idea to have your child write or type these rules out. Try to avoid being rigid or harsh. Firmness is not rigidity. Negotiate when you can and try to be creative and flexible with your demands of your children, giving them more responsibility when they demonstrate they can handle it. Model the behavior you expect from your older children. They can smell a hypocrite a mile away. If you require honesty from them, you should be honest yourself. If you tell them that smoking is bad for their health, then don't smoke. If you want them to listen to you, listen to them.
- Acknowledge to your children that you too went through the puberty/teenage syndrome. Share some insights, challenges and hard lessons you learned. Set ground rules for discussions.
- Reach out to a support system of friends, teachers, community folk who are experienced and or trained in dealing or caring for teenagers themselves. Ask for help when you need it.



PERSONAL MOMENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITY

By Marziyah Panju

I am a product of a 'special' family although I had never considered myself as such until I was invited to ponder about the quality of my family life for this article. My younger sister contracted Meningitis at 9 months causing damage to various areas of her brain. This led to neuro-developmental deficits resulting in minor behavioural problems and significant learning difficulties. Families with disabled children often face significant emotional and social pressures. But the presence of my sister amongst us was considered a gift; we all had the responsibility of attending to her needs for the pleasure of Allah, and hence our family relationships were stronger rather than overwhelming. Of course my parents worried about her welfare, what the future would hold and what would happen when they were no longer there or able to care for her. They used different coping mechanisms: for my mother it was her faith in Allah, her complete trust on His decisions; and for my father it was his optimistic nature and positive outlook that enabled him to find the good in all his family.

Although there were difficult moments – hair pulling and toy snatching amongst siblings and secret codes in different languages to by-pass her, especially when we wanted to go out, there was never a time I can remember when we felt ignored, neglected or less loved. My sister just made us view life differently. There were things we could do and things we could not do and we never argued about them. We just became tolerant and understanding of each others needs. My

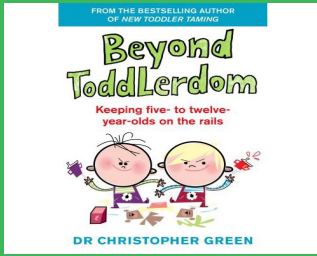
mother shouldered the bulk of the responsibility of taking care of her. She learned to manage her time well and taught us self discipline, organisational routines, and empathy for each other. We all shared in the responsibilities of household chores. When I became a parent myself I recalled the responsibilities my elder brother and I had at the tender age of 6 or 7 years. These experiences have made us the responsible and confident adults we are today. It has also influenced how we have brought up our own children. And research now endorses the importance of such early responsibilities. People, including professionals, tend to emphasise the 'dis' in the ability and not the 'ability' in the child. In our household, every child's strength was highlighted and praised and used in family settings. With regard to my sister, although she may not have comprehended the full picture at any one time, she had the gift of a great memory, and this was recognised, praised and used by all family members. Whenever we had something important to store, we shared her into our secret. My mum too, would always show her where she put things; in case she forgot, there was someone who would remember. This gift served us well when my mum passed away: my dad and I knew she had her own kaban ready but we did not know where she had kept it. In our grief we temporarily forgot there was someone who could help us and she did – she knew exactly where it was! The two most important influences in my life while we were growing up were my grand-parents who lived with us and our extended family of

uncles and aunts. We developed a strong bond with them as they supported our family physically and emotionally and were always there to fulfil all our childish whims. In fact many a time we felt privileged for having so many sets of 'loco-parentis' maintaining the quality of our family life.

Looking back at the experience, I have a couple of regrets. Firstly, the medical advice we were given at the time was that children with significant learning disabilities might not be able to cope with several languages and therefore we should teach her one language that she could use at home and with outsiders. Hence we all started speaking English and that became our first language. The irony is that although I attended Gujarati classes, I never attained complete fluency yet my sister could understand and communicate not only in English, but Gujarati, Swahili and Urdu too! My second regret is the lack of educational opportunities for such children at that time. Although as a family we tried hard to educate her and even arranged 1:1 sessions for her with a retired teacher, she had so much potential and her quality of life could have been enhanced if she had had the opportunities available to disabled children today.

Finally I want to convey the complementary yet powerful sibling relationship that I enjoyed with her. She loved people and everyone who knew her loved her. Being of a quieter personality myself, many people only knew me through her. In fact in a funny way, I felt I lost my own identity when I lost her. She had filled our lives with everything she had and more, much more!

BOOK REVIEWS



ADULT BOOK REVIEW Beyond Toddlerdom By Dr Christopher Green

In the author's words himself, "Beyond Toddlerdom looks at how primary school-age children feel, think and behave. The emphasis is on behaviour, with the aim of keeping parents close and in love with their children, so homes need never become a war zone."

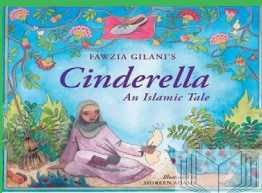
This book is, I suppose, the sequel to his earlier parenting advice book called "Toddler Taming", a huge success as is this book too, perhaps because of the down-to-earth and humorous approach of the author and more importantly, due to the practical advice he gives from his many years of experience working with children as a paediatrician in Australia.

The book covers various topics such as 'Age five to twelve: how they think, feel and behave', 'The do's and don't's of discipline', 'Increasing self-esteem', and 'Television, computers and the internet'.

The extract below from the book reflects the gentle style with which the author manages to remind the parent of how to subtly get the message across as to who is in charge. "I worry about the current assault by television on both children and adults. I dislike the way it impedes conversation, reading, physical exercise and creative play. I resent the beaming of so much cruelty, horror, unhappiness and anger into my home. I don't wish to be a hermit or a Luddite, but there must be more control over this intrusive invention.

Computers and the internet provide another screen. When they are used appropriately they can bring valuable skills and knowledge, but when they are misused, they can promote isolation, poor socialisation and glazed-eye solitude.

The main thing to remember, whether it's television, computer time or access to the internet, it is parents that have control - they are not controlled by other people's transmissions." First published in the year 2000, this book is a golden oldie and a must have on every parent's shelf!



CHILD BOOK REVIEW Cinderella: An Islamic Tale By Fawzia Gilani

Cinderella: An Islamic Tale is a picture book of a classic fairy tale, retold from an Islamic perspective. The gentle and pious Zahra's mother dies, and eventually her father remarries. After his death, she lives a harsh life with a stepmother who becomes jealous of her due to her strength of character, compared to the stepmother's own daughters. This jealousy becomes hatred and she takes it out on Zahra. Zahra remains true to her beliefs and her principles, and her inner goodness ultimately earns her goodness in reward. There is a happy ending for all, for – as in the narration of Prophet Yusuf - the stepmother and daughters repent for their sins and Zahra forgives them whole-heartedly. Several Quranic ayahs and ahadith are quoted in the book, giving it a very sound basis, and simple, colourful illustrations enhance this lovely recreation of a cherished fairy tale.



MULTIMEDIA REVIEW The Prophet Yusuf Series

While we all know the famous story of Prophet Yusuf and have heard about his beauty that caused Zulaykha to fall in love with him and the women of Egypt to cut their hands when seeing him, we are unaware of the details of the story, the timeline in which things occurred, and how he eventually came to hold a high-ranking position. In an epic 45 episode series, we get to see the life of Prophet Yusuf firsthand. From the time of Prophet Ya'qub, when he managed to convert the people of his time from idol worship to the worship of one God, all the way to the reunion of father and son after years of separation, we see and hear the details of his life – the hardships and joys. It must be noted that such a thing cannot be 100% accurate - it is impossible after all to know exactly what conversations took place and what words were used! However, to get the overall gist of the events that took place, the timeline and main characters involved, this is a perfect visual aid to that will sink into your hearts and memories. Definitely one to watch as a family - beware though – it is addictive and you may not get much else done until you have managed to finish it off!

BLOG SPOT

A place for mums to air their thoughts!



LIVE FOR TODAY

By Farhanaz Merali

Huhhh it's been one of those days, you know, when you realise how quickly your kids are growing up and how fast time is passing by and you reminisce about the early days... I remember when my newborn son held my finger so tightly with his tiny fist and as a toddler him holding onto me on his first day at nursery, not wanting to say goodbye. That feeling of being needed...of being the most important person in your child's life, is something that words cannot describe and perhaps only a mother can truly understand. Yet how ironic that this beautiful child that grew inside you and even took its first breath while still attached to you, is one that you will eventually have to let go. It's a process that these days unfortunately begins too soon, almost like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon prematurely, not yet ready to fly. My children are still

quite young, yet at times I must say, I find it so hard to say 'no' to things that aren't necessarily bad for them right now, but I can see that it's only a stepping stone to something else; perhaps something that will be detrimental in some way. I can't imagine that it will get any easier and I can feel the mental and emotional trials looming, but on a regular basis I remind myself that I'm going to make the most of these years, enjoy their company, the laughs, the tears, the mini-dramas, their wit and humour (while they still have time for me!). I'm trying not to worry about the future, I want to relish in the present, as I know what lies ahead is not within my control. For now, with prayers and guidance to the best of my ability, I endeavour to make their 'cocoon' an environment that strengthens them mentally, spiritually, physically and emotionally in preparation for the inevitable challenges of life.

SMALL THINGS MAKE BIG MUSLIMS



Whether it's a 'new toy' commercial on television, the latest fashion trend modelled through the shop window, or a kid at school with the latest gadget, children are surrounded by materialism. So much so, that they feel compelled to go out and buy the 'in thing'. And as they grow older, children's tastes become more and more expensive.

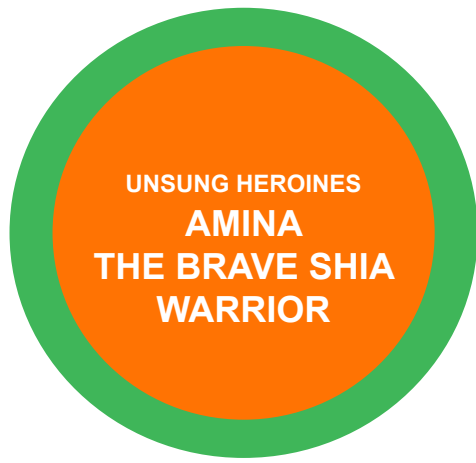
For muslims, as with anything else, we will be held accountable to Allah (S.W.T) for how we spend our wealth. Thus it is important for us to learn to manage our money efficiently and to ensure that we teach our children to do the same.

Here are a few ideas for effective money management :-

- Give them pocket money. How much will depend on the age of the child. This will allow children to be responsible for themselves. They may make mistakes but this only means they can learn from them.
- Encourage children to keep a record of how they spent their money

each week or month. This way they can look back and analyse whether or not their money was well spent.

- Explain how money should only be spent on halaal products. For example, their money should not be spent on buying music CD's or haraam food.
- Have a savings box. They can buy one or make one and decorate it. Encourage children to put some of their allowance into the box every month to form a habit of saving from a young age.
- Before you go out shopping, agree on a budget. Explain how you will buy them something provided it is within a certain price. In this way you will be giving children the responsibility of budgeting and learning to buy in moderation.
- Have a sadaqa box and agree on an amount from their allowance that your children will put in every week or month. Discuss the importance of charity in Islam and the different places that they can give out the sadaqa money.



UNSUNG HEROINES

AMINA THE BRAVE SHIA WARRIOR

By Mahjabeen Dhalla.

Muslim Mums has decided to focus on the Women of Islam for the next few issues. We begin with Amina, the brave Shia warrior.

After the assassination of Amirul Mumineen Ali AS, Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan began his crackdown on the sincere followers of the Ahlul Bayt AS. He sent his men to arrest Amr bin Hamaq Khudhaili, but was unsuccessful as Amr had already fled. In his frustration, he ordered for the wife of Amr, Amina bint Sharid, to be arrested instead and had her imprisoned in Damascus for two years. Eventually Amr was captured and killed by Abdurrahman

bin Hakam in Algiers, and his head was sent to Muawiya in Damascus. Muawiya called for the jail warden to send the head to Amina and to notify him of her reaction. As Amina stared at the head of her husband in her lap, she began to sob profusely, and said, "Alas! The tyrant has cut off your head from your body! O tyrant, you kept us apart for so long, and now you bring his head to me! May Allah have mercy on my husband, I shall never forget him. Return this head to Muawiya and tell him, May Allah make his children orphan and never forgive him for this crime!"

The warden reported this to Muawiya. He was infuriated and demanded her presence in his court that was crowded with several dignitaries. As she approached, he lashed out at her, "Oh enemy of God! Is it true, what I have heard of you?" "Yes it is true, and I don't regret saying what I said, I swear by Allah, I shall oppose you and curse you, to the best of ability, verily Allah is on the lookout for you!"

One of the spectators by the name of Ayas bin Hasal cried out, "This woman should be killed. I swear by Allah, she should meet the same fate as that of her husband." Amina bravely retorted to this remark and

silenced Ayas by her sharp and courageous reply. Muawiya pretended to be amused by her harsh cries and laughed out loud, and said, "Use this opportunity and get out of here; I shouldn't see you in Syria" "Rest assured, I'm leaving. I hate Syria. I haven't seen any good here, just severe and bitter hardships," replied Amina. Muawiya harshly signaled to her with his hands to get out. As she turned around to leave, another from among the spectators (Aswad Hilali) stepped up and said, "How dare you curse Muawiya, do you think you can get away with that?" Amina said, "I curse you too, get out of my way!" and walked out of the court, while the men stood watching in amazement.

Aswad ran up to Muawiya and said, "Excuse me, Oh Amir, I tried to get her to apologize. I have never seen a woman who talks as sharply as her. She seems to be brave hearted. The severity of her response terrified me and left me tongue-tied." Later Muawiya sent her some money through Obayd bin Aws. When she received this money, she said, "How strange! Muawiya kills my husband and then sends me money! He wants to ensure that I have enough means to leave Syria." Soon after that she left. Muawiya was very relieved to hear of her departure.

KIDS CORNER

MAKE A MOSQUE



You will need:

- Petit filous yogurt pot
- Toilet roll
- Tissue box
- Baskin Robbins ice cream lid
- Fruit nugget egg
- PVA Glue
- Paint
- Scissors
- Foil

Method:

- 1.Mix one part paint and one part pva glue together, use which ever colours you like
- 2.Paint the tissue box, toilet roll, ice cream lid and leave to dry

3.Cut a door in the middle of the tissue box

4.Cut arch shape windows from the foil and stick them around the tissue box

5.Place the yogurt pot inside the tissue roll and stick it onto the tissue box to make a minaret

6.Place half the fruit nugget onto the tissue toll to complete the minaret

7.Stick the ice cream lid onto the tissue box make the dome

8.Leave to dry and your mosque is complete!



HEALTH FOCUS

FIRST AID

By Dr Farah Hussein

I am just going to outline immediate simple action to be taken in some common medical emergencies. Only undertake action you are comfortable to do and always first make sure it is safe to approach the person. Know your limitations and call for help if you are unsure!

Strains and Sprains:

RICE procedure

R- rest the area (ankle or shoulder etc).

I – Ice the area (with ice, a bag of peas or a cold compress) to reduce the swelling.

C- Compress by applying gentle, even pressure on the area.

E- Elevate the area if possible (to reduce blood flow to the affected area).

Fractures and dislocations:

If you suspect a fracture (for example if the person cannot walk and bear their weight on the foot or they have severe pain on touching over the bone).

1. Do not move that area of the body and try to straighten it - ie keep the leg bent or keep the wrist at the angle it is in.
2. Take the patient in to see a GP/A&E or call 999 if they are elderly and you cannot pick them up.

Burns:

Extinguish the flames by water, extinguisher or smothering.

Remove any continuing source of heat (eg by taking off clothes around the area if they are not stuck on).

Put the area in cold water for at least 10 minutes.

Remove jewellery (eg rings).

Cover with a clean, non-sticky dressing (cling film can be used). Do not break blisters or use any lotions/creams.

If it is an electrical burn, look for another exit/entry wound.

If it is severe, see the practice nurse or GP.

Nosebleeds:

Get the person to sit down, lean slightly forward and pinch the fleshy part of their nose, pushing the bony parts of their face. They should breathe through their mouth and spit out any blood from the mouth. If the nose bleed continues past 10 minutes, take the patient into casualty.

Tooth knocked out:

If a baby tooth is knocked out (usual if under 7 years of age):

Control the bleeding by applying pressure with a piece of gauze soaked in cold water. See a dentist. If a permanent tooth is knocked out: Hold the tooth by the crown (not the root) and rinse it with milk or saline. Control any bleeding from the gums by applying a gauze soaked in cold water .

If it is an adult and safe to do so - reinsert the tooth into its socket and bite down on a gauze / handkerchief to keep it in place.

If you do not feel comfortable about reinserting the tooth, keep it soaked in milk or saliva and see a dentist asap - ideally within 20 minutes as the tooth begins to die after 15 minutes.

Convulsions (Fits)

Lie the patient on the ground in a safe area (clear all objects away from the patient), if possible put on their side or the recovery position. DO NOT place anything between their teeth, do not try to restrain them!

DO loosen tight clothing (especially around the neck).

Look at your watch when the fit starts - if the fit lasts longer than 10minutes go into casualty.

A Febrile Convulsion occurs in a child (between 6 months and 5 yrs) with a temperature above 38 C. Try to lower the temperature by stripping down to underwear and tepid water sponging. This will usually stop the fit. If it is the first episode, seek medical attention. Otherwise you may wait 10 minutes and if it continues longer than this, go into casualty.

Fainting:

Lay the patient flat, with their legs raised if possible.

If appropriate, loosen tight clothing (especially around the neck).

If the patient has vomited put them in the recovery position to prevent choking.

If they have not recovered fully within 2 minutes, seek medical attention.

External bleeding:

Lay the patient down to avoid fainting.

If you are comfortable to do so, check the wound for any foreign body, but do not remove any deeply penetrating objects - rather pad and keep still.

Apply firm direct pressure with a clean folded cloth over the area. If the blood soaks through, do not remove the first cloth but add another over it and continue to apply pressure for up to 10 minutes.

If possible, elevate the area (lift up the leg or arm above the level of the heart).

FREE TIME FOR IBADAH

By Shaista Yusufali

As we search for ways to help our brothers and sisters struggling in the Middle East, many of us turn to the words of the Ahlul Bayt (a) in order to pray for their plight and success in the face of so much oppression. Among the many supplications we can use, is Supplication # 27 for the People of the Frontier, found in Al-Sahifa Al-Sajjadiya of our fourth Imam (a). In this beautiful and powerful du'a the Imam prays for the success of the Muslim armies and the defeat of the enemy, while teaching us about the nature of jihad. He also prays for the emotional strength of the soldier, who is away from his family and facing difficulties. As part of this prayer, the Imam says: "O God, give them ease from their fighting to worship Thee and from their warfare to be alone with Thee." At first this may seem like a curious prayer to make for the soldiers, for what could be more pleasing to God than their spending every moment of their day fighting for the safety and freedom of the Muslim ummah? And yet upon further thought we realize that the Imam is reminding both the soldiers and the believers that no action, however honorable, frees us of the need for 'ibadah. There are several lessons we can learn from this du'a and apply to our own lives.

1. Intention

There is great reward for a Muslim soldier who is fighting on the frontier and risking his life for the sake of Islam. However, like all actions, the intention with which he fights de-

termines the spiritual status of his action. There were those during the early years of Islam, who fought in the Muslim army for the material reward of war booty and capturing slaves. For a soldier to take his jihad to the higher level of 'ibadah, he must engage in warfare with sincerity and for the sole pleasure of God. In this lies a valuable lesson for all of us. As mothers much of what we do is carrying out what God has asked of us, and certainly taking care of the needs of our families, cleaning, cooking, child rearing – all these are pleasing to God, and our own form of jihad. But it is possible to carry out these actions without having God in mind, in which case they cannot be classified as 'ibadah. In order to benefit spiritually from our actions, we need to give an intention to our actions, and strive to remember God at all times, such that with every fold of laundry and every feeding of a baby, we reap the benefits of our own jihad.

2. Necessity of ritual worship

The words of our 4th Imam (a) teach us that even a soldier, who is in the midst of war, is in need of setting aside time to engage in the remembrance of his Lord. Although he is engaged in a jihad with the external enemy, he is now and at all times fighting another war with his inner self. Similarly we have in hadith that the jihad of a woman is to take care of her family, and certainly anyone who has struggled to maintain a balance between several roles of wife, mother, career woman, or student, knows that it is no easy task. Many times the demands on us are so great that we hardly manage to perform our wajib prayers, let alone make some extra time to engage in



additional forms of worship. And yet, despite the importance of all we do, we are very much in need of traditional worship. We must take time for ourselves to sit on the prayer mat and worship the Almighty, recite His Holy Book, and reflect on the words of His beloved Prophet and his family. This will not only allow us to grow spiritually and achieve success on the internal warfront, but it will ensure that we carry out our many roles as women with greater strength and insight.

3. Personal Time

At every stage in life Shaytan occupies our time such that we are left overwhelmed with things to do and with very little free time – personal time in which we can actively work on our relationship with the Almighty. As youth we were occupied with our studies, with marriage came other responsibilities, and with children... they occupy our every moment! But just as in the midst of war a soldier needs his personal time, we too must take a time out for ourselves, and organize our schedules such that we have at least a few minutes each day to rejuvenate our spirits. This valuable 'me' time is not only an opportunity to engage in ritual worship, but also a time to reflect on the path our life is taking; where we came from, where we are going and where we are right now. It is said that after the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Imam Khomeini would cancel all his meetings in the month of Ramadhan. Despite the overwhelming demands on his time as leader of the revolution, he realized the necessity of setting aside time where he was not taking care of the needs of others, but rather attending to his own soul. May God also give us the wisdom and tafiq to set aside a few moments each day during which we can grow closer to Him. "O God...give them ease from their fighting to worship Thee and from their warfare to be alone with Thee, so that none will be worshiped in the regions of the earth but Thee and no forehead of theirs may be rubbed in dust for less than Thee!"



OUT OF INTEREST

A LIFE LESS FORTUNATE

By Masuma Govani

“...Whenever a destitute remains hungry it is because some rich persons have denied him (his share).” Imam Ali (as)

As Muslims we are required to care about the plight of others. Our wealth is not our own, but belongs to the Almighty and it is up to us to strive for its distribution. Sadly, poverty has always been rife across all nations and the Muslim nations are no exception. When I got the opportunity to witness how the less fortunate live I felt grateful, for although we all seemingly care about others, it is only when we see it first-hand that we fully appreciate their situation.

We were scheduled to visit refugee families and orphans who had fled to Syria in desperate hope and despair. These refugees had undergone huge traumas, from witnessing their children being killed to having their houses and belongings taken away from them. The children suffered more, as some of them lost both parents because they were Shia, or their fathers were taken away from them - either

kidnapped or tortured. Each one of them had a story.

As I boarded the plane and looked back at the country I call home, I wondered what changes this journey would bring. I wondered how these people would react to me. I was informed that the families loved visitors, and loved that a fellow Muslim came to visit them. This made me feel more at ease. The biggest fear was whether or not I would come back with the firm resolution to act on what I saw. It is so easy to forget as we all live in our own self-contained bubbles, busy with our lives, our children, all the school runs, commitments, classes, family, household duties, etc. and I knew this all too well. A day or two into the trip we met with the head volunteer and other volunteers. They were carrying heavy loads of goods for the people we were going to visit. He explained that some of the places where these families lived were not accessible by car, so we would have to walk. It was a long walk and I could see they were struggling with the heavy bags and had to put them down every now and then for a rest, but they continued with determination. We were told that these bags contained items donated by generous people, mostly good quality toys and clothing. I had taken my daughter along on the visit; although only 2 at the time, I

felt that it was important for her to come along with me.

We walked for what seemed like forever. The roads began to narrow and get bumpier. We reached a dilapidated building and then climbed three flights of narrow, dimly lit stairs. A lady opened the door ajar to check who it was and then allowed us to enter. She then invited us in with a welcoming smile. We entered a worn room with hardly any furniture. In the living room a young girl lay ill on a broken bed, while a young boy played with little chicks that hopped around him, to my daughter's delight! The lady offered us drinks and hugged me with warmth as if she knew me. Even though we did not speak the same language she treated me with compassion, saying that Allah had sent her guests and that she was grateful. We sat and she immediately offered us drinks. It was translated that she was struggling, the charity had a donor who was paying her rent, but her son had a blood disorder and the cost of treatment was beyond their reach. She was a widow, looking after two children on her own. Her son who was 10 years old would otherwise have had to be the one going out on the streets looking for work, either cleaning shoes, or picking up rubbish for recycling, but Alhamdulillah she had a sponsor and this was not be her son's fate and he could now attend school. She was extremely worried about the medical costs for her sick son's treatment and was looking for cleaning jobs to try and raise money. She had fled to Syria after being forced out of her house; her husband was kidnapped and her son was killed in Iraq so she fled for the safety of her other two children.

I noticed as she was talking that this charity offered more than financial support - it provided a source of spiritual and emotional support. On each visit the volun-

teers would narrate a hadeeth or ayat from the Holy Quran or Nahjul Balagha. The money or goods were not handed at the door, but the volunteers entered their homes and spent time with the individuals; this support was something they needed just as much as basic necessities.

The lady was really grateful for our visit, and as we began to leave she lifted her hands in prayer for us. My admiration for the women was immense; to go through such turmoil and have great strength and imaan to pray for others who seemed so much better off than her. It made me question how firm in faith I would be if I was put in a similar situation. We left and went on to visit the next family.

We walked further and reached a narrow alleyway and all we saw was dirty water and sewage everywhere. The stench was deep and we could not walk further to get to the house. Although we did attempt to step on stones and jump along dry patches, we were not able to get to the family. Many families did not have phones, and the volunteer would have to deliver the goods once the water had dried up.

After reaching back to the hotel, we felt unworthy of having such a comfortable room. The fact that I could just go and buy food for my daughter because she was hungry suddenly seemed like a luxury. I would encourage others to visit and see for themselves the hardships they face, as sometimes we feel depressed in our comfortable lives... Why? Because we look at others who have more than us. Instead what we should be doing is looking at those who are less fortunate than us. Their strength, imaan and character are formidable and we can learn so much, not only about life but about ourselves. Visit Al Zahra Charitable Foundation to see how you can get involved or pledge a gift to an orphan or have a ziyarat done on your behalf.

www.alzahra-foundation.org

TWO COURSE MEAL

Getting stuck for meal ideas?

Try this easy two course meal!



MIKATE

- ¾ cup rice
- ½ cup water (I used boiled water)
- ½ cup warmed milk
- ¼ packet creamed coconut
- ¼ teaspoon elchi
- 1 teaspoon yeast
- ½ cup sugar

Soak rice in water overnight. Place rice, water, milk and coconut in blender and mix for 3 minutes continuously. Add the yeast and elchi and blend the mixture for 1 further minute.

Place the mixture in a large mixing bowl (allowing plenty of space to rise) for at least 2-3 hours.

Just before cooking, add the sugar and stir through thoroughly.

Heat the frying pan till warm then add either 1 tablespoon oil or a knob of butter (I use butter) and spread the fat across the pan. Pour the mixture into the heated pan and cook on low/medium heat until edges begin to come away from the pan and gently brown. You should see holes appearing on the surface of the mikate.

Once base is cooked, place pan under pre heated grill to cook the top. Watch the mikate and turn to evenly cook the top. Remove from grill and spread 1 teaspoon margarine/butter across the mikate whilst hot.

Leave in pan to cool, then turn out and cut in slices.



BUTTER CHICKEN

- 1 lb boneless chicken (I find works better with chicken strips)
- 1 tbs butter
- 3 small tomatoes (I tend to remove the skins and the core)
- 2 small onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbs sour cream
- 2 tbs whipping cream
- 1 tbs tomato ketchup
- coriander (I use 1 ice cube worth)
- Marinade for chicken
- 1/2 (i.e half) tsp garlic
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 1 tbs tandoori masala (I use Patak's Tandoori Curry Paste - Tamarind and Ginger)
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper

Melt the butter in a large saucepan and fry the onions. Before they turn too golden brown add the tomatoes. Fry gently. Add the chicken and turn the heat up. When the chicken pieces have separated, turn the heat down again and cover the saucepan for 15 minutes.

Add the ketchup, coriander, and the creams. Keep the saucepan on a low heat for approx 10 minutes, or until you think the chicken is thoroughly cooked. (If you make this earlier in the day, when it comes to serving it might seem very thick but when you warm it up again it thins out a bit. If you think it might still be a bit thick, add a little more of the whipping cream while reheating.)

MOTIVATE YOUR CHILD TO PRAY

By Ayman Hirji



The two key aspects that all parents need to consider in bringing about the inculcation of religious duties and guidance in our children's lives, are taking on the central role as positive models and being the 'communicators' of the understanding and meanings of these duties that we want our children to be motivated to engage in passionately. These two aspects come together and form the fabric of the home environment that our children then thrive in.

The training of a child in performance of religious duties starts at a young age when a child follows his natural inclination to imitate and thus is witness to, and at times an eager participant, in the daily religious acts of his/her parents. This early impression is engraved in the child's conscience and needs to be nurtured; it is the foundation which then need to be built on, as we inculcate our children with love of these duties and keep them motivated enough to persevere enthusiastically and passionately, all the while ensuring that we as parents fulfil the right of our children in preparing their dunya and akhirah.

When one talks of the religious duties, the foremost deeds that we as parents concern ourselves with are prayers and rightly so, as we have heard time and again

of the emphasis that Islam lays on this. The narrations of our beloved Prophet and his noble household (as) have accentuated this lofty deed, in one instance likening it to the pole on which a tent is supported and thus stands upright, describing the prayer as the pillar of Islam, the means of ascension of a believer, and the pertinent effect of the salah as a protection from evil as mentioned in the Qur'an - in distancing one from the evils and indecencies. It is the adornment of the believer, the acceptance of which is the guarantee for the acceptance of all of man's good deeds.

We establish prayer in direct obedience to Allah, thanking Him for his Bounties, supplicating to Him, asking for His guidance and presence at all times in our lives, professing our love for Him and glorifying Him. This is but a snippet of the bigger picture of salah that we as parents can and should paint for our children to inculcate this love for this noble act and imbibe the appreciation and honour accrued to us to have a special chat with our Lord.

As a Muslim parent this is one of the greater challenges for some of us, for our children may have prayed with us, understand how it ought to work and all the other issues attached to it, but they don't

seem motivated enough to come and say their prayers and especially on time. This is especially important as we parents know that keeping the child engaged is the key to continued loyalty to execution of the act, in this case the daily salah. As a psychologist quite rightly opines that, especially in the later years, 'Interest in a task is indispensable—far more important than simple training; it may suffice, and it precedes by far a constant and conscientious personal involvement in carrying out a task.'

Some of the many ways of initiating and keeping up these practises could be any or all of the recommendations below:

- Get the children involved in setting an alarm for prayer time and reminding the parents of the times of prayer.
- Make prayer beads together reminding your child of the importance of this supplication at all times but especially after salah.
- Being giving the responsibility to play the adhan or for a child who is fairly confident with the phrases, parents could assign him/her the famed title of muadh-dhin in the home encouraging the child in this role as the Prophet so lovingly did to his companion Bilal al-Habashi.
- Praying as a family to-

gether. Since children are away at school usually when the time for zuhr sets in the parents may choose to offer salah al- asr when the child returns from school giving the parent and child some time together in an activity or offering the maghrib salah as a whole family in congregation.

- Reward charts and prizes for a certain number of salah offered, reminding the child every time they are successful that their lies a greater reward with the Almighty for their deeds.

- Remind a child that this is a 'special chat' time that he is whereby he can say all that he would like to the Almighty especially in his qunut (raising hands in supplication).

- Recite the supplications for each action out loud and encourage your child to do the same.

- Assign a special prayer mat and place for the child's regular prayer.

- Use different methods and resources like videos, books to share on salah to enhance and reinforce learning in a fun and easy-going manner.

- Allow your child to personalise his prayer space - by placing pictures of nature and writing words that remind him/her of Allah.

- Encourage him/her to apply a little perfume in readiness for prayer.

- As parents you will agree that one can never underestimate the power of positive reinforcement via encouraging and appreciative words and rewards which can take the form of treats, cuddles or time set aside doing what the child enjoys or a family outing all of which is dependant on the age of the child and the parents' existing systems within their home environments.

- Children will inevitably have days that they may be less willing and parents can be resourceful and creative in finding means of reignite the love for salah. A scholar relates that his father would wake the children up for morning-prayer by placing something sweet in their mouths.

Ultimately, the first institution of learning that a child is instated in is that of his mother's lap, a mother who must believe that she has been chosen to be the pathway to Jannah for her children within the calm, loving and God-conscious atmosphere of her home. I would like to conclude humbly with a scholar's inspiring words, 'the relationship of the child to his parents ought to be one that is similar to the relationship between man and his Creator a relationship of balance between Fear and Awe neither overwhelming the other.'



PRODUCT REVIEWS

BY AZMINA MAWJEE
(WWW.MUMMYTIME.COM)



A baby cup that can be used for drinking anywhere around the rim, it is designed to make your life easy.

As my 6 & 7 year old children have their drinks through a plastic cup, my toddler wanted to try it too. This was ideal as he thought he was being treated like the elder two and did not have a "beaker" style spout. He felt grown up drinking from his cup and uses it till today. I would give this cup 8/10. Needs to be leakproof and have more colours to score top marks!!

Sells for approx between £4-£6.



Thermos insulated fully plastic container, ideal for kids on the go or in their lunch box, holds approx 250ml. Includes a separate lid section for a foldable spoon which is included. I found it worked really well once I had started weaning my toddler as his food was just the right temperature when it was his meal time. Also great for after school snack. Rating 10/10. Black Available at Asda £3.99 and pink and blue available at Popat in Wembley £3.99.

DAYS OUT IN LONDON



The Tower of London
Tower Hill, EC3N 4AB
0844 482 7777
www.hrp.org.uk

Perhaps the most famous castle in the world, The Tower of London has played a central part in British History. The White Tower built by William the Conqueror as a show of strength to the people of London, remains one of the most outstanding examples of Norman military architecture in Europe. For hundreds of years The Tower was used as a state prison. The Yeoman Warders, also known as the "Beefeaters", play an important role in the protection of the Tower, home of the Crown Jewels, and are informative and entertaining. Also look out for the ravens.



Royal Observatory Greenwich
Greenwich SE10 9NF
020 8312 6565
www.nmm.ac.uk

Charles II founded the Royal Observatory in 1675 for "perfecting navigation and astronomy". It stands at zero meridian longitude and is the original house for Greenwich Mean Time. It houses an extensive collection of historic timekeeping, astronomical and navigational instruments.



Tate Modern
Bankside, SE1 9TG
020 7887 8008
www.tate.org.uk

This is the UK's largest museum of modern art and is housed in the impressive Bankside Power Station. Entrance to the Permanent Collection, which includes works from artists like Picasso, Dali and Warhol, is free. Tate Modern also holds world-acclaimed temporary exhibitions as well as education programs, events and activities.



Kerwood House
Hampstead Lane, NW3 7JR
020 8348 1286
www.english-heritage.org.uk

In splendid grounds behind Hampstead Heath, this outstanding neo-classical house contains one of the most important collections of paintings ever given to the nation. Works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Turner are all set against a backdrop of sumptuous rooms.



London Wetland Centre
Queen Elizabeth Walk SW13 9WT
020 8348 1286
www.wwt.org.uk

An inspiring wetland landscape that stretches over 105 acres almost in the heart of London. Thirty wild wetland habitats have been created from reservoir lagoons to ponds, lakes and reedbeds and all are home to a wealth of wildlife.