

Muslim Moms



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Muharram Special

As we spend two months commemorating the tragedy of Kerbala, people from far and wide are astounded by the faith that Imam Hussain and his followers had in their Lord. Thomas Carlyle (Scottish historian and essayist) said: "The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Cerebella is that Husain and his companions were rigid believers in God. They illustrated that the numerical superiority does not count when it comes to the truth and the falsehood." As mothers it is a reminder for us that in all that we sacrifice for our children in our daily lives we should keep Allah as our main focus and allow our thoughts in him to enrich our lives.

When Kids Revolt *by Aliya Jabeen*

Children are the most cherished people in a parent's life. Upbringing a child is a task full of hurdles. Parents try to impose the rules that make a human and children enjoy breaking such rules. This surely results in panic and pain for the parents who feel helpless in the very hands of their own little angels.

Psychologists say there are two stages when parents face numerous difficulties while handling their children, one is the stage of a toddler and the other is the stage of a teenager. While the toddler tries to be treated as a grown up child, the teenage wishes to be treated as an adult. In both cases parents are at the receiving end, trying to bridge the generation gap.

Toddlers are very innocent and also with blank minds that endlessly tend to explore the world around. They try to understand the world with their own limited knowledge. At this stage of their life we cannot expect them to learn by words but they are good at imitating and find learning by example easier.

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There are many problems parents face while upbringing their toddlers and preschoolers. The habits that startle the parents and disappoint them most are stealing, speaking lies, hiding one's activities and disobedience. When we study these actions closely we understand that in all such cases, the child is trying to do just one thing, 'satisfy himself against the parents wishes'. A toddler or a preschooler is too young to understand the ill effects of the above such activities. The only reason behind such a behaviour of an innocent child is self satisfaction. Every human is born with the nature of self satisfaction and this is seen from the very beginning of childhood.

A child is too young to understand the meaning of self control and sacrifice. When the parents expect the child to behave in a way suggested by them, by implementing strict rules, the kids who are unable to understand the

importance of such rules simply try to break them. Too much denial has to be avoided by the parents. When every desire of the child is met with a "no", the child stops putting forward his desire in front of the parents. Instead he tries to

satisfy himself by different methods which may sound totally intolerable or inappropriate to the parent.

A parent's decision is not supposed to be forced upon the child. The child has to be convinced about the reason behind the rule implemented by the parents. He should be encouraged softly. This results in the child obeying his parents under his own will and not under pressure.

Imam Ali said, "If you scold a child,



then leave him room to turn away from his wrong action, so that you do not leave him with obstinacy as his only way out". Strict and stubborn act of a parent will surely lead the child to revolt and go against the rules. The child is too young to differentiate between good and bad, so when he revolts he is not committing a huge mistake,

but just trying to find a way out for his problem in his own method.

The most important aspect is that the child learns from his surroundings. You don't have to sit and teach the child everything verbally. He observes all the activities taking place around him and acts accordingly. Parents are a child's role models. So parents have to be cautious in whatever they do.

There is no need to panic when the child revolts and gets into any of the acts. The only thing one has to remember is the child is innocent and ignorant as well. He needs to be paid more attention and flexible rules with constant

encouragement to get rid of his newly acquired habits. This will help him to forget the act quickly. Making a huge issue of it only hurts and confuses the child and may result in extreme disappointment of the kid.

Imam Ali said, "It should be your aim to display more kindness towards your child than the kindness that he displays towards you."

The parent's love and affection along with proper training can make a good human out of their child. Negligence and stubborn rules can only break the child's future.

Children's Book Review

Alhamdulillah, there are increasingly more and more good books out there for young adults, and *Wanting Mor* is one of those. Jameela and her family live in a poor, war-torn village in Afghanistan. Even with her cleft lip and lack of educational opportunities, Jameela feels relatively secure, sustained by her Muslim faith and the love of her mother, Mor. But when Mor dies, Jameela's father impulsively decides to start a new life in Kabul. Jameela is appalled as he succumbs to alcohol and drugs, then suddenly remarries, a situation that soon has her a virtual slave to a demanding stepmother. After she's discovered trying to learn to read, Jameela is abandoned in a busy market, eventually landing in an orphanage run by the same army that killed so many members of her family. Throughout it all, the memory of her mother sustains her, giving Jameela the strength to face her father and stepmother when fate brings them together again. Inspired by a true story, this powerful novel is a great way to open up young minds to worlds that although are far away, are yet very close to home in many ways. Readers will also relate to the universality of the desire for the desire for identity and self-understanding.



Growing Feet

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

PREGNANCY – Preparing The Way

(Based on *Raising Happy Brothers and Sisters*, By Jan Parker and Jan Stimpson)

Preparation for the arrival of a new baby won't eradicate an older child's feelings of jealousy and hurt once the baby arrives. Advance warning does not remove all anxiety. Yet we can help our children feel less threatened and more relaxed about expressing hopes and concerns. We can reduce their fear of the unknown by letting them know how their lives may change and what will stay the same. And by recognising and respecting their needs and feelings – even the negative ones – we can show them that we understand and that we care.

Timing – When we tell our older child will depend on many factors – their age, understanding, what else may be going on in their life. Whatever the case, remember that most young ones don't have the same understanding of time as we do!

Togetherness – When they realise the enormity of the changes going to happen, children are often full of thoughts, feelings and questions. Sharing relaxed time with them will help them feel valued, and give them the chance to put feelings into words, for questions and concerns to unfold gently, or for them to simply enjoy much-needed cuddles.

Talking about the baby – Help them understand that their new brother or sister is a little person, how they may feel and emphasise the potential relationship between them. Include them in the preparations as well, discussing names, getting the cot ready, but only if they seem interested and willing to do so.

Talking about love – This is crucial and we need to tell our children that we will love them forever, that our love grows every day and nothing can take that away.

Talking about the older child as a baby – Talking to our older children about what they were like as babies is a great way to introduce a positive view of newborns without being too heavy handed, and also reassure them that they were once 'babied' too. They may enjoy watching family videos of making a book of photographs and mementos of when they were babies themselves.

A dash of realism - Preparing well for the birth of a new brother or sister involves talking about what real life may be like after the baby is born. It helps to be honest about what babies can or can't do, or children expecting an instant friend will be bitterly disappointed.

Keeping changes to a minimum – Not surprisingly, children who have major disruptions to their usual routines around the time of the birth tend to experience more difficulties coping with the baby's arrival. As far as possible, it makes sense to keep routines fairly predictable and to avoid too many other life changes.

Talking about care arrangements – Chatting about arrangements for our children's care when we're having the baby may help allay worries. Ideally the chosen carer should know the child well, have cared for them before and be aware of all they need to help them feel at ease.

Thinking of our child's world – Children often attach great importance to significant objects, so are they aware for example, they their teddy will always be theirs and won't have to be shared? Or that we can put special toys out of baby's reach to be safe? Thinking of our child's world from their perspective helps us recognise issues that concern them but which we may have overlooked. What matters to each child will vary, but you will know what your child cares about most.

THE TODDLER YEARS – Truth and Consequences – Why Preschoolers Lie.

(<http://preschoolers.about.com/od/behaviordiscipline/a/lying.htm>)

Living with a preschooler, you may sometimes feel like you are on *To Tell the Truth*, trying to determine which statements that come out of your child's mouth are real and which are objects of their imagination.

“I didn't spill the milk,” said the 3-year-old who is standing in a puddle of the white stuff with an empty cup in her hand. “The baby broke my car.” “I didn't take out all these toys, the dog did.” The tall tales go on and on.

But the truth of the matter is all kids lie occasionally. And although lying is a normal part of a child's development, it's not something you can overlook. As a parent, it's your job to teach honesty. In order to deal with the situation, you need to know a) why your little Pinocchio is lying and b) how to teach him to value honesty. Here's how.

Fib or Flight of Fancy?

Kids this age can come up with some whoppers of a story – not to be deceitful but because for the most part, they are still learning what is reality and what is fantasy. In most cases, a 3-, 4-, or 5-year-old is too young to understand exactly what a lie is. Their

fairy-tale accounts are the result of an imagination working in high gear, not anything sinister.

When your 4-year-old says she didn't color on the wall while she's holding the crayon in her hand, what she means is that she wishes she hadn't done it because clearly, you are angry. Since she didn't mean to turn your bedroom wall into her canvas, in her mind she didn't. To cut down on the yarn spinning, avoid putting her in a situation that may make her feel like she has to lie. Instead of asking angrily, "Did you color on my wall?" say, "We have a rule in this house that we only color on paper. Let's get some towels and water and clean this up together."

If the story your child cooks up is on the outlandish side – "There was an elephant at preschool today." – challenge it in a lighthearted way. Ask if what she is telling you is real or made up. When she admits that she was fibbing, get in on the act and help her to elaborate – "Imagine if an elephant really came to preschool? Would you eat peanuts for snack?" A tall tale turns into a silly story that the two of you can share and you are helping your preschooler exercise her imagination.

Honesty Policy

When your child tells a lie, use it an opportunity to talk about why being truthful is so important. Calling her a liar or yelling may cause your child to keep lying to avoid blame. To encourage truth-telling, try removing the consequences. Say, "No matter what you did, I promise I won't get angry as long as you tell the truth." Many kids lie because they know they've done something wrong and don't want to disappoint you and/or be punished. Focus on what you want your child to learn – being honest. When your child tells the truth about something she's done wrong be sure to praise her.

If your child starts spinning over-the-top tales about something that never happened – say the time he joined the circus or the fabulous trip your family took to Walt Disney World – confront her, but not in an angry way. This wishful thinking is normal for a child this age but still needs to be corrected. Just a simple, "A trip to the circus sounds lovely. I know you wish that really happened."

Practice What You Preach

In the course of your daily routine, chances are you tell a white lie or two. And that's OK, for the most part. "Pro-social lies" – avoiding the truth to spare some one's feelings – are normal and pretty much accepted. But don't expect your take-everything-literally preschooler

to understand. If you tell your preschooler, "You must never tell a lie," but then tell her to say to grandma that the inedible cookies are delicious, you'll confuse her. Set a good example by being honest yourself.

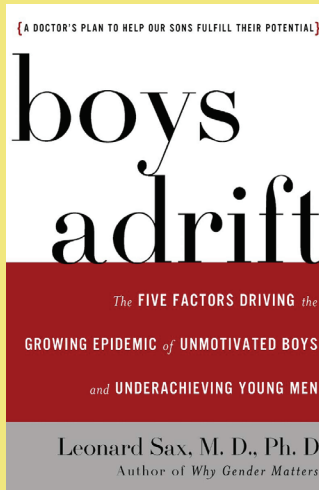
It's never too early to teach your kids honesty. Talk about why it is wrong to lie – that it makes you sad when she says things that aren't true. When your child realizes that telling the truth is something you value, that's something they'll strive to reach.

Boys Adrift

By Leonard Sax

Something scary is happening to boys today. From kindergarten to college, they're less resilient and less ambitious than they were a mere twenty years ago. In fact, a third of men ages 22–34 years are still living at home with their parents—about a 100 percent increase in the past twenty years.

Parents, teachers, and mental health professionals are worried about boys. But until now, no one has come up with good reasons for their decline—nor, more importantly, with workable solutions to reverse this troubling trend.



In *Boys Adrift*, family physician and research psychologist Leonard Sax tackles the problem head on, drawing on the very latest research and his vast experience with boys and their families. He argues that a combination of social and biological factors is creating an environment that is literally toxic to boys. Misguided over-emphasis on reading and math as early

as kindergarten, too much time spent playing video games, over-reliance on medication for attention deficit disorders which are more common in boys than in girls, and overlooked endocrine disturbances are actually causing damage to boys' brains.

Dr. Sax offers a wide range of reassuring remedies—including innovative ways parents can wean their sons away from video games, practical steps they can take to improve their sons' schooling, and surprisingly simple life changes they can make to protect boys from the environmental estrogens that undermine boys' motivation.

Filled with moving success stories that will inspire parents and teachers everywhere, *Boys Adrift* points the way to a new future for today's boys and young men.

www.boysadrift.com

Unsung Heroines

Hajera - A Wife & Mother

by Mahjabeen Dhala

Perhaps the most glorious station in a woman's life is motherhood which cannot be attained without physical, spiritual and emotional strength. And while all you mothers out there are probably nodding their heads in approval, the only one raising an eyebrow wanting to correct me is a GRANDmother who has witnessed her child graduate to parenthood.

Join me this month in paying tribute to a woman whose service to the Hujjat of her time, in obedience to Allah SWT, immortalized her actions as the most revered act of worship- Hajj. Yes Hajera, the wife of Ibrahim 9 (a.s.) and mother of Ismael (a.s.).

Let me start by clarifying that Ibrahim (a.s.) did not abandon his wife upon the orders of his other wife Sara. It is not befitting to think this of a man who stood firm in his belief in Allah SWT, in the face of the fire of Nemrud and his eventual exile from his hometown. This act of his was in accordance with the command of Allah SWT. As he turned away after bringing his family to the desert, Hajera asked him under whose protection was he leaving them, to which he replied under the Protection of the One Almighty God. This aroused her trust in her Lord and she let go of the prophet. This is exactly what the pilgrims do when they turn away from every attachment and turn towards their Lord crying Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk.

Her run between Safa and Marwa in an endeavor to quench the thirst of the child, has been deemed Saee for the pilgrims, running a little faster between a few marked stations. These are the places where because of the uneven landscape; she was unable to see the child and ran a little faster to be able to have him in her sight again. Her actions are replayed right down to such minor details. Her shooing away the Devil, as he approached her with the news of Ibrahim's intentions of sacrificing her son, has been immortalized in the act of Rami, throwing pebbles at pillars representing shaytan in Mina.

As long as millions of men and women adorn themselves in white clothing and head towards the Holy House chanting their Labbayk, they will be proof of the remembrance of a mother's trial, and a tribute to all those mothers who accompanied Imam Hussein AS presenting their supreme sacrifices in the plains of Kerbala.

The sincere and untiring efforts of a mother in raising her children with the intention of serving the Hujjat of her time will never go unnoticed by her Creator. May Allah help us in our mission as mothers.

BLOGSPOT *by Farhanaz Merali*

I recently watched a programme on tv dedicated to an American couple, the Cobles, who lost all three of their beautiful children-a boy age 5 and two girls age 4 and 2, in a horrific road accident. As a mother, watching their faces as they spoke about their beloved children, it just broke my heart. Tears streamed down their faces showing the extent of their grief and devastation, they cried and I cried. I cried out of sympathy for them and at the same time out of fear that this could happen to anyone.

After the couple had discussed the heart-wrenching details of how they woke up each day with the house so quiet and how they tried for the sake of their late children to get out of bed every day and somehow carry on, the show went on to reveal how almost a year to the day that their children died, the mother gave birth to triplets- a boy and two girls. Subhanallah!

Relieved to see a real-life happy ending, I sat to think about all the things I take for granted with my children and how some of the things the Cobles missed such as the noise of three chattering, happy carefree children, toys all over the house etc, are actually some of the things that drive me mad with my own three!

It brought home to me how sometimes the days go by so fast and it's so easy to get carried away in the 'rat-race' that is the world today. We all want our children to succeed, but at what cost? We push them to be the best that they can be, we worry about whether our child is in line or even ahead of their peers, we have expectations that sometimes we know are out of reach. Surely there are better things to worry about? Surely when we look back we won't remember the spelling tests and the incomplete homework etc. We'll remember the conversations we had, the things we did together, learned together and the times we laughed and played.

Every precious moment (each one a true blessing) will one day become a memory, one I hope will fill us with joy in our old age Insha-Allah!

KIDS CORNER

MOTHERS AND SONS OF KERBALA

Match the mothers to the sons they sacrificed in Kerbala.

Umme Layla	Ali-Asgher
Bibi Zainab (a.s)	Ali-Akber
Umme Rubab	Qassim
Umme Farwa	Aun & Muhammad



THINKING OF A WAY TO EXPLAIN THE EVENTS OF KERBALA TO YOUR CHILDREN?

Why not make a model together to give children a visual representation. It can be as simple or as complex according to the age of the child and their understanding.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Plains of Kerbala – A lid of a large box, cut down in height, or a tray filled with play sand.

Tents – children can cut cards into rectangle shape, fold to stand up and use two different colours to represent Imam Hussein's (a.s) camp and Yazids camp.

River Furat – Mix sand in blue paint or use blue felt or tissue paper.

Soldiers & Horses – make horses from play dough and use match sticks covered in small piece of cloth for soldiers. Again, vary cloth for the two sides. Alternatively, you can use toy horses & soliders. When making representations of Imam Hussein's (a.s) side, you can cover the whole match stick in cloth and use a small piece of plain white card for the top to show just illumination of light from the face.

Once the model is ready, use can use it to re-enact the story of Kerbala or your children may tell it to you!



MUHARRAM LEARNING

Whether it's at mosque, or at home, every Muharram and Safar you hear about the different amazing personalities that sacrificed their lives to save the perfect religion that we follow today.

We would like you to spend a moment to think about what you have heard about these personalities and fill out the table below. Write or draw, you choose.

Personality	One thing I learnt about him/her	How I can try to be more like him/her
Hazarat John Bin Abi Malik		
Hazarat Hurr		
Hazarat Habib Ibne Mazahir		
Hazarat Aun and Hazarat Muhammad		
Shah Qassim		
Hazarat Abbas		
Bibi Sakina		
Hazarat Ali Asgher		
Imam Husayn (a.s)		
Bibi Zainab		

Dads Focus

Kids & Their Dads

By Mehboob Ali Khaki

We all realise the importance of spending quality time with our children. Studies have shown that the impact of fathers' interaction with their children is vital to their cognitive, psychological and social development. According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, "Fathers are far more than just 'second adults' in the home. Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring".

In today's hectic lifestyle, however, finding a true work/family life balance can seem a daunting challenge. Whilst it may be possible in theory to spend limitless time with one's children, the reality can often be far from this idyll. As a father of three young children, I try to find creative ways to spend quality time with them, and attempt to make the most of every opportunity to do so. Aside from protected family time, such as holidays and birthdays, I have come to realise that sometimes, an impromptu activity or seemingly mundane task can also form a cherished moment or precious memory.

Here is some insight into how I spend time with my children.

Child Number One (2 ½ years)

At this age, quality time with your child may be the least demanding but very rewarding. I have discovered that family rituals are important at this age. For example, reading to my daughter is one way in which I interact with her, and though I may not fully understand the reason why she insists on having the same book read to her numerous times (her current favourite being a super-sized boardbook, simply entitled "Animals"), she gains obvious delight from this! An added bonus is that studies show that reading

to toddlers sets the foundation for later independent reading, and provides them with social and educational advantages over their peers.



Another ritual that we have established is the 'sacred' task of tea-making after dinner. She will happily sit on the worktop while I make the tea, and takes pride in her role of adding the teabag and sugar to the cup. This activity, though seemingly trivial, has formed a bond between us, demonstrated by her refusal to allow anyone else into the interaction (the flip side of this, however, is that I can't remember the last time I enjoyed an after-dinner cuppa made by someone else).

Other activities I enjoy with my youngest are occasional trips to the local swimming pool, running quick errands together and the all-time favourite of playing in the park.

Child Number Two (7 years)

My middle child seems to have a more active and interesting social life than I do, so much of our "father-daughter" time revolves around her busy calendar. I sometimes struggle to find opportunities to spend one-on-one time with her, but attempt to make the most of any free time we can spend together. For instance, I try to supplement my

role as unpaid chauffeur with that of loving father, and during those times my daughter and I have an uninterrupted chance to catch up on what is important to her. This may range from issues with friends, to the latest book she is reading, and how to solve a particular problem she may be facing with her older brother. Whatever the subject of the moment, these moments together allow us to engage and strengthen our relationship.

Child Number Three (9 years)

My eldest child is only 19 months older than his younger sister, so many "father-son" activities also include my middle daughter. We are quite accepting of this, and find that it adds to the enjoyment of the activity in question.

For example, playing a board game with both kids adds to its enjoyment; having a session of "Maths Challenge" becomes more competitive when both children are involved (and sometimes when all three are, as even the youngest enjoys counting her fingers); a challenging Lego project becomes more manageable with extra hands on deck, except when little 2-year old hands try to get in on the act; and lastly, reading aloud to my children at bedtime brings us all immense pleasure and it is also a great way to develop their interest in works that may be beyond their individual reading level. A particular activity I enjoyed for the first time this year with both of them was sehri during Ramadhan. This year was the first that both my son and older daughter completed full fasts, and it was joyous to sit with them in the early hours and feel a sense of togetherness and spirituality.



Health Focus

K-Kwondo

K-Kwon-Do is a new and exciting Martial Art which has evolved from the Korean Fighting system of Tae Kwon Do and more recently Choi Kwang-Do.

K-Kwon-Do is still a very new Martial Art and has developed over the years, with a new generation of students in mind! K-Kwon-Do embraces traditional values whilst welcoming change. Not only does it promote health, fitness, self-defense and confidence but places equal emphasis on nurturing personal, social, spiritual and mental growth, thus producing more balanced individuals.

The development of character and good mental attitude is the most important goal in K-Kwon-Do. As martial artists we not only train hard to attain proper techniques but also to develop a strong martial art spirit. For this reason students must always display good manners and character and observe certain etiquette during classes

K-Kwondo works around ENERGY. CONFIDENCE. SPIRIT. The development of energy, fitness, self-defense, confidence and proper student attitude as well as the Martial Art spirit are considered the most important goal in K-Kwon-Do training. Along with the attainment of proper techniques, students are encouraged to approach every class with enthusiasm and a spirit they demonstrate, not on how high a student kicks or how hard they punch!

K-Kwondo works on progressing through a colour belt system. The purpose of the colour belt system is to demonstrate progression in levels skills and techniques. This provides positive incentives as well as establishing a hierarchy of command from Senior to junior students. This hierarchy instills a feeling of pride and achievement in each belt attained and also develops the student's social skills. By learning to give and take orders, students at any level or age group learn cooperation as well as leadership qualities and skills. Furthermore, students learn that in order to be respected, one must respect others. The colour belt system from white to brown belt senior takes approximately three years.

Product Reviews

By Azmina Mawjee

Toodle Loo

Travelling, or just popping to the shops? Public toilets are no ones favourites. This easy fold child loo seat sits on the toilet seat and provides security for the child, peace of mind for you and a hygienic answer to germs. It comes within its own bag and is compact enough to go into an average handbag. It was great for coming to the mosque with too. My little one felt at ease using something he was familiar with.



Ideal for toddlers. Priced at £9.99

www.thebabycatalogue.com

Anti Bottle

The Anti-Bottle is a foldable, reusable water bottle designed for convenient on-the-go use. Unlike traditional rigid bottles, the Anti-Bottle is flexible. It stands upright when full and can be rolled, folded or flattened when empty - easily fitting into pockets, purses or packs. It also has a place to write your child's name for easy identification. I bought these for my kids and they love them, they have been drinking so much water over the past few days with this new bottle of theirs.



For a limited time available at a special price of £2.49 (RRP £6.99)

www.7dayshop.com

Personal Moments

Packing & Moving to Dar

By Fatema Haji

My husband and I had spent years weighing out the pros and cons of living in London against living in Dar-es-Salaam. It was now time to make a decision – if we were going to move to Dar, it was now or never. The kids were young (my daughter was 2 and I had a newborn) so it felt like the right time to move. Also, continuing to live in the UK meant that we would always wonder what it would have been like had we moved!

So we packed - it was a loooong packing process but we got there in the end! - and left. Saying goodbye was difficult especially as we were leaving immediate family behind and both of us had developed strong social networks,

We have now been in Dar for almost 5 months. For the kids, the

change hasn't bothered them one bit. I think my daughter still feels she's on a long holiday! They both love the outdoors, swimming, and the beach. That was the life we wanted for them and Alhamdulillah they seem to be getting that here.

Since we arrived, all we have been doing is attending weddings – one after the other! The advantage had been that the mosque here is big enough to accommodate us well and we have a massive hall for mothers and toddlers. Whether that hall is quiet and allows one to concentrate on the program is a whole different story.

The next event was the month of Ramadhan which was absolutely brilliant. The atmosphere in Dar was amazing – everyone around you was fasting, people were busy preparing lovely meals for their families and night turned into day with shops being open at night and restaurants open till very late. This was the time to be in Dar!

The toughest thing for me as a parent has been to find a school for my daughter. I saw many and was not impressed as I felt I could give her more at home.

I finally found one that was affordable and the perfect setting for her as well as meeting the UK standards that I had become used to. I mean she has beach sand in the playground and rabbits as their school pet!

I also find that groceries that we were used to picking up from Tesco every so often is either not available here and if it is, then its three times the price if not more making it painful to pick up from the shelves. Having a child with allergies to milk and egg makes it all the more difficult as soya products are not easily available and other alternatives aren't either. Also, the awareness of food allergies seems non-existent here making it that bit difficult to attend places where food is being served.

The biggest advantage I find here is the amount of household help that is affordable and therefore available. It gives me so much more free time for my kids as well as more energy to be able to do a lot more with them and generally. Producing two home cooked meals per day from scratch as well as baking more often seems like an everyday occurrence now.

The healthcare system that we were used to the UK does not exist, however we have been fortunate to have a very good family doctor that we trust and who we even call at night and he tends to the kids. No more waiting at A&E.

A comment I am used to hearing from many people when they hear I've moved from the UK is 'no more Harlequin, no more shopping!'. That is very right and I will not lie and say I don't miss it! I do miss the availability of clothes, accessories, etc. for my kids as well as my husband and myself. However I do feel that not having that has freed up lots of time which is instead spent going to the beach with the kids or taking them to visit a family member or going swimming. That consumer society that exists in the UK does not exist here! Plus it helps to have family there who can keep us well stocked!

On the whole, I feel wherever you live, as a woman/mother/wife, it becomes our responsibility to make it a home for our family and place emphasis on the positives so as to enjoy the lives that we are living.



Routines for Children

By Aaliya Mavani

Routine in babies is a hot topic in the recent parenting press, a myriad of information exists which either supports routines and a rigid structure or condemns such a thing in a baby or toddler's life. Personally, a routine with my children has enabled me to maintain some sanity, adapt to the new role of a mother of one, then subsequently a mother of two and finally get things done which in the absence of local family support would have otherwise been impossible to do. With an Occupational

Therapy background, I am prejudiced to advocate the essential need of routines and structure for a healthy and happy upbringing. This article will examine some key

concepts of routines in babies, the pros and cons and how to establish routines. The second part of the article will discuss sleep, sleep time routine, how and when to establish a sleep time routine drawing from personal experiences.

Delving in on the Islamic perspective, there is strong emphasis on a routine and structure in a human's life. The very core of all acts of worship – the salaah, in itself is a manifestation of a healthy structure to an individual's day. Another ayat "Surely you have in the day time a long occupation" (S.Muzammil, ayat 7) designates daytime for all productive activities.

Babies need us to make sense of their world around them. With their primary task of growing and developing, they are actually quite busy creatures and may not have the time and skills to organise their activities and keep their house keeping in order. So, the Almighty recruits loving parents to look after them. However, not all babies are good bosses, some can really drive their personal assistants up the wall.

On a developmental level, routines help young children, and even babies, manage the world around them. "Children do well when they have a predictable environment. They learn what to expect," says Dr. Kurt Fischer, PhD, director of the Mind, Brain, and Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "If you're constantly trying to figure out what the rules are, what the schedule and regularities are going to be, then you don't have the freedom to explore and play." Rules, like routines, also provide children with that comforting element of predictability by outlining what's expected of them. Dr. Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of Delaware who has done extensive research on how children learn, says

predictability empowers kids. There is some further research to support that such children do well academically and in other areas of life.

With routines and structure, the locus of control lies with the parents who inarguably are more capable of creating order and equilibrium



essential for family life. Supernanny Jo Frost repeatedly advises parents that handing the power over to the kids is only making them more vulnerable, scared and confused. Note that there is a difference between handing power and empowering kids. The latter enables them to exercise freedom within a safe, comfortable and secure environment. This is especially useful during your child's most challenging stage – the toddler years. Dr Miriam Stoppard in her book 'You and your toddler' explains how toddler temper tantrum can be prevented by having a routine in place at a time when the toddler is over-whelmed by a myriad of emotions, experiences and acquaintances. Lastly having a routine in place, certainly saves time giving parents the opportunity to do other things or just spend quality time with their children.

On the less greener side, routines can instill a robotic

operation of tasks and activities with very little room for creativity and spontaneity. Furthermore, a different environment can play an enormous role in upsetting the equilibrium and bringing about the dreaded misbehaviour when it is least needed. Therefore, I find it easier to conceptualise structure and routine as a sequence of activities rather than a strict schedule adhering to specific timings of these activities. Whereas, Gina Ford's babies may be the perfect little happy children in an ideal world, in practical day to day life the contented little baby routines would not allow us the flexibility of adjusting to the outside environment. For example one may not get doctor's appointment during the child's wakeful time or a craft session at the local library may run half an hour into the child's naptime. All these realities of life can make it difficult to follow strict time-based routines.

Establishing routines

It is unquestionably essential to seek the assistance of the Absolute, the Originator of all things and with the wasila of our masumeen, especially our present Imam before establishing a routine. Following on, consistency and persistence is absolute key. The tools required for this are observation, gradual sequencing and/or my least preferred method of going cold turkey - which may include the well-known 'controlled crying' method.

Not all babies are the same, but they all in some way communicate their needs to us. The important thing is to work with them to establish a structure best for them and you. The first few months are crucial in observing when your baby needs to feed, play and sleep – the three most crucial dimensions through to toddler years. Once you have established a sequence and frequency of these three dimensions you can then sometimes, gradually juggle around to make it more favourable for you and your family, what I call gradual sequencing. For example, if a baby is most playful around mid night, the next stage is to gradually decrease playtime and stimulation at these periods and bring playtime forward into the early part of the night.

Working with babies sometimes depends on their personalities. My daughter was easier to adapt around us – preferred a longer nap and didn't mind having a lie in most weekend mornings. Whereas my son prefers most things done his way, rising early in the morning and having two naps during the day. No matter how much I tried, he is tired and grizzly mid-morning and NEEDS to nap, therefore his sequence of sleep, play and feed was different to his sister's. Gradual sequencing and adjusting routines gets easier as the baby grows and the time spans for playing, feeding and sleeping prolong, marking a clearer distinction between the three.

In a new or different environment, stick to being consistent as much as possible, follow your order of the three dimensions: feed, play and sleep. Show consistency by reproducing a similar environment as much as possible, for example if your child's room has blackout curtains or blinds then travel with some portable blackout blinds. Carry your child's favourite cuddly toy so they have some sense of security in the new environment.

Remember body language, how you feel and your uneasiness can play a huge role in reaching a successful outcome. Young children, especially babies, can instantly perceive increased heartbeats, tensed muscles, anxious expressions and change in sound frequencies – skills that have been mastered and perfected for nine months whilst in the cosy womb. Mean what you say or do. Children have been gifted with the exceptional ability of detecting when parents waver in their intentions and actions but equally recognise when their parents mean something seriously. In fact the latter goes a long way for your child to trust you in laying safe boundaries for them. One way of demonstrating that you mean business is to be calm, carryout the task with unrivalled persistence and utmost consistency.

A consistent and regular routine is like the brick house withstanding the wolf's huffs and puffs from the three little pigs story. By creating a regular and expected pattern to daily activities, one can enjoy the most treasured years of their children. Then again, do add a little dash of dynamics in the equilibrium to allow children to learn dealing with and adapting to different situations for that all-rounded upbringing. The second part will inshA.. explore sleep and establishing a sleep routine and hopefully converting our wakeful Oliver Owls into happy sleeping beauties.

Spiritual Focus

My Learning

By Tanveer Kanji

It's been about a year since I've been attending the spirituality classes and I have learnt so much about myself. When we first heard about the class we all thought it was a parenting class, but it was actually a self betterment class. Actions speak louder than words and kids do as we do and not as we tell them to do, therefore, in order to be good parents, we have to work on ourselves and be the best we can be. We don't have to worry about the past, the important thing is to get started. Here, I share my thoughts.

It is very important to introspect ourselves and ask the all important question of "Who am I?" We are all Abd-Allah (servants of Allah) and therefore have to try and reflect His attributes in our behaviour. As I go through the day, I have learnt to watch my thoughts and pay attention to what I am thinking. Thoughts = Words = Actions = Habits. Most of the time our energy is drained thinking about what other people have done to us and over analysing a situation.

Being non-judgemental is also very important. By watching our thoughts, especially when around people, we will see how much we are constantly judging other people's actions and behaviour. All this unnecessary judging uses up our energy. By having a 'blank' mind when communicating with someone, we will be able to better

concentrate on what they are saying. If at any time, we get a negative thought about someone, we should try and replace it with a positive one. Wherever we go, we should try and look for good. Taking a walk with nature and reflecting on it, we see how much beauty Allah has created. There is always something good about someone or in any situation. We just need to be able to tune ourselves to find it and creating positive energy within us.

Have you ever thought about how much we give and receive? We may think we are always giving but actually we are constantly receiving- the Air, the Water, Allah gives us everything we need to survive. Whatever we have comes from Him, therefore we should also try and share and look out for ways we can give from what we have. Everything in life is flowing and constantly moving, think of water sitting at the bottom of a vase, if it's not replaced, it smells bad. The best things to give are non-material items. These are time, a smile, a prayer. Even when we give for example a prayer, we are receiving the 'feel good' effect from it.

As we go through life, we make choices. The choices we make reflect our desires. If we have a clear goal or objective in life and we truly desire that goal both in the mind and heart, we will be able to make choices that lead us to that goal. I have learnt that by accepting and acknowledging a choice I have made, it allows me to progress. When we stop blaming others and accept the choices we have made it

lets us move on.

In any task or goal that we have, we should try our best at it from the

beginning. For example, if we want to have a beautiful garden full of flowers in the summer, we have to work at it all year round by planting at the right time, weeding etc. If we start working on it when summer has arrived, we will have so much to do in a short period of time that it will seem like we have to work very hard. The end result will also not be as nice as it would have been, had we worked on it all year. By constantly ensuring that we are doing things to the best of our ability, we don't have to 'work hard' at anything.

And thus as Autumn is underway and the trees shed their leaves, I think to myself, how many bad habits or characteristics am I trying to get rid of? Nature is constantly changing; each plant has to work hard to survive. It has to defend itself from insects, the change in weather and so many other factors. But Allah has made everything so perfectly and given each plant what it needs to grow. Just think, the mighty oak tree develops from a small acorn. Allah has given each one of us the ingredients we need and it is up to us to use them to the best of our ability. We have to strive and grow till we reach our full potential. As, Imam Khomeini said: "everyday there has to be some change in ourselves (for the better) of at least the weight of a wing of a fly!"

Asma -ul Husna

Al-Waali The protecting friend/The holder of authority

It is said that people who recite this beautiful name constantly will be safeguarded against all unexpected calamities Insha-Allah. As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: *God is the Protector of all who are conscious of Him. (Al-Jathiyah 45:19)*. Ultimately in all aspects of our life, we can only succeed with the protection and guidance of Allah (swt). By reciting this beautiful name we ask for protection from those actions which prevent us from gaining His pleasure and we ask for help in situations where we find ourselves constrained or helpless to do the right thing. In particular, for our children we seek Allah's authority over them. *It is He who sends down abundant rain, after they have lost all hope, and unfolds His mercy. He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy. (Ash-Shura 42:28)*

Skiing with Children

By Zainab Manji

Skiing with children can be an enjoyable time for all the family. The fresh mountain air, the warm sun on your face, the sound of snow under your skis and a clear blue sky present a beautiful backdrop to spend time with your family. They do say 'a family that plays together stays together!'

If you are planning a ski trip with children here are a few points you may want to consider.

- Children can start to ski at any age, however practice a little before you go. If you are able to visit an indoor ski centre before your trip it will help the children familiarise themselves with the equipment. Have a look at at the following centres:
www.thesnowcentre.com
www.xscape.co.uk
www.snowdome.co.uk
- For young children a short flight or ski train to a European resort might make for easier travelling but if you are choosing to go further afield to Canada or USA then spring skiing is also an option as their ski season tends to last longer. Also check transfer times as some ski resorts are quite far from International airports and require a long coach journey. If you are considering driving make sure you hire a 4x4 as some resorts are remote.
- Try to select accommodation which is within walking distance to the ski school meeting point and ski lifts. Walking in ski boots and carrying your own and your child's skis can be a tricky balancing act! Where possible encourage children to be independent and carry their own. They will feel more comfortable with the surroundings. Look for ski in ski out properties!
- Make sure you have checked how much snow they usually have at the time of the year you are planning to go and when their ski season ends, as this does vary.
- Check all ski clothes and accessories fit before you go including base layers/thermals, outer layers, jackets, Salopettes, hats, ski socks, waterproof gloves or mittens (which are warmer than gloves). Attaching a string to mittens and gloves ensures they always stay in jacket sleeves! Take waterproof boots for when getting around the resort and playing in the snow. Skis, and ski boots for beginners and children are best to hire at the resort. Make sure you pack layers of clothing for the children. If they get too hot they can take a layer off.
- Helmets are essential for all skiers and can also be hired at the resort.
- Sun cream is a must. It can get very sunny on the

mountain and there is always the glare of the sun reflecting off the snow.

- Ski goggles are useful especially when it is snowing and there is a strong wind. For sunny days don't forget their sunglasses. Having a strap on their shades keeps them safe.
- Most ski schools take children aged 4-5. Register them in advance as they do get booked up during peak seasons. For younger children, aged 3-4years, it might be an idea to arrange a private lesson. Also check if they have a kids club with a magic carpet in their snow garden. This is a great way for your 3 year old to be introduced to skiing on a resort. As children get more confident it is great fun to ski as a family for half the day and then have lessons for the other half . For beginners a careful scrutiny of the piste map is essential to make sure the ski lift deposits you onto a suitable slope- normally a green run.
- Check that the instructors speak English in European resorts.
- Try to arrange the children's skis and ski boots before the first day of ski school. If this is not possible then go to the ski hire shop early in the morning so you are not pushed for time and the children don't get anxious about being late.
- Advise the ski school about any allergies etc. and give the children a wrist id. Some resorts use a 'flaik' system where each child is given a gps tracking device for extra safety and also allows parents to see which runs their children have skied.
- Many resorts use a chip system on ski lift passes but some still require passport type photos. Check with the resort before you travel as this will save time. Keep lift passes safely attached to jacket pockets. Don't attach the lift pass to the front zip of the children's jacket as it will flap in their face as they ski.
- If you have tried skiing or snow boarding and are not keen but your children are choose a resort that offers other activities like Zip wires, sleigh rides, snowmobiling, snow trekking, ice skating and toboganing are all fun activities too. You can also take the gondola or teleferique up to meet your children at the top of the mountain for an alpine lunch and some breath-taking photos.
- To make sure your children get the most out of their ski trip you do have to plan ahead and be organised with the choice of resort, type of accomodation, booking their lessons early and having the right clothing and equipment.

Finally, remember skiing is fun so don't forget to enjoy yourselves. When you're not whizzing down the slopes, savour the delicious snacks and have slope-side hot chocolate breaks. Take time to marvel at the breath-taking mountain views and remember your camera for those snow-filled memories.

Chicken Satay Noodles

By Alia Merali

Preparation:

500g boneless chicken cut in strips

Noodles

Stir fry vegetables of your choice (I use spring onions, carrots, baby corn, mangetout, tenderleaf broccoli, peppers)

whole green or red chilli sliced lengthways (optional)

handful of chopped coriander

Marinade chicken strips in

1 tsp dhana jeeru

1/2 tsp turmeric powder

1/4 tsp chilli powder (more if you like)

1/2 tsp salt

Sauce ingredients:

1/3 cup peanut butter

1 tbsp coconut powder

1/2 cup chicken stock

1/2 cup hot water

2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce

2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp brown sugar

juice of a whole lime (can add more after tasting - the sauce should have a good balance between salty, sweet, chilli and sour.)

Method

- Chop all veg - diagonally looks prettier.

- Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a wok or pan and stir fry the chicken strips until cooked. Remove from the wok.

- Heat 1 tsp of oil and stir fry vegetables and chilli for a few minutes. Add a couple of tablespoons of water to create steam and cover for a few minutes to allow vegetables to cook.

- Make the satay sauce by whisking all ingredients together.

- Once the vegetables are cooked, return the chicken to the pan with the satay sauce. Let the sauce heat up, just until it starts to thicken (2-3 mins).

- In a pan, cook the noodles according to instructions in boiling water. Drain and add to the wok along with fresh coriander. Toss all together and serve.



Malteser Bite

By Sarah Daya

Ingredients

100g butter

250g milk chocolate

3 tbsp golden syrup

225g finely crushed digestives

225g maltesers

Method

1. Melt the butter, chocolate and golden syrup together.

2. Then mix in the crushed biscuits and maltesers.

3. Pour into a baking tray and refrigerate.

4. Cut into squares and enjoy!



Kerbala is Bleeding

Kerbala (slow x3)

Kerbala is bleeding (x4)

1. Fighting with only few, how could they win? x2
Versus so many enemies x2

Chorus

2. So many people killed, So many bad enemies x2
Didn't they think? x2

Chorus

3. Aun and Muhammad, fighting so bravely x2
Working together, as a team
Chorus

4. Oh Qasim, Death sweeter than honey x2
2nd Imam, in sorrow and grief

Chorus

5. Hazrat abbas, he fought for some water x2
They cut both his hands, but he still carried on

Chorus

6. Arrow pierced in his eye, fallen mushq x2
Cries of Al-Atash heard

Chorus

7. Ali Asghar, such a sweet baby x2
He asked for some water, they didn't give him any

Chorus

8. Prisoners on top of camels without saddles x2
Falling off so often x2

Chorus

9. What a terrible time they had at Kerbala
In such pain x2

Chorus

10. Bibi sakina died in Shaam
Missing her brother, Ali Asghar,
and her father, Imam Husayn

Chorus - Kerbala is bleeding (slow x4)

- by a 6 year old boy

The Beat of My Heart

The beat of my heart echoes, and the crimson tears flow.
A heaviness clenches within, releasing my sorrow

I stand here, a witness, to the waking of a new dawn.
Envisioning how a child may have stood, her heart torn

Skies reflecting my grief, a deep shade of red.
Unable to comprehend how they once must've bled
Time passing slower than my feet are willing to hold me.
An ache within urges me to set my mind free:

How does a father bear the loss of a child so dear?
How does a mother watch her child fight without fear?
How does an innocent infant see her uncle's arms severed?
How do cold and brutal hearts not hesitate against the
revered?!

Tell me Oh you who have been misguided;

How is a man of great compassion, who grieves also for the
wrong,
Dismissed mercilessly by your ego, that you hold on to so
strong?

Have you lost your sense of direction? Or your ability to
perceive?
Your conscious has withered and left you, and yet you still
believe:

This battle was won by you, and victory was delivered in your
hand,
Is that not why you celebrated and magnified so grand?

While the truth known to those whose eyes of the heart
weren't closed
A strength was being nurtured and you'd soon be exposed

I call that strength 'Aalimah, others call it Zainab, daughter of
Ali,
By both names referred, a strength that sets Muslims free.

But you, oh misguided, have in reality lost and been defeated.
The likes of Hussain, from you, they knowingly retreated.

Hussain is alive, as is the message, and those who follow.
Through means of actions, and also our tears of sorrow.

Come see us in these days, when the cries resonate worldwide.

Then oh misguided, tell me, the winnings were handed to
which side?

It is these tears that keep the message of Hussain alive!