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Muslim Mums

Welcome!

Salaam Alaykum,

As the world celebrates the start of the new year with joy and merriment, we welcome 1430 with clothes of mourning, heavy hearts and tearful eyes. Yet how lucky we are for the The Holy Prophet has said *O Fatimah! Every eye shall be weeping on the day of judgement except the eye which has shed tears over the tragedy of Husayn (a.s.)*



Small things make Big Muslims

Tips for instilling Islam in your children

In this issue we are looking at small things you can do at home to involve your children in commemorating the months of Muharram and Safar.

1. Put up black pieces of cloth, a flag or an Alam in a prominent place in the house to mark the beginning and end of the two months. A concrete symbol will serve as a constant reminder, even to the younger children.



2. Explain the events of kerbala to your children, simplifying it for the youngest. For example, you can tell them how a very bad man name Shimr killed Imam Husayn (a.s) and how even the little children were not given any food and water. Use books such as Understanding Kerbala, Heroes of Kerbala, Alas Hussein and Tears for Kerbala, to aid you.

3. Switch on Maatam and Marshiyas for children in the car or at bedtime. You could also translate the marshiyas for children as one mother said, "One of the things I did last year was that I translated marshiyas for my boys, the really sad ones about Hazarat Ali Asgher and they were literally in tears. Often the English ones are bit difficult to grasp for younger ones and my boys were really interested to know what the ones I was listening to meant."

4. Try and take children to mosque. If that is not possible then spend 10 or 15 minutes viewing parts of a majaanis on the internet for children to see how we mourn as a community; the black clothes, the dim lights, the Alam,

5. Encourage children to pay their respects to Imam Husayn (a.s) by saying, "As salaamu aliaka Ya Abaabdillah" daily.

6. Remind children to keep in mind the thirst of the children of kerbala when drinking a glass of water.

7. Promote children's participation in Muharram activities; pray a marshiya or Nauha, enter competitions or attend children's majaanis.

8. Taking into consideration safety, where appropriate light candles on the night of Shame Ghariba, rather than switching on the lights.



in this issue

- Yoga
- Book Review
- Spiritual Parenting
- Dining Malaysian
- A Father's discipline
- Growing Feet
- Keeping up with the Jones'
- WinterWonderlands
- Kids Competition



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Growing Feet

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

PREGNANCY – Good Travelling (Extracted from Conception, Pregnancy and Birth, by Dr. Miriam Stoppard)

Bearing in mind a few important points when you are travelling will make it a more comfortable experience.

- Leave more than enough time for your journey
- Try to leave yourself a comfortable margin between any connections you have to make
- Travel in short bursts rather than a long stretch
- Travel safely
- Carry a drink, such as milk or fruit juice, in a flask
- Take adequate amounts of nutritious portable food, such as wholemeal crackers, cold hard-boiled eggs, raw fruit or vegetables, and nibbles like dried fruit, nuts, and seeds.
- Carry glucose sweets in order to prevent nausea due to low blood sugar.
- Make use of an eye mask and ear plugs so that you can get some sleep when travelling by train or plane.

INFANCY (0-12 Months) – Food for Thought (Extracted from Raising Happy Children, by Jan Parker and Jan Simpson)

Around half of all mothers experience the ‘baby blues’ in the first week to 10 days after the birth of their baby. The symptoms linked to maternal

exhaustion and hormonal changes following the birth usually disappear after a few hours or, at most, a few days. The most common symptom is tearfulness. Many mothers feel very emotional or upset. Some feel anxious and tense. Other symptoms include mood swings, memory lapses, sleeplessness, loss of appetite and a feeling of helplessness and confusion – all of which may be exacerbated if you are exhausted or experiencing difficulties feeding your baby.

Mothers who have the blues should be allowed to cry and express their fluctuating emotions. They need as much rest as possible and reassurance that the symptoms are common and usually pass quickly. Practical help in the home can be particularly useful at this time. Many mothers also find it helpful to talk through their experiences of the birth and new motherhood with someone they trust.

If you feel the symptoms are worsening or the feelings of depression last longer than a few days, it may be you are experiencing the onset of post-natal depression. It is important you consult your GP or health visitor.

THE TODDLER YEARS – Copy Cat

(Extracted from “What to Expect – the Toddler Years”, by Eisenberg, Murkoff and Hathaway)

Children display the ability to imitate

almost from birth; imitation is one of the ways they learn. So while it’s important to give them the freedom to be creative, it’s also necessary to give them the opportunity to imitate so that they can master basic skills. Show your toddler how to hold a crayon, or pencil, or paintbrush correctly – but if he or she prefers another hold, leave it at that. Once in a while, when the two of you are drawing together, draw a straight line or a circle on your paper, and say, “Can you make that?” When it’s time to play with clay, demonstrate rolling the clay to make a string or a ball. When baking biscuits, show how to use a biscuit cutter. But, never force your toddler to reproduce what you demonstrate, and always allow him or her to do something quite different, if the spirit so moves.

THE OLDER YEARS – Love Languages (Part 2 – Quality Time)

(Based on “The Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman) Language differences are part and parcel of human culture. If we are to communicate effectively across cultural lines, we must learn the language of those with whom we wish to communicate. In the area of love it is similar. Your emotional love language and that of your child may be as different as Chinese from English, and we must be willing to learn their primary love language if we are to be effective communicators of love; something that is especially important as children grow older. Over the next few issues we will focus on each of the five love languages: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service and Physical Touch. Every child needs all of them, but there is usually one that



Food Focus Dining Malaysian Style

Chicken Satay

When you think of Malaysian food the first thing that comes to mind is satays. Kuala Lumpur is “famous” for its beef and - kajang chicken satay barbecued meat served on a bamboo skewer and accompanied by peanut sauce, rice, onion and cucumber. What makes the satay “famous” is supposedly the sauce. Its easy and can be served as a starter, buffet or dressed up as a main meal. Below is an easy recipe for a chicken satay.

For the chicken:

stick lemon grass, outer leaves removed and roughly chopped
50g root ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
1 tsp coriander seeds
1 pack fresh coriander, leaves removed
500g chicken breast fillet, roughly chopped

1 tbsp Dark Soy Sauce

For the satay sauce:

1 stick lemon grass, outer leaves removed and finely chopped
1 tsp coriander seeds
125g Roasted Peanuts
1 tsp cumin seeds
50g root ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
3 shallots, roughly chopped
3 garlic cloves, peeled
1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
1 tbsp tomato ketchup
1 tbsp caster sugar
400ml can Coconut Milk
2 tbsp fish sauce
Little gem lettuce to serve

Method:

For the satay sticks. Place the lemon grass, ginger, coriander seeds and fresh coriander in a food processor and pulse until roughly chopped. Add the chicken and soya sauce and process for a few seconds more until mixed together and the chicken is coarsely chopped.

Place the chicken mixture in a bowl, cover and place in the fridge for 1 hour or preferably overnight until it becomes firm.

Using wet hands, divide the mixture into 8-10 portions and shape into ‘sausages’ along wooden skewers, pressing down to flatten each one a little.

Place under a preheated grill on a preheated griddle pan or barbecue, and cook for 10-15 minutes, turning occasionally, until the chicken is golden brown and thoroughly cooked. The juices should run clear and there should be no pink meat remaining.

Meanwhile, make the satay sauce. Place all the ingredients in a food processor and mix until smooth. Pour into a pan and simmer gently for 15 minutes or

until beginning to thicken. Serve the satay skewers on little gem lettuce leaves and the warm satay sauce in a separate bowl for dipping.

Cook’s tips:

Soak the skewers in cold water for 30 minutes before use to stop them scorching. The satay sauce can be made the day before, covered and stored in the fridge. Reheat gently in a pan for 4-5 minutes before serving.



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We would like to thank all contributors and advertisers for their efforts and generosity.

For all inquiries and comments please do not hesitate to email us at: muslimmums@madressa.net

Children's Writing Competition

Mums!

Here is a chance to teach your children more about the Heroes of Kerbala. Ask your child to pick one personality that means the most to them. Encourage them to think about the part they played in Kerbala, why this was so important and what they have learnt from them.

5-7 years 50-200 words

8-10 years 200-500 words

Deadline 17 February

(one winner from each category will be awarded)

Please hand in entries to members of Muslim Mums team or post to:

SI Madressa
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Winners will be rewarded with a £25 gift voucher and winning entries will be printed in the next issue.

Make your own Flag (Alam)

Hazrat Abbas was Imam Husayn's brother. He was the flag bearer of the army in Kerbala. It was very hot in the desert and Imam Husayn's family did not have water to drink and were very thirsty, especially the children! Bibi Sakina asked Hazrat Abbas to get some water for them. When he went to get the water he was struck down by Yazid's army. Make a flag like Hazrat Abbas' and keep it somewhere you will see it regularly - it will help to remind you of Hazrat Abbas who fought so bravely to keep the message of Islam alive.

You will need:

- Fabric (preferably black)
- Plant sticks (can buy from any garden centre)
- Fabric pens
- Card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Foil/silver paper
- Sticky tape
- Stapler

Instructions:

- Cut out some fabric (about 30cm x 20cm)
- Using the fabric pens decorate the fabric with quotes and pictures that remind you of Kerbala. Use the pictures from the Muharram Memory game to give you some ideas. Use your imagination - draw and write anything that reminds you of the tragedy of Kerbala.
- Draw around your hand on a piece of card and cut it out. Stick silver paper or foil on the hand.

- Stick this to the top of the garden stick with sticky tape.

When it has dried attach the fabric to the garden stick using glue or staples.

they speak above the rest.

Quality Time:

Quality time means giving a child undivided attention. For the small child, it means sitting on the floor and rolling a ball back and forth with him. We are talking about playing with cars or dolls. We are talking about playing in the sandbox and building castles, getting into his world, doing things with him. You may be into computers as an adult but your child lives in a child's world. You must get down on the child's level if you eventually want to lead him to the adult world.

As the child gets older and develops new interests, you must

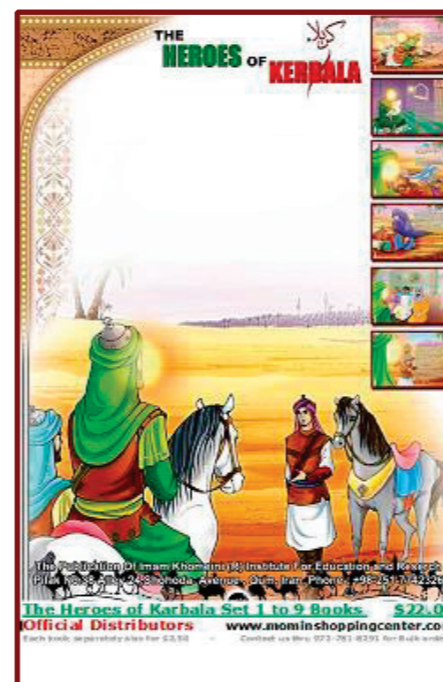


enter into those interests if you want to meet his needs. If he is into basketball, you get interested in basketball too, spend time playing basketball with him, and take him to basketball games. If he is into reading, read with him, take him to the library for story time. Giving a child your undivided attention says that you care, that he is important to you, that you enjoy being with him. Many adults, looking back on their childhood, do not remember much of what their parents said, but they do remember what their parents did. One adult said, "I remember

that my father never missed my school games. I knew he was interested in what I was doing." For that adult, "Quality Time" was an extremely important communicator of love. If "Quality Time" is the primary love language of your child and you speak that language, chances are that he will allow you to spend quality time with him even through the adolescent years. If you do not give him quality time during the younger years, he will likely seek the attention of peers during the adolescent years and turn away from parents who may at that time desperately desire more time with their children.

Childrens Book Review

The Heroes of Karbala Translated by Ali A. Jaffry



This colourful set of 9 is beautifully designed for children to introduce the companions of Imam Husain (a.s) based on reliable historical sources, and thus better understand the epic of Karbala. Some narrative details have been added by the author, pointed out by an asterisk. It is a translation from Persian of the original work entitled, "ASHABE AASHURA".

Although it has been adapted and tailored to meet the needs of older readers (i.e. 10 and above), the books can be read to younger readers, providing explanations and simplifying it on the way. They use the medium of colour and storytelling to convey important and usually unheard narratives about the companions

of our Holy Imam during the tragedy of Karbala, and are highly recommended for every household!

The Series include:

- The Heroes of Karbala 1 – Anas bin Haris Kahili**
- The Heroes of Karbala 2 – Jon bin Huway**
- The Heroes of Karbala 3 – Saif bin Haris Jabiri**
- The Heroes of Karbala 4 – Aabis bin Abi Shabeeb Shakiri**
- The Heroes of Karbala 5 – Amr bin Junadah Ansari**
- The Heroes of Karbala 6 – Yazid bin Ziyad Muhasir**
- The Heroes of Karbala 7 – Aslam bin Amr**
- The Heroes of Karbala 8 – Abdullah bin Umair Kalbi**
- The Heroes of Karbala 9 – Saeed bin Abdullah Hanafi**

Out of Interest

A Holistic Approach in Our Lives: YOGA

By Shamim Walji

As our community progresses intellectually, we find that people are becoming more and more aware of their well being and health. Many a times, we will find that contemporary medicine has grossly failed us and people are losing confidence and faith in it day by day. Now a time has come where people are desperately searching for alternative therapies and yoga is one example. The good news is that there is already awareness in the community and there are several classes running right now at Stanmore as well as in other jamaats in the UK.

What is Yoga? Yoga is a Sanskrit word derived from the word 'yuj' meaning to join, integrate or harmonize. When performing yoga, it enables you to join, bring together, and connect your physical being, your intellectual mind, and your spiritual self, resulting in creating a happy and wholesome person. For the mind, body, and spirit to be integrated as one, the balance of emotions, actions and intelligence is necessary.

The three main aspects of yoga are **exercise, breathing, and meditation**. In its simplest form, yoga treats the body with utmost care and respect because it is the primary instrument in man's work and growth. Other benefits of the physical part of yoga exercises are that they improve blood circulation, stimulate the abdominal organs, and put pressure on the glandular system of the body, resulting in a healthier you.



The second aspect, the **breathing**, is based on the concept that breath is the source of life. This has two benefits; first, it helps yogis gain breathing control, and second, it makes sure that oxygen reaches all parts of our body. Usually when we breathe, it's very shallow, resulting in oxygen not reaching to its full extent and use. By focusing on breathing, one prepares the mind for the next step which is **meditation**. By designing physical poses and breathing techniques, awareness of our body develops. This mindfulness is excellent for promoting calm and control, which are invaluable attributes for stress-proofing yourself.

Yoga in your life You may ask yourself, is yoga for me? Definitely, yes! Yoga is for everyone who is willing to learn its ways and ideas. It does not actually require any special equipment or clothing. What it does involve is the will to possess a healthier and stress-free self. This begins with a 25 to 30 minute yoga session first thing in the morning; this takes you through the day feeling energetic as well as enables you to cope with stress or any hurdles which may come your way.

You may first approach yoga as a way to achieve a great body or to keep fit and that is perfectly alright. Yoga, however, is not a 'quick fix'. Do not expect dramatic results. It really does help in improving your health as stretching can tone your muscles, exercise your spine and entire skeletal system. More importantly, it encourages you to reflect on yourself and to find your inner peace. In other words, it exercises not only your body but your mind as well. With a healthy body and mind, you are well on your way to a more fulfilling life.

Benefits of Yoga

In the practice of yoga there are many health benefits to be gained, a few of which are discussed below:

Internal Health Benefits Within: From lowering blood pressure to increasing pain tolerance, the following health benefits can all be discovered within the body.

- 1. Circulation:** Yoga improves blood circulation, by transporting nutrients and oxygen throughout your body. It provides healthier organs, skin and brain.
- 2. Metabolism:** Consistent yoga practice helps find the balance and creates more efficient metabolism. Having a regulated metabolic system results in maintaining a healthy weight and controlling hunger.
- 3. Organs:** Some yoga exercises and stretches are designed to massage internal organs, thus improving the ability of the body to avoid diseases.

Kids Corner

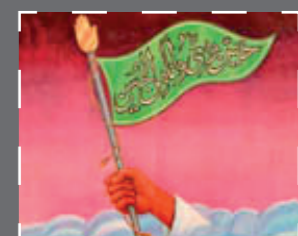
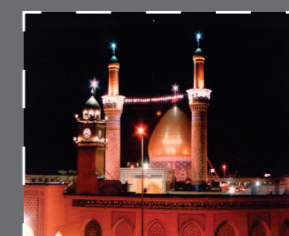
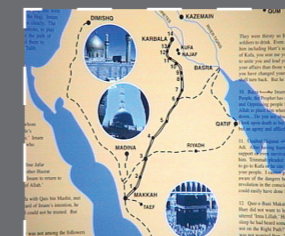
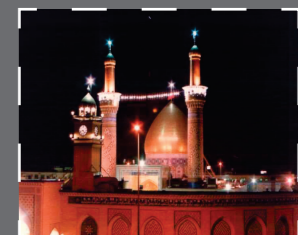
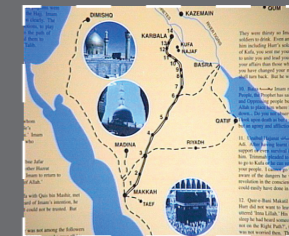
Islamic Dates To Add To My Diary

This issue focuses on the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. It also includes activities which we hope you will enjoy.

Muharram

Make Muharram Memory

Below are 9 images that remind us of Muharram. Stick them onto card and cut them out. You can then play Memory with them. To play Memory spread the cards out on a flat surface, face down. Turn over two squares at a time. If they match remove them from the game. If they do not match turn them back over and try again until all squares have been removed. When playing with your child explain the meaning of each card. Images often help younger children to understand things more clearly and remember them better. The cards can also be a good game for their mosque bag in Muharram.



Personal Moments

Life with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

Do you have all or some of the following symptoms?

1. Irregular or light monthly cycles
2. Do you have problems conceiving
3. Suffer from weight gain
4. Acne
5. Excessive hair growth.

If you have a few or all of these symptoms, you might have PCOS or Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. It is also known as the Stan Leventhal Syndrome. It is a condition associated with cysts in the ovaries. Each of these symptoms varies from mild to severe.

During ovulation which leads to the monthly cycle, the ovaries release an egg (ovum) into the uterus. Before the ovum is released, it develops inside a follicle on the ovary. Several follicles start developing monthly, but mostly, only one goes on to mature and develop an egg. The function of the ovaries is also to produce the female hormone, Oestrogen as well as the production of Androgens (male hormones), like Testosterone in small quantities. With PCOS the process of ovulation is disrupted because of the cysts on the ovaries.

The symptoms of PCOS often appear during the late teens. Many women only suffer from irregular cycles but for others it is a failure to conceive. PCOS can be diagnosed by the symptoms but the severity by an ultrasound. Blood tests are also done to establish the level of testosterone. Women with raised testosterone levels have been known to suffer from excessive

hair growth.

Unfortunately, I was one of the unlucky ones to suffer from all the above mentioned symptoms. The worst symptoms were the weight gain and excessive hair growth. It made me feel extremely conscious of my appearance and I went through a hard time and really got depressed. The worst times were when women would come up to me and ask me when my baby was due thinking I was pregnant!

I finally went to see my G.P about my weight gain and my failure at conceiving (almost a year). She asked me if I had any of the symptoms of PCOS and I did have all of them. She sent me off for a scan and blood tests. The scan showed numerous cysts on my ovaries. I was then referred to a consultant at Northwick Park Hospital who, after looking through my scan and blood tests told me I had to have hormone treatment for six months in order to conceive and if that did not work then I would have to undergo surgery. It was a lot to take in, I was shocked at first but I came to terms with it. I would do anything to have a baby! I prayed to Allah (s.w.t) and the fourteen Masumeens (A.S) to give me the patience and strength. Before I could start the hormone treatment I had to have a cycle of progesterone so that I could have one regular monthly cycle. After which I was suppose to have a Hysterosalpingogram (HSG), an x-ray test that examines the inside of the uterus, fallopian tubes to check for any blockage.

The day I was suppose to start the progesterone pill I decide to do a pregnancy test first. Having done a quite a few pregnancy tests in the past year I was hoping that this time it would not be negative. It was the longest 2 minutes of my life

and when I looked at the pregnancy test stick I was shocked to see the line that showed I was pregnant!!! I was overjoyed but I still wanted to make sure and so I did four more tests (had to drink lots of water!). I thanked Allah (s.w.t) and prayed everything would go well. Soon enough I would have my first scan, I would see my baby for the first time. Waiting outside the room before the scan I was nervous and excited. When I saw my baby and the tiny little heart beat I couldn't help but cry. This was my baby!! All was well with my pregnancy beside the morning sickness! Then I had my second scan which showed everything was normal and that the baby was fine. My pregnancy progressed well but my labour was long and tiring.

Then, at 1:13 am on the 15th of November 2006, weighing 6 pounds my daughter Saarah was born via C-section. When I held her for the first time, I felt a rush of love for her and didn't want to let go of her. Months have gone by now and my daughter is now two years old and has just started nursery. On her first birthday I found out I was pregnant again! My husband and I were overjoyed. I knew it would be hard with two young kids but I thanked Allah (s.w.t). My second pregnancy progressed well but unfortunately I couldn't have the normal birth I planned and on Saturday the 5th of July at 5:04pm, my daughter Saida was born by C-section, weighing 6 pounds & 10 ounces.

My advice to anyone who has PCOS is please don't be disheartened if you have a few failed attempts at conceiving, it's all a matter of time. Just be patient and have faith in Allah (s.w.t).

If you would like any further information about this article please contact the Muslim Mums team and they will put you in contact with the author.

4. Respiratory: Yoga decreases the respiratory rate through a combination of controlled breathing exercises and better fitness.

5. Pain: Pain tolerance is much higher among those who practice yoga regularly. In addition to that, some instances of chronic pain, such as back pain, are lessened or eliminated through yoga.

External Benefits: There are just as many health benefits that occur externally. From better sleep to more energy and strength, this list provides several benefits achieved through yoga in other ways:

1. Ageing: Yoga stimulates the

Adults Book Review

The Seven Stages of Motherhood: Making the Most of Your Life as a Mum

Ann Pleshette Murphy

Most books on parenting focus purely on the development and care of the child. It is rare to find a book that documents the emotional, mental and physical rollercoaster of being a mother with such empathy. Ann Pleshette Murphy, herself a mother of two, provides a personal and sympathetic outlook on the developmental changes mothers face alongside their children; how we change and grow from the moment we get pregnant to the day we watch our children graduate.

Her experience reflected in her words, she writes how 'we're encouraged to stand in our children's shoes, while our own shoes gather dust...' and goes on to say how 'we do have to spend as much time (or just enough time) on our own physical, emotional, cognitive and social

detoxification process within the body. Detoxification has been shown to delay ageing among many other health benefits.

2. Posture: The very nature of yoga teaches the practitioner how to hold and control one's body in a more healthful position. Through consistent practice, your posture will improve and you will look more confident and healthy.

3. Energy: Regular yoga practice provides consistent energy. In fact, most yogis state that when you perform your yoga correctly, you will energised after your yoga session rather than feel tired.

4. Weight: The benefits of better metabolism along with

growth to make the most of the years we spend raising our kids. And those years will fly by so fast it takes your breath away. Mothers with older children will tell you that when you stand on the bridge you've built and watch your children cross over and away into adulthood, you'll experience the pain of regret along with elation. You mourn the moments that slipped through your fingers and at the same time realise that very few of the mistakes you made really mattered in the long run'.

As the title suggests, the book is divided into seven chapters each corresponding to children's developmental stages, each with its own challenges and opportunities for the mother. For example in stage five "Reading the Compass to God-Knows-Where: years six to ten", she writes how this period was one of the most fullest and challenging as the child starts school and becomes more independent and self-reliant. Activities and commitments kick up a gear, yet at this stage the child becomes aware of the extent of their abilities in comparison to their peers. The mother has to accept that they can't make it all better when

the exercise of yoga work to keep your weight in check. Additionally, the stretching of muscles longwise helps to reduce the amount of cellulite that can build around muscles.

5. Sleep: Because of many benefits of body and mind that a yoga routine can provide, many find that their sleep is much better.

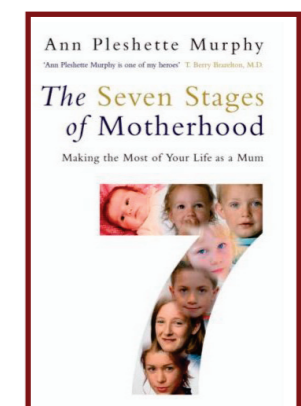
6. Core strength: With a strong body core, you receive better posture and overall body strength. A strong core helps heal and reduce injuries.

In the next issue, 'Pre and Post-natal Yoga' will be discussed, dedicated to our young mothers and mothers to be.

their children stumble at school or lack certain skills. The realisation too that she can't always protect and shelter her child and that now there are times when she shouldn't even try.

Incorporating a wide range of anecdotes, interview material, and quotes from a variety of authors to support her own personal advice, Ann Pleshette Murphy together with her humour and wisdom gives a valuable and honest insight into what to expect and offers meaningful advice and gentle reassurance along the way.

A must read for all mums especially on days when we need a sense of direction and a wise friend who has been there before!



Feature Article

Spiritual Parenting

By Dr. Kamyar M. Hedayat, MD, FAAP, a Stanford-trained critical care physician, board-certified pediatrician and clinical aromatherapist, and holistic physician www.aromamd.net

One of the great joys of life is having a child. We prepare the mother for birth, we prepare the nursery for the child's arrival, but do we prepare ourselves for the task of parenting? In Islam, child rearing is not an afterthought to pregnancy. Like going to hajj, child rearing has its own set of rules and ethics which the observant Muslim should be aware of. But child rearing is more than just fulfilling an obligation to teach a child Quran or prayer. Child rearing is a spiritual journey for the parent.

Watching the development of the child's mind gives us a glimpse into the development of our own spirituality as adults.

By showing mercy and patience towards children, we realise how much more Allah loves each of us, more than we even love our children based on the mercy and patience He shows us. When parents learn to see the spiritual aspects of parenting,

Child rearing is a spiritual journey for the parent. Watching the development of the child's mind gives us a glimpse into the development of our own spirituality as adults.

parenting becomes a constant state of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and every apparent hardship a blessing from Allah for our own spiritual maturation.

It is natural as parents to sometimes feel frustrated with their child, or dislikes a behavior he or she sees in them. Instead of being overly critical or thinking, "Why do they act that way?" or, "Why are you doing this to me?" It is more constructive to ask, "Do I act that way towards my caretaker (i.e. Allah)?" Even though as adults we do not need anyone



to look after our physical needs, we always need our Lord to look after us spiritually and to guide us to His pleasure (in addition to granting us our sustenance). While children can be delayed in their intellectual or physical developmental, adults can suffer from spiritual retardation if they do not work on their spirituality and exercise their soul every day.

The great Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget pioneered the study of children's intellectual development. He described four stages of cognitive development. These stages also correspond to our spiritual development. In the first

stage, from birth to two years of age, children learn about and conceive the world through their senses and movement, i.e. they only believe in what they can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell.

Spiritually, there are people who are materialists, with the same approach as these children. They see the world as just the physical events around us. For them there is no absolute or true permanence or meaning to life, only the subjective values we give to them. They say,

"There is nothing but our life in this world; we die and we live and we shall not be raised again." (23:37)

The second stage Piaget described was from ages two to seven. During this time, toddlers learn to imitate behaviors, and learn to use their hands more precisely in drawing, putting on their clothes, etc.

At this time, your children may imitate your *sujud* in prayer or put on your *hijab* to look and act like a Muslim. During this time, they also have an active imagination and see everything around them as being alive and carry on conversations with them. They have fantastical and amusing explanations for how things happen and what words mean even though they do not know. What is more, they do not know what they are unaware of. Spiritually, there are Muslims, who develop their own fanciful *fiqh* made of "do's" and "don'ts" which make perfect sense to them, but lacks internal consistency or external validity. They say things about Allah without consulting the Qur'an or the scholars of deep understanding:

"So ask the people of remembrance

Product Review

Alternative presents for New Borns

By Fatema Haji

Money, Mamas and Papas gift vouchers, play mats, bouncers, baby clothes – we all seems to be sending and receiving the same gifts when a new baby is born. If ideas for innovative things are running low, here are a few suggestions for some cracking gifts to present your friend and their new born at the first visit.

Little Touch LeapPad Learning System Manufactured by Leapfrog - Cost: £30.00 with each additional book costing around £10.

An interactive book that is aimed for children aged 6 months and above, is a good replacement for traditional bed time reading. Made of hard blue/pink and white this learning book has a pillow attached to the bottom which gives your child comfort whilst reading.

The Little Touch LeapPad Learning System has three settings. The sound scape setting is recommended for babies of around 6 months, each time you touch something in the book it will make a noise which is interesting and of relevance to the picture. The word play setting is recommended for babies of around 18 months, each time you touch a picture it will tell you what that picture is and then make a noise which represents this picture. The laugh and learn setting is recommended for babies up to 36 months will say a short rhyme in description to what baby has just touched. Each page of the book has a green go sign which you must touch to enable the pad to recognise the page you are on and also has a light bulb which allows you to play a little game in relation to the pictures.



Imprints Gift Certificate

Available at John Lewis stores - Cost: £60 - £200



This gift certificate provides you with the opportunity to have professionally made imprints of your child's hands and feet, have their name and age which will be fired and glazed then mounted in a hand-finished box frame and delivered to the store for collection.

There are many combination packages available to buy – the basic £60 imprint starts with room for a double print, on one piece of clay, with a natural pine or whitewash frame and goes onto a more sophisticated four double family prints with a silver effect frame costing £200. You can get cheaper do-it-yourself versions at many stores and online so shop around.

Zing Photography Session

Available at Blooming Marvellous - Cost: Starting at £20.00

Taken in the changing rooms in Blooming Marvellous stores across the country, Zing Photography session offers fresh and contemporary black and white photography of babies and children - not a fluffy rug or teddy bear in sight. Parents and older siblings can join in the photography session too.

The basic pack includes a photo session, a framed print and you'll receive it in the post with full instructions and you can book a session whenever you wish.



Clarins Mum to be Massage

Available at selected Debenhams stores - Cost: £42 per massage

Sometimes, we neglect the new mum and concentrate our presents on the baby. Perhaps consider buying the mum a Clarins Mum to Be or New Mum massage voucher. A top to toe which concentrates on easing backache, fluid retention, stress, fatigue and tired legs, as well as improving skin tone and elasticity, the massage will leave you feeling invigorated and generally glowing all over. Coupled with that why don't you offer to babysit the new born whilst mum has the treatment done.



Personal & Spiritual Development

Keeping Up with the Jones'

By Zehrbanu Mohamedali

As mothers we are faced with so many pressures. We want our kids to be the best in everything and constantly compare ourselves to everyone else. These pressures cause us to think or act in unbecoming ways and our lives turn into a never-ending struggle to keep up with society. In this situation, it becomes difficult to remember that Allah (S.W.T) has created all these challenges for us to reaffirm our commitment to Him:

Your riches and your children are only a trial: but in the Presence of God is the highest reward. (64:15)

If we fail to act in a righteous way while raising our children, they will not grow up to be righteous individuals and we would have ultimately failed in our struggles. This article attempts to convince us that whether it is their physical development, material possessions, or education and training, the pressure to 'Keep up with the Jones' must not prevail!

"Does Zaynab have any teeth yet?" a well-meaning auntie asked. "No, not yet" I replied. Teething is just one of the milestones children go through in their physical development, but despite what stage they are at, there is always a tendency to worry when our child is lagging behind or feel a sense of superiority if they are ahead of the game. We seem to hold the false notions that our child's rate of development is a reflection of how good a parent we are or how successful he or she will be as an adult. We fail to realize amidst all our anxiety that some things are just not in our control. In these instances we need to admit our inability and rely on Allah (S.W.T) since He knows what is best, and is taking care of it:

Allah is sufficient for me; on Him do the reliant rely. (39:38)

Instead of constantly worrying about the future, we must learn to "live in the now" and savour every part of our child's precious journey. In the international bestseller, *Being Happy* Andrew Matthews says "the key to happiness and contentment must be in focusing our minds on the present moment." We must have faith that everything will happen when the time is right. Imam Musa al-Kadhim has said: "Know for certain that whatever He does to you, your good and benefit lies therein." So whatever the wisdom was behind Zaynab's delayed teething, there was no need for me to feel any pressure about it.

This pressure to keep up with everyone expands to our financial situations when we try to meet the status of our neighbours and friends. If their children go to a private school, we want the same; if their children are too good for hand-me-downs, then so are ours. This problem is compounded by the fact that we love our kids immensely, and will do whatever we can to give them the best. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) has said: "The worst of parents are those who transgress the limits in their love and goodness to their children." This combination of "Keeping up with the Jones" and loving excessively causes us to give our children a limitless amount of worldly pleasures, creating in them materialism and a damaging attachment to the dunya. Imam Jaffer as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said "The example of the world is that of sea water; the more a thirsty person drinks from it, the thirstier he becomes until it kills him". If we really love our children we need to teach them that there are more important things in life than material possessions. Here are a few practical suggestions that may stop us from completely spoiling our little darlings:

- Encourage playing with inexpensive bits and bobs (e.g. scraps of cloth, a box, etc). Sometimes these can be even more fun than a branded toy!

- Stick to buying new things only on special occasions or as a reward earned for something. I know this is hard - every time I go out I want to buy another truck for my son!
- Before buying something new, teach the giving away of some money or old toys to charity.

InshaAllah this will help to prevent us from becoming too focused on keeping up with material gains.

Education is another area where we try to "keep up" - whether it is secular, Islamic, or even sports. However, whilst striving to raise our children to be knowledgeable and well-rounded individuals, it is paramount that our intentions are scrutinized. Imam Husayn (a.s.) has said, "...sincerity of action lies in this that you should not desire anyone to praise you for it except God..." Of course children thrive on praise - but are we doing the same? In her booklet *Raising Children*, Sister Tahera Kassamali warns, "Don't teach Islam to show off. Children should not be taught to be religious so parents can be proud of them in the community." Sometimes when our intentions are not sincere, there is so much pressure on the child to excel that they don't get enough time to play, and their self-esteem is damaged because they think they are just not good enough. To prevent this from happening, we must keep the 'big picture' in mind and be vigilant over our hidden intentions. If we are insincere, we are also teaching our kids to learn for the wrong reasons. Are we trying to please Allah, or just keep up with the rest of the world?

We want to raise happy, healthy children who are equipped to achieve success in this world and the hereafter. If we become too caught up in the trend of "Keeping up with the Jones" we will never be able to achieve this goal. However, with constant sincere effort, InshaAllah we will be able to succeed!

if you do not know." (21:7)

Such people go through all the motions that a Muslim does, of prayer, fasting and hajj, but in their hearts they doubt what Allah has said, or question its wisdom.

"Is there in their hearts a disease, or are they in doubt, or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will act wrongfully towards them?" (24:50)

Belief is based on certainty, not in doubt. (49:15) They do not realise that they actually mock Islam with what they say and their empty gestures.

The third stage Piaget described occurred from ages seven to eleven years. During this time, children learn to use logic in their thinking, but they see the world in concrete terms of black and white. Morally, things are either right or wrong and there are no moral shades of gray. Children become obsessed with rules with knowing what the rules are, negotiating or breaking the rules, or making sure they and/or others follow the rules. Most people spiritually do not progress beyond this stage of thinking. People learn Islam as a series of



rules to be faithfully followed. They see Islam as a strict and unyielding with no shades of gray. Others learn the forms of religion, but not its meaning. They see Islam as a box to live in and shut tight around them instead

of fertile soil to grow in and towards the heavens. Jalaluddin Rumi relates, "It is related that during the time of the Prophet anyone who knew one Sura by heart, or half a Sura, was called a great person and pointed out, 'They have a Sura by heart,' since in that day they devoured the Koran. To devour a loaf of bread, or two loaves, is certainly a great accomplishment. But people who put bread in their mouths without chewing it and spit it out again can devour thousands of tons in that way." (Fihī ma fihī)

The final stage of a child's intellectual development is from the age of 11 or 12 onward. This is the stage in which a child can learn, with training, abstract and subtle reasoning. It is in this stage that a child, now a teenager, can learn the function of rules as being a ladder to climb in order to fly with the wings of self-motivation.

Spiritually, the purpose of Islam is actually its ethical teachings, not its rules and regulations. After all, the Prophet Muhammad al-Mustapha (S) said,

the perfection of morals." (Bihar al-Anwar)

"But people who put bread in their mouths without chewing it and spit it out again can devour thousands of tons in that way."
(Fihī ma fihī)

All the worshippers weighed together cannot reach the height of excellence of a single wise man. The men of reason are those who possess understanding minds about whom Allah said,

But none will grasp the message except men of understanding. [2:269, 3:7]" (Usul al-Kafi, part 1, chp 1, Bood of Reason and Ignorance, hadith #11)

Now that we understand why our children develop as they do, and how we develop spiritually as we do, we can prepare ourselves to show mercy and patience towards our children when we feel frustrated or bewildered by what they do or how they act.

Parenting is not always easy. It can be joyful and fretful, frustrating and exhilarating. If we ponder on the mercies of Allah and His myriad signs, we shall see that raising a helpless child to the point of independence is the same journey we take spiritually, and the person who looks after us is none other than the Lord of the Universe.

"I came not but for the perfection of morals." (Bihar al-Anwar)

Relatives Corner

Father's Role in Disciplining the Child

By Zeeshan Kanji

“Mould clay as long as long as it pliable and plant seedlings while they are still supple”

Imam Ali (a.s)

When we hear the terms “discipline” and “father,” there appears to be a natural connection, but often with negative overtones. The idea of a father as one who punishes runs deep in our culture. Yet, fathers have much more to offer than only helping their children learn self control and social rules, and their role involves much more than punishment.

Research shows when fathers are absent or ignore their child-rearing responsibilities; there are implications throughout the family system. Mothers are likely to feel unsupported, abandoned, angry, and resentful. The resulting tension exacerbates the child's challenging behaviours. Lack of parental involvement by the father leaves the mother as the sole unsupported teacher of social skills and deprives the child of another role model.

The role of fathers for all children is unique and important. The father is typically the one who engages in physical rough and tumble play with children. In the course of active play, children may test limits. Whether the activity involves tickling, wrestling or splashing in the pool, paying attention and stopping when needed are important lessons to be learned. Thus, discipline and learning self-control can start with play.

Fathers tend to be more active in their play, helping their children

to be first in a race, catch the ball the most times, leap into the water, etc. Play has purpose; it tests limits and boundaries generally pushed less often by mothers. The children have to learn how to play without hurting someone else or getting hurt themselves, and how to direct their energy.

Constructive play is something both fathers and mothers can enjoy. One of the most valuable interactions a father can have is getting down on the floor each day for 15 minutes with his child—playing, commenting, and giving undivided attention.

How parents speak greatly influences how often children comply with directions. The research is fairly consistent that mothers tend to explain more to their children, while fathers tend to use fewer words in all interactions.



Consistently positive or negative responses to a child's behaviour will change how often the child will respond the same way. Parents need to do what they say, and to be consistent. If parents promise to do things and do them each time they promise, their children will trust and expect them to follow through. If a parent promises to play after dinner, and does, the child may eat more neatly and quickly. If a parent promises to take away a privilege because the child has broken a rule, the parent needs to do it so the child follows

the rule next time.

When positive and negative consequences are used to shape behaviour, lavish one-time rewards, or harsh intense punishments are not as effective as the little rewards of adult attention and time, or consistent brief mild punishments. For most children between the ages of two and six, a brief “Time Out” of sitting away quietly, not isolated, but not being paid attention is the most effective mild punishment. “Time Out” allows both parent and child to cool down. Other brief solution includes a short loss of privilege. For example if two children fight over a toy or what to watch on TV, and are unable to problem-solve, a parent might put the toy away temporarily or turn off the TV for a half hour. The key here is to follow through, calmly and consistently.

“It should be your aim to display more kindness towards your child than the kindness that he displays to you”

Imam Ali (A.S.)

When fathers understand that disciplining their child is an opportunity to teach by words and actions, they will have an important role in helping their children learn appropriate behaviour and self-control. Engaging in fun play, conversation, and the use of fair consequences are times when discipline can be used in positive, nurturing ways.

Discipline is better understood as guidance and teaching, not controlling and punishing. Over time, children will learn how to control themselves, but until they can, adults need to help them by setting appropriate limits and modeling correct behaviour. Discipline is an all day, every day teaching and learning process.

Travel Focus

Winter Wonderlands

You explored Legoland, Chessington World of Adventures and local farms in the summer and now you're looking for somewhere warmer to take the children where their toes wont freeze but their minds will stay occupied.

All Aboard

After the success of Underground Ernie, many visitors to England flock to the London Transport Museum. A hidden children's gem on the back streets of Covent Gardens the museum provides fascinating tour of transport history on the top deck and fun filled activities on the lower deck. Get your children to try their skills at taking control of the transport system, moving buses and trains around



London's most famous landmarks. There are great adult challenges too. Its free for children under 16, adults pay £10.00 The museum

Fantasy football

If your son/daughter is crazy about Britain's national sport take them along to their favourite home ground for a guided tour. The tours usually take you to the dressing rooms, the press rooms, the players tunnel, the manager's dug-out and the club Museum which documents years of information. Tour prices vary depending on which club you visit and operate on a timed entry system.

Eco friendly

Many of you will have had fun riding on the log flumes and carousels at Gulliver's Land but may not have noticed their Eco Park next door. The park has a variety of activities which are sectioned



into evolution, land, water and energy. Your children can learn about dinosaurs from their 30 life sized dinosaur model, try their hands at pottery and learn more about energy crops. The cost of your fun filled day is £7.25 for both children and adults and children under 90cm go free. Opening times vary from day to day but check out further details at www.gulliversfun.co.uk.

Skating through

Outdoor ice rinks have become quite popular over the last few years and many are trying to make themselves unique



and interesting, providing skating and lunch/dinner packages. Keen skaters can skate at some venues until the middle of February Older children may enjoy a visit inside the venue itself and then a skate. Prices vary according to the time of day but most charge around £10-15 per session. Popular venues include the world famous Hyde Park, the ice aged historical Natural History Museum, Canary Wharf, the 18th century neo classical Somerset House, the Tower of London, the unique landscaped Kew Gardens, Greenwich and Henry VIII pad Hampton Court Palace.

Fishy Fun

Located on the ground floor of County Hall on the South Bank of the River Thames, the London Aquarium is the only place in London you can stare freely at sharks and deadly stone fish. There are over 350 species of underwater creatures here and you can educate your children about all the world's oceans, as well



as rainforest, tropical freshwater, seashores and beaches and see a recreation of a coral reef. The aquarium has gone through a £5mIn refurbishment so expect some cool memoires to take home.

Play locally

Local play centers also offer respite and a good coffee break for mothers (and



fathers alike) whilst children tumble over soft mats, glide through tunnels and tear down giant slides. Team up with some friends and discover your local play centre. Most offer a safe haven from under 2's which offers toddler friendly toys and equipment for children to play with. The latest offering is Gambados in Garston, Watford. Prices vary according to centers but expect to pay around £5-£7 per visit. Some centers charge just for the children and other charge for each adult.

Finally, don't forget to shop around on the internet before you go, some websites offer discounted entries, which is an added bonus.