

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Baby showers

In a Hadith Nabi + said, "Fast on the day of Āshūrah but oppose the Jews by fasting a day before or a day after." (Musnad Ahmad)

One important principle of our Deen which is being ignored by the vast majority of Muslims nowadays is that Nabi + detested the emulation of the Kuffār even in the acts of 'Ibādah let alone their emulation in daily life practices, and commanded the same to the Ṣaḥābah @. Condemning emulation or imitation of the ways and methods of the Kuffār, Rasūlullah + said, "Whoever emulates a people becomes of them."

Emulation of non-Muslim lifestyles produces a change in our thinking and mindset. Muslims start to think like non-Muslims, behave like non-Muslims and our values and goals become those of the non-Muslims. Predicting this total emulation, Rasūlullah + said:

"Most certainly you will follow the ways of those who preceded you step by step, inch by inch. If they enter into a lizard's hole, you will emulate them and follow them into the lizard's hole." Someone asked, "O Rasūlullah +! Do you mean the Jews and the Christians?" Rasūlullah + replied, "Who else...?" (Mishkāṭ al- Masābiḥ)

A recent non-Islāmic practice that has crept into our homes is that of the 'Baby Shower'. As Muslims, Allāh Ta'ālā has honoured us with the teachings and lifestyle of His beloved Nabi +. Indeed, the birth of a child and parenthood is a unique occasion for the mother, father and the rest of the family.

Islām encourages us to celebrate such occasions, but at the same time, Islām teaches us to be pragmatic and responsible. We have been blessed with 'Aqeeqah' to celebrate the birth of a child. It is a dignified celebration involving the mother, the father and the rest of the family. On the contrary, 'Baby showers' are mostly surrounded by frivolous, aimless and impermissible activities. Eventually, these activities have a negative impact on the growth of the child resulting in despair and detriment for the parents.

Hence, we should invest all our efforts in promoting the Sunnah of Nabi +, i.e. the 'Aqeeqah' and encourage our families and friends to desist from hosting or attending 'Baby showers'. We must always remember that our identity is not only related to the Masjid but to every sphere of life. Our success in both worlds is solely and purely in adhering to the teachings of our beloved Nabi + and the commands of our Rabb.

Question: Is it permissible to attend or host 'baby showers'?

Answer: Respected Sister in Islām,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

A careful review of the event referred to has highlighted certain grievances associated with such customs and practices:

- Islām is very sensitive about maintaining its purity, as well as the unique identity of its followers. Islāmic laws and teachings extend to the extra miles to ensure that this ideal is not compromised in the least. Muslims have been forbidden from emulating the modes of worship, appearance and practices of non-Muslims and Western civilizations. Since this type of celebration has its roots in western and modernist cultures, our faith demands that we abandon and shun such practices and customs.
- Islām has always considered the exchange of gifts to be a purely voluntary act of kindness, which is acknowledged and appreciated irrespective of size or value. The age-old adage 'It's the thought that counts' refers to it. Such events advocate a different philosophy though, since it is considered almost obligatory to take a gift along, which is required to be of a certain standard. The gift is then compared to others that have been received, and is viewed in light of whether it is an adequate recompense for a gift that the mother-to-be or her family members had given the giver on a previous occasion. This would no doubt stir the emotions of disappointment, embarrassment, anger, greed, pride, inadequacy, amongst others, in the respective parties concerned.
- Pregnancy is a time of extreme sensitivity, when the mother-to-be is encouraged to be mindful of both the physical and spiritual effects of her behaviour on the innocent foetus she is carrying in her womb. The negative effects of excessive laughter, backbiting, attempting to comply with childish dares, etc. cannot be underestimated.
- History bears testimony to the great achievements of women in various spheres of Islāmic life, through appropriate usage of their acumen, imagination and insight. Apart from being an unconstructive usage of time, such events and celebrations are a great injustice to the female fraternity, as their valuable abilities and resources become occupied with fickle decorations, petty competitions and frivolous extravagances.

- It is a tragedy that under the constant barrage of commercial and cultural propaganda by the forces of globalization and the relentless media machine, modern and 'Westernized' Muslims have begun to embrace such events and practices. However, the tragedy is further compounded when Muslims who come from religious homes and backgrounds allow themselves to be pressurized into considering these events and celebrations as acceptable practice, to the extent that they are drawn into a moral and religious debate over something that, in reality, does not deserve the slightest consideration or attention. If this has become the norm in fairly religious and orthodox households, one can gauge the level of moral and religious decay that has engulfed the Muslim Ummah today.

In light of the above, the hosting and attending of 'baby showers' and other similar events, parties and celebrations should be strictly avoided. However, if a concrete and reasonable fear exists that the refusal to accept an invitation of an immediate family member would be deemed as offensive, and lead to a strained family relationship, attendance would be briefly allowed.

However, care should be taken to avoid all vain and unnecessary talk, as well as backbiting, while any opportunity to initiate constructive conversation or at least, steer the direction of the conversation towards matters related to Deen should be grasped. Furthermore, at a later stage, whenever it is deemed appropriate one should make one's standpoint. And, present the reasons for it (as enumerated above) to all concerned parties, i.e. both inviters and invitees, whether individually or collectively, with the hope that each of them may also adopt a similar stance and abstain from the attending and/or hosting of 'baby showers' or other similar events, parties and celebrations in the future.

Allāh Ta'ālā knows best.

Ḥadhrat Mufti Radha Ul-Haqq (Dāmat Barakātuhu)

Darul Uloom Zakariyya

South Africa