

20018 - Ruling on 'aqeeqah, and are the poor excused from it?

the question

Allaah has blessed me with a baby boy, and I heard that my husband has to sacrifice two sheep for him for the 'aqeeqah. If his circumstances do not allow him to do that because he has many debts, is he excused from that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

There is a difference of scholarly opinion concerning the ruling on 'aqeeqah, with there being three different views. Some say that it is obligatory, some said that it is mustahabb (recommended) and some say that it is Sunnah mu'akkadah (a confirmed Sunnah). The latter is the most correct view.

The Scholars of the Standing Committee said:

'Aqeeqah is Sunnah mu'akkadah. For a boy two sheep which meet the conditions for sacrifice should be slaughtered, and for a girl one sheep. The sheep should be slaughtered on the seventh day, but if it is delayed it is permissible to slaughter them at any time, and there is no sin in delaying it, but it is better to do it as soon as possible.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 11/439

But there is no difference of opinion that it is not obligatory for one who is poor, let alone one who is in debt. Something that is more important than 'aqeeqah – such as Hajj for example – does not

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take precedence over paying off debts.

So 'aqeeqah is not obligatory for you, because of your husband's financial circumstances.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

If I am blessed with a number of children, and I cannot do 'aqeeqah for one of them because I am not well off, as I am an employee and my salary is limited and is only sufficient to cover my monthly expenses, what is the ruling on the 'aqeeqahs of my children in Islam?

They replied:

If the situation is as you described and you are not well off, and your income is only sufficient to cover your spending on yourself and those under your care, then there is nothing wrong with you not doing the 'aqeeqah for your children, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope”

[al-Baqarah 2:286]

“and [Allaah] has not laid upon you in religion any hardship”

[al-Hajj 22:78]

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16]

And it was narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If you are commanded to do a thing, do as much of it as you can; and if you are forbidden to do something then avoid it.” So whenever you can afford it then it is prescribed for you to do it.

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Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 11/436, 437

The scholars of the Standing Committee were also asked:

A man had a number of sons and he did not do 'aqeeqah for them, because he was poor. A few years later, Allaah made him independent of means by His Bounty. Does he have to do 'aqeeqah?

They replied:

If the situation is as described, then it is prescribed for him to do 'aqeeqah for them, two sheep for each boy.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 11/441, 442

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen was asked:

A man has a number of sons and daughters, and he did not do 'aqeeqah for any of them, either because of ignorance or carelessness. Some of them are grown up now. What should he do now?

He replied:

If he does 'aqeeqah for them now, that will be good, if he was ignorant of the ruling or if he kept saying, "I will do 'aqeeqah tomorrow" until too much time had gone by. But if he was poor at the time when 'aqeeqah was prescribed, then he does not have to do anything.

Liqa' al-Baab al-Maftooh, 2/17-18

His family do not have to do the slaughtering on his behalf, even though that is permissible, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did the 'aqeeqah for his grandsons al-Hasan and al-Husayn, as narrated by Abu Dawood (2841) and al-Nasaa'i (4219), and classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 2466.

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Secondly:

If you have to choose between Hajj and 'aqeeqah, then priority should definitely be given to Hajj. If you want to do 'aqeeqah for your children, that is permissible even if they are grown up. You do not have to tell the people whom you invite that this is an 'aqeeqah, and it is not permissible for them to make fun of what you are doing, because what you are doing is the right thing. It is not essential to cook the meat and invite the people, rather it is permissible to distribute the meat raw.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

'Aqeeqah refers to the animal sacrificed on the seventh day after birth as an act of thanksgiving to Allaah for the blessing of a child, whether male or female. It is Sunnah, because of the ahaadeeth that have been narrated concerning that. The person who does 'aqeeqah for his child has to invite people to come and eat it, in his house or wherever, or he can distribute the meat raw or cooked to the poor and to his relatives, neighbours, friends, etc.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 11/442

And Allaah knows best.