14624 - At What Age Do Boys Get Circumcised?

the question

When should circumcision be done? At adolescence or when the child is small?

Summary of answer

In Islam, it is preferred to circumcise boys during childhood as it is considered kinder to the child. While there is no definitive Sunnah on the timing, scholars suggest it is obligatory before puberty, with the responsibility falling on the guardian.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Circumcision at a Young Age: A Kinder Approach

It is better for circumcision to be done when the child is small, because that is kinder to the child, and so that the child may grow up in a perfect form.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is recommended for the child's guardian to have him circumcised when he is small, because that is kinder to him. (End quote from Al-Majmu`, 1/351)

Al-Bayhaqi (8/324) narrated that Jabir (may Allah be pleased him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did `Aqiqah for Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and he circumcised them when they were seven days old.

The chain of narration of this Hadith is weak. (See Irwa' Al-Ghalil, 4/383)

Hence Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the time of circumcision , and he said: “We have not heard anything about that.”

Ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “There is no report that may be referred to concerning the time of circumcision, and no Sunnah to be followed.”

Is Circumcision Obligatory before Puberty?

With regard to the time when circumcision becomes obligatory , some of the scholars were of the view that it is not obligatory until after puberty, because the duties of Shari`ah are not obligatory until one reaches puberty.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Our companions said: The time when circumcision becomes obligatory is after puberty . (End quote from Al-Majmu`, 1/351)

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) favoured the view that circumcision is obligatory before puberty , so that the child will reach puberty in a circumcised state, but the obligation here is upon the guardian, not the child.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In my view, it is obligatory for the guardian to circumcise the child before puberty, so that he will grow up in a circumcised state, because the duty can only be done in this manner… The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined fathers to tell their children to pray when they are seven and to smack them if they do not pray when they are ten, so what justification can there be for not circumcising them until after they have reached puberty?

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to circumcision, whenever he wants he can be circumcised, but if he is approaching the age of puberty he should be circumcised as the Arabs used to do, to make sure he does not

reach puberty when he is not circumcised. (End quote from Al-Fatawa Al-Kubra, 1/275)

And Allah knows best.