88734 - Delay in naming a child

the question

We have been blessed with a new child, but we delayed naming him for five months because there were no sheep available. Is it permissible to give this child a name?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Sunnah has stipulated the time for naming a newborn in various ahadith, such as the following:

1 – Indication that it is mustahabb to give the name on the seventh day.

It was narrated from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb, from his father, from his grandfather, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined naming the newborn on the seventh day, and removing the impurity from him, and offering the ‘aqeeqah. Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2832) who said: This is a hasan ghareeb hadeeth. It was also classed as hasan by al-Albani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

It was narrated from Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah have mercy on him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“Every child is in pledge for his ‘aqeeqah, which should be slaughtered on his behalf on the seventh day, and he should be shaved and given a name.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (3838); classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

2 – Indication that the name may be given on the day he is born.

It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“A child was born to me last night and I have called him by the name of my father Ibraaheem.” Narrated by Muslim (2315).

The majority of scholars are of the view that it is better to name the child on the seventh day. They said: The hadeeth of Anas ibn Malik indicates only that it is permissible to name the child on the first day, not that it is mustahabb to do so.

See: al-Mughni (9/356).

Some of the Malikis and al-Nawawi said, and according to one report from the Hanbalis, that it is mustahabb to name the child on the first day, and it is also mustahabb to do it on the seventh day.

Al-Nawawi said in al-Adhkaar (286):

The Sunnah is to name the newborn on the seventh day after birth, or on the day of birth. End quote.

See: al-Insaaf (4/111).

Al-Bukhaari was of the view that the one who intends to offer an ‘aqeeqah should delay the naming until the time of the ‘aqeeqah on the seventh day, but the one who does not intend to offer an ‘aqeeqah should name the child on the first day.

Ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Baari (9/588):

This is a fine reconciliation (of reports) which I have not seen from anyone but al-Bukhaari. End quote.

Al-‘Iraaqi said in Tarh al-Tathreeb (5/203-204):

This (that it is mustahabb on the seventh day) was the view of al-Hasan al-Basri, Malik, al-Shaafa’i,

Ahmad and others. Our companions said: There is nothing wrong with naming him before that.

Muhammad ibn Sireen, Qataadah and al-Awzaa'i said: If he is born and is fully formed, he may be given a name straight away, if they wish.

Ibn al-Mundhir said: Naming him on the seventh day is good, but whenever they wish they may name him.

Ibn Hazm said: He may be named on the day of his birth, but if it is delayed and he is named on the seventh day, that is good.

Ibn al-Muhallab said: It is permissible to name him when he is born or after that, unless it is intended to offer the 'aqeeqah on his behalf on the seventh day, in which case the Sunnah is to delay it until the seventh day. That is understood from what al-Bukhaari said when he named a chapter: Chapter on naming the newborn on the day of his birth for one who does not offer 'aqeeqah. End quote.

Whatever the case, all of the above indicates that the matter is either mustahabb or permissible, and there is nothing to suggest that it is obligatory to give the child his name on the seventh day. If the naming is delayed beyond the seventh day, there is nothing wrong with that.

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Majmoo' (8/415):

Our companions and others said: It is mustahabb to name the child on the seventh day, and it is permissible to do it before then or after. The saheeh ahadith clearly show that. End quote

Based on the above, it would have been better for you to give your blessed – in sha Allah – child his name on the first day or on the seventh day, then leave the 'aqeeqah until whenever it was easy for you. But it is mustahabb only, and not doing it does not mean that you are sinning or exposed to punishment.

See also the answer to question no. 7889 and 20646.

And Allah knows best.