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See also: ABROGATION; ĀDAM; ALLIANCE AND TREATY; ANGELS; ANIMALS; APOSTASY; BEAUTY; BELIEVERS; BONES; BUYING AND SELLING; CHILDREN OF ISRĀ’ĪL; CLIENTS AND PATRONS; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; COVENANT; DĀWŪD, UPON HIM PEACE; DAY OF JUDGMENT; DISBELIEF; DISBELIEVERS; EARTH; FIR‘AWN; FRIDAY; GLORIFICATION; HELL; HUMILITY; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS; JĀHILIYYA; JEWS; JINNS; JIZYA; LANGUAGE OF THE QUR’ĀN; LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY; MAGIC; MOON; MUḤAMMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; MŪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; PEOPLE OF THE BOOK; POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS; PARABLES OF THE QUR’ĀN; PATH; PRAYER; PROPHETS; QIBLA; THE QUR’ĀN AND THE NATURAL WORLD; READING AND RECITATION; SATAN; SLAVES OF ALLAH; STARS AND PLANETS; SUBMISSION; SUBSERVIENCE; SUN; THRONE OF ALLAH; TORAH; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WILL, WANT AND VOLITION; WORSHIP; YA‘QŪB, UPON HIM PEACE; YŪSUF, UPON HIM PEACE; ZAKĀT.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD AND FATIMAH AHMADSHAH

BREASTFEEDING

This article comprises the following sections: i. Usage; ii. Legal Issues; iii. Other References; iv. Bibliography.

Usage

A baby’s suckling from a woman’s breast. The

Qur’ānic terms referring to breastfeeding are derived from the root *r-d-‘*, meaning to suck mother’s milk, to suckle a baby, to seek a foster mother (Farāhīdī; Ibn Fāris; Rāghib; Fayrūzābādī; Zabīdī; Ibn Manẓūr). Five derived forms of this root occur eleven times in five sūras, one of which (Q 28) is Makkan:

- i. six times as various forms of the Form IV verb (*arḍa‘a/yurḍi‘u*), “to suckle, to breastfeed, to nurse” (Q 2:233; 4:23; 22:2; 28:7; 65:6x2);
- ii. once as the imperfect subjunctive (*manṣūb*) of the form X verb *istarḍa‘a*, “to seek to suckle, to seek for breastfeeding” (Q 2:233: *if you seek to engage a wet nurse for your children*);
- iii. once as the feminine active participle of the Form IV verb, *murḍi‘a*, “one who is breastfeeding a baby”; the woman whose breast is in the mouth of a baby (Azharī), (Q 22:2: *every nursing woman will forget her nursing*);
- iv. once as *marāḍi‘*, the plural of both the active participle *murḍi‘a* and the verbal/place noun *marḍa‘*, “breast-feeders, foster mothers” (Q 28:12: *We had already forbidden him (Mūsā) wet-nurses*); and
- v. twice as the accusative feminine noun *raḍā‘a*, the suckling (Q 2:233; 4:23).

Of these six verses, three (Q 2:233; 4:23; 65:6) refer to legal matters pertaining to breastfeeding. The other mentions include one (Q 22:2) in the context of the horrors and severity of the Day of Resurrection and two (Q 28:7, 12) regarding the infancy of the Prophet Mūsā, upon him peace. Weaning (*fiṣāl*) is mentioned in Q 31:14 (*his weaning lasted two years*) and Q 46:15 (*We have enjoined man to be kind to his parents. In pain did his mother bear him and in pain did she give birth to him; and his bearing and weaning are [a duration of] thirty months*).

Legal Issues

Jurists and exegetes discuss several legal issues derived from Q 2:233; 4:23; and 65:6, and related Prophetic traditions. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) explains eighteen different issues arising out of Q 2:233 alone (*Tafsīr*). This entry focuses on the following five: (i) who is responsible for nursing a child; (ii) its duration; (iii) its recompense; (iv) prohibiting harm to the parent of a suckling child; and (v) the conditions of milk-kinship.

- I. **Who is responsible for breastfeeding?** The reference to breastfeeding in Sūrat al-Baqara (Q 2:233) is preceded by the verse stipulating measures for divorce: