

THE CODES OF TRAINING

آئین تربیت

By **AYATOLLAH IBRAHIM AMINI**

Translated by **Sayed Tahir Bilgrami**

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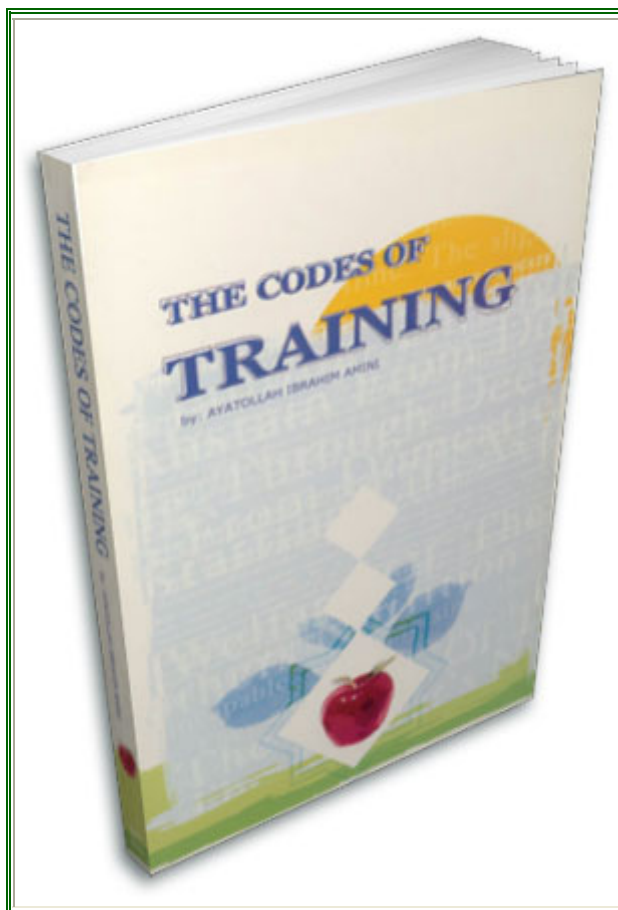


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The Translator's Note

My friend Riaz Ahmed gave me a copy of the Urdu translation of the book to read and attempt its translation into the English language. He told me that the sponsors are keen to have the book published in the English language for the benefit of young, eligible, girls, newly married couples and expectant mothers who do not have proficiency in Persian, the language of the original text, nor can they read Urdu in which it has been translated and published. After reading the book I am convinced that it is a highly commendable project. I feel a copy should reach every household. It should be a part of the dower of newly wed brides, it should be presented to the young married couples and it must be there on every family bookshelf. The book should adorn the bed- side table of every young couple and will be a very useful reference and guide for proper upbringing of children.

Ayatollah Ustaz Ibrahim Amini has rightly pointed out in his foreword that the western libraries are chock full of works on child rearing and

upbringing, but we find hardly any comprehensive reference on the subject with particular emphasis on the Islamic norms and guidelines for upbringing of children. The Western works are more materialistic which emphasize only on the material and moral aspects of child rearing. It is Islam that covers all the aspects including the religious and spiritual



guidelines for bringing up the children as good Muslims and citizens. He has extensively quoted from the Holy Book and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet and his Infallible Descendants.

The need for English translations of Islamic works is universally felt and lot of work is being done in this direction. There is a very large section of Muslim youth, although fluent at speaking in their native languages, are more comfortable communicating in English which has assumed the status of lingua franca for them. We also come across people from other faiths who are curious to know more about Islam and they wish to have access to good literature on the subject in the English language. If the publication of the translation of this book sees the light of the day, it will be another small, but significant step, towards dissemination of Islamic precepts to a wide spectrum of people in the East and the West. Insha Allah.

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Foreword

There is pronounced difference between education and training or upbringing. Education means inculcation of knowledge, or imparting the meanings of the contents of curricula. But upbringing is molding of personalities on desired lines. The society can be transformed with proper upbringing of its population.

It is imperative that upbringing is based on well thought out program to ensure the degree of desired success. Upbringing is not only sermonizing and admonishing but it requires creation of the right environment towards attainment of the desired results. The criteria necessary for proper upbringing can be listed as:

The mentor should be properly acquainted with the student whose upbringing he is assigned to take up. He should familiarize himself with the physical and mental status of the student.

The mentor should have defined aims of the training program for the student. The ultimate goal of the upbringing process has to be the development of the student into a humane person.

The training program to be inclusive of the desirable criteria and conditions for producing best results. The mentor then can expect positive results over a period of time.

The best period for commencement of the upbringing or training is the childhood of the student. Childhood is the most impressionable period in the life

of a person. At this



delicate and responsible juncture the parents can play a very crucial role. But upbringing of small children is not an easy and simple function and requires deep thought of identification, knowledge, experience, determination and perseverance in the mentor or the parents. It is sad that most parents are found ignorant of the art of upbringing of the children. This is the reason most children are not receiving upbringing on desirable lines and they keep growing like self-sustained saplings.

In the progressive countries of the West and the East upbringing of children receives prime importance. They have conducted lot of research in this field. Many useful books have been published on the subject and they have many experts in the field. But in our country scant attention has been given to this crucial matter. We have few knowledgeable persons in this discipline and very few books on the subject which are absolutely insufficient. Quite a few books have been translated from other languages into Persian which are available to people. But these books from the West and the East have two big lacunae.

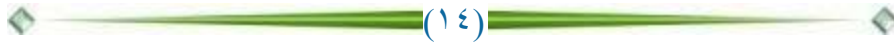
The first lacuna is that they treat of only the physical requirement of the students and the stress is on the worldly education of the subjects. All the research rotates around these aspects only and they are totally silent on the spiritual aspect of human life and have ignored any reference to mention of the concept of hereafter.

In the West the only objective is to train the children for their bodies and minds for the attainment of worldly conveniences and pleasures so that when they grow up they have ideal living conditions at their disposal. And if



these books deal with the subject of morality they limit themselves to the treatment of morality specific only to the worldly benefits and are totally silent about the rewards or retribution which one can earn on the basis of his actions during the worldly life.

The second lacuna is that the training problems in the West are dependence for a solution only on past experiences and statistics. There is no impress of “Faith” in this process. Therefore, these books are not of comprehensive utility for the people of the Muslim Faith. In the eyes of a Muslim the human being has two pronounced aspects—one is the body and the other is the spirit. One pertains to the worldly life and the other to the Hereafter. In view of this the writer has decided to study and research and thereafter present the conclusions to the seekers of knowledge in the form of a book. For the writing of this book the main source of information has been the Holy Quran, the books of tradition and the writings on moral science. Reference has also been made to works in Arabic and Persian on the training of children, their psychology, health etc. The books written by Iranian scholars on the upbringing of children were also kept in view. The personal experiences of the author have also been invaluable in this effort. It is hoped that this humble presentation will be of use to the mentors who are associated with the training of impressionable minds in the Muslim community.



THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

In the eyes of Islam the status of the father and the mother is very exalted. Allah, the Holy Prophet and the Infallible Imams have exhorted the people in this regard. There are a lot of verses in the Holy Book relevant to the subject. The exemplary behavior of children towards their parents is rated as one of the best invocations.

Allah says:

“Your God has decreed that thou shalt worship only Him and adopt good behavior with (thy) parents. ۱۷:۲۳”

Imam Ja'far Sadiq observes:

“Three actions are the best: (۱) Offer the five mandatory prayers with punctuality, (۲) Maintain good behavior with your parents, and (۳) Struggle in the cause of Allah.”[۱]

Now the question arises why this exalted position has been bestowed on the parents of the Faithful! Is Allah giving this status for no specific reason? What big deed the parents perform for their progeny that they are deemed deserving of the august status. The father, in satisfaction of his carnal desire transfers his sperm into the womb of the mother where it compounds with the



ovum and a new being starts to develop and after nine months of the incident arrives into the world as a tiny babe. The mother suckles it and gives it other nutrition. Sometimes she cleans it and sometimes changes its raiment. She cares of its wetness and dryness. During this time the father takes care of the expenses required for the upkeep of the child. Don't the parents have any other responsibility besides these? Is it because of performing these duties that the parents have been endowed with the exalted status? Do the parents only have a right over their offspring and the children don't have any rights over them? In my opinion no one will accept any such one sided privilege. The traditions of the Infallibles of the Holy Prophet's Family are quoted in this regard:

١. The Holy Prophet of Islam has said:

“As your father has a right over you, so does your progeny have a similar right?”[١]

The Prophet also said:

“As are the children disinherited for their disobedience so also it is possible that the parents may be disowned by the children for not fulfilling their bonded duties.[٢]

The Prophet said:

“Allah’s curse on such parents who become the cause of disinheriting their children.”[۳]

[۱] Majma al-Zawaid, Vol. ۸, page: ۱۴۶.

[۲] Bihar al-Anwar, Volt ۱۹, Page ۹۳.

[۳] Makarim al-Akhlaq. Page ۲۱۸.



Imam Sajjad said:

“Your children have a right that you consider if they are good or they are bad. You have been the cause of their birth and the world recognizes them as your offspring. It is your responsibility that you teach them good manners and guide them toward the recognition and obedience of Allah. Your behavior towards your children must be of a person who believes that a good deed shall get a suitable reward and ill treatment shall call for retribution.”[۱]

Amir al-Mominin Ali says:

“Beware; your behavior might render your family and your relatives part of the ill fated people.”[۲]

The Prophet said:

“Whoever wishes that his children are safe from disinheritance, he should help

them performing good deeds.”[٣]

The Prophet also said:

“To whomsoever a daughter is born should strive to impart norms of good behavior to her and make efforts to educate her. Provide means of comfort to her that she becomes a cause of his deliverance from the Hell Fire.”[٤]

Above all, Allah says in the Holy Quran:

[١] Makarim al-Akhlaq, Page ٤٨٤.

[٢] Ghurar al-Hikam Page ٨٠٢

[٣] Majma al-Zawaid, Volt ٨, Page ١٠٨

[٤] Ibid.



(١٧)

“O, Believers! Save yourselves and your dependents from the fire whose fuel are humans and the stones. ٦٦:٦”

The time when a child is in the process of adopting a way of life which can make him either virtuous or wicked, he can be metamorphosed into a perfect human being or a degraded wild animal. The virtue or wickedness of a person will be dependent on the upbringing he receives and this responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the parents. In fact the parents are instruments of shaping a human being, good or bad, from the child. The greatest service which the parents can render to their children is that they train them to be good

mannered, kind, friends of humans, well meaning, freedom loving, bold, just, wise, righteous, noble, faithful, dutiful, hard working, educated. The parents must mould their children in such a way that they are successful in both the world and hereafter. Only such people are those who are endowed with the exalted status of parenthood, and not those who in fulfillment of their carnal desire caused the birth of children and left the children to fend for themselves and rendering them likely to fall into evil ways.

The Holy Prophet said:

“The best thing a father provide to his child is good manners and ethical training.”[¹]

The mother has a more important function to perform towards the upbringing of the progeny. Even during the pregnancy the mother’s food habits and her behavior

[¹] Majma al-Zawaid, Volt ٨, Page: ١٥٩



affects the future virtuosity or otherwise of the developing child.

The Prophet of Islam said:

“Lucky is the one whose foundation of his virtue has been made in the womb of the mother and unlucky is one whose wickedness had its rudiments in the

mother's womb as well"[1]

The Prophet also said:

“The Janna (Heaven) is under the feet of one's mother.”[2]

The parents, who don't pay attention to the education and training of their children, become guilty of gross negligence. Such parents must be asked whether the innocent child pleaded with him to give him birth in the world to be abandoned like sheep and cattle. Now that you have become the cause of his existence, by virtue of religious tenets and human wisdom his education and training is your bonden duty.

The parents are also answerable to the society. Today's children will be men and women, the citizens of tomorrow. The fabric of the society will be made of these individuals. Whatever lessons they learn today, they shall put them into practice tomorrow. If their upbringing today is perfect, the society of tomorrow shall be flawless. And if today's generation follows a faulty program of training it is imperative that tomorrow's society will be evil and perverted. The personalities in the fields of

[1] Bihar al-Anwar, Volt ٧٧, Page ١١٥-١٣٣.

[2] Mustadrak, Vol. ٢, Page ٣٨.

politics, education and society shall emerge from these elements. Today's

children are tomorrow's parents. Today's children can be tomorrow's reformers. If they have received good training at the hands of their parents, they in turn can carry forward this practice with their children. If the parents have the will, they can be the instruments of the reform of the society for the future and with neglect of the children they can be the cause of the ruination of the society. By giving the right training to their children, the parents can render invaluable service to their society.

Education and training should not be treated as an insignificant subject. The efforts which the parents make to educate their children and the hardships that they undergo in this quest result in the creation of thousands of professors, doctors, and engineers. It is the parents who strive to nurture perfect human beings, capable and pious mentors and other professionals.

The mothers in particular bear more responsibility for the upbringing of the children. The children spend most of their childhood with the mothers. The foundation of the direction their future is bound to take is laid here. So, the key to the vice or virtue of a person and the progress or decline of a society is with the mothers of the society. The woman's place is not in the shop floor, ministerial or administrative positions. These functions don't measure up to the importance of a woman as a mother. Mothers breed perfect human beings. Virtuous ministers, lawyers, professors owe their positions to the loving care received from their mothers during their formative years.

The parents, who nurture truthful, pious children not

only serve their children and the society but also create a niche for themselves in the society. These children will be a support of the parents in their frail old age. If parents strive towards the education and upbringing of their children they reap the harvest of their troubles during their lifetime only.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Evil off-spring is among the greatest hardships for the parents.”[۱]

Hazrat Ali also says:

“Evil off-spring causes loss of respect for the parents and the successors are shamed.”[۲]

The Prophet of Islam says:

“May Allah bless the parents who trained their children to behave justly with them.”[۳]

Therefore those who attain parenthood have great responsibility on their shoulders. This responsibility is to Allah Almighty as also to their fellow human beings and also to their own children. If they discharge the responsibility properly they will be rewarded in this world and hereafter. But if they falter in the discharge of this responsibility then they themselves will be the losers and they will be tantamount to have cheated their own children and the society at large and they would be perpetrating an unpardonable sin.

[۱] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۱۸۹.

[۲] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۱۸۰.

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THE KNOWLEDGE AND MUTUAL COOPERATION OF THE EDUCATORS

The training and upbringing of a child is not an easy and simple task that the parents can perform with little or no effort. This task requires, in fact, delicate handling and temperament. There are myriads of fine points to be considered to achieve success in the efforts. The mentor has to relate himself with the spirit of the child. He cannot perform the task without knowing the spiritual, psychological, educational and practical niceties of the job. A child's world is a world of his own and his imaginations and fantasies will be unique to him. These cannot be compared to the thought process of the adults. The child's spirit will be delicate and will be very impressionable. The child will be a human being in miniature that has not as yet assumed a permanent identity but it has the capability to attain this change. The mentor of the child has to be capable of fathoming and identifying a human being and, also, identifying the mind of the children. He should

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have a keen eye on the intricacies of the process of upbringing. He should be aware of the human capabilities and failings. He should have sense of responsibility and keen interest in the job on hand. He should be patient and courageous that the hardships don't overpower him. Besides, the rules of

training are not rigid and cannot be implemented the same way under different circumstances. In fact these rules have to be modified and applied to each individual child according to his physical make up and mental capabilities. The parents must keenly observe the physical built of the child and educate him keeping this factor in mind. Otherwise, the effort may not bring about the desired result.

The man and woman should acquire knowledge about education and training before parenting a child. The education of the child commences with its birth and, in fact, from the time of conception. During this period the foundation of the child's nature is established and his nature, behavior, thinking process starts taking shape.

It is not right that the parents remain unconcerned during this visibly dormant period. .

They postpone the upbringing of the expected new arrival till its actual arrival. They tend to keep away this task till the child is capable of distinguishing between good and bad behavior. While it may be easier to correct the behavioral defects in the early stages, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to effect these corrections once the habits are formed.

Hazrat Ali says:

“The most difficult politics is bringing about changes

in the habits of people.”[^١]

Hazrat Ali also says:

“Habits settle down upon people.”[^٢]

Hazrat Ali says:

“Habits become second nature.”[^٣]

Shunning habits is so difficult that doing it is considered amongst better invocations.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Overcoming bad habits is amongst benevolent invocations.”[^٤]

Another important factor in imparting ideal training to the child is the coordination and cooperation between the parents and other mentors like the grand parents on the program of training to be followed. Their joint effort will produce the desired results. But if any one of them takes a cavalier attitude on the training process, the results may not be as desired.

The child should be made aware of its duty. When the parents give contrary directions the child gets confused. Particularly if they insist on their contrary points of view, there is likelihood of negative results in the process of the training of the child. The biggest difficulty in imparting training to the child is that the father makes a

[^١] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ١٨١.

[^٢] Ibid., Page ١٨١.

[۳] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ۲۶۰.

[۴] Ibid., Page ۱۷۶.



decision about him and the mother or the grand parents insist on a contrary course. There is always a need for such understanding between the mentors that the child is able to clearly understand what he has to do and the idea of doing anything against this does not enter his mind.

Sometimes it happens that the father is well educated and reasonable and the mother of the child is ill tempered and uneducated. Sometimes the situation is reversed, when the mother is better equipped to train the child and the father is not. Many families face this problem. Children in such families do not receive proper training. But this doesn't mean that they should give up efforts of properly training their children.

In such a difficult situation the responsibility become more pronounced. The need in such a situation is to give more thought to the program of educating the child. The parents should make sincere efforts to overcome the lacunae in their character and behavior and give more attention to the children. With good actions the parents can attract the children's attention and set a desirable example before them. The parent's action should help the child to decide what is good for him and what is not. If the mentor is wise, thoughtful and patient he can to a greater extent counter the negative impact of his wife's behavior on the training of the child. This is no doubt a difficult task but there is no way out of

it.

One intellectual says:

“A family in which the father and the mother think alike about the upbringing of the children and are able to mould their character and actions accordingly the



impact on the senses of the children will be ideal. The family unit is a small society in which the child's moral character assumes definite form. A family in which the members are friendly towards each other their children are generally mild mannered, self-respecting and judicious. Against this, a family where the parents have the habit of contradicting each other their children will be morally deficient, pretentious and excitable.”



TRAINING-THROUGH DEEDS, NOT JUST TALK

Most parents think that oral instructions and occasional talk about dos and don'ts is sufficient for good upbringing of children. They presume that the upbringing of the child is thus taken care of and they do not have to do anything about the upbringing of the child concerning other walks of life. This is why such parents do not feel any need to think of the upbringing till the child is a tiny tot. They say that the child is still a babe and is incapable of understanding anything about upbringing. When the child comes to the age of understanding they give a thought to its upbringing. It is the period in the life of a child when

he starts discriminating between good and bad. While this thinking is incorrect, the child, as a matter of fact, is ready for the upbringing the day he is born. He gets trained every moment and his nature is molded in a particular way. Whether the parents are aware of this process or not the child does wait not for any initiative on their part. The child's active mind and other senses are like a camera, which keeps preserving images of what happens in its environment. A child of five to six years would have acquired a certain character.



Good or bad habits would have got engrained in its nature and it would be a difficult task to bring about a change in his behavior. The child, as a matter of fact, is a mimic. It tries to emulate its parents and the other inmates in its surroundings. The child views its parents with a degree of respect and makes efforts to copy their life style. Their actions become his yardstick for good and bad actions. The nature of a child is not cast in a mould but it takes the parents as the example to follow. The child depends more on the behavior of the parents as a model for its actions than any amount of sermonizing.

The daughter observes her mother and learns the niceties of house keeping. She sees her father and understands the nature of men. The boy takes lessons about life from his father's actions and from his mother's behavior he learns about the nature of women.

It is therefore necessary for responsible people to reform themselves at the outset and if they have any flaws in their behavior they should avoid them. In a nutshell, they should mould themselves into good human beings before they

embark on the road to parenthood.

The parents should give a thought to what sort of offspring the desire to give to the society. If they feel that their child should be a morally upright, kind, humane, freedom loving and responsible person then they too have to be owning such characteristics that they set an example for him to emulate. The mother wishes that her daughter should be responsible, kind, equanimous person who respects the feelings of her spouse then she should herself try to fit into these norms. The daughter will then observe the behavior pattern of the mother and



automatically mould herself the same way. If the mother is an ill tempered, lazy, disorderly, untidy and selfish person then she cannot expect to train her daughter only through lecturing on the norms of good behavior.

Only those persons can competently train and bring up children properly who had similar upbringing themselves in their childhood. They will have better understanding of the nature and psyche of the children. The parents who have differences and pick up fights over trivialities will be incompetent in bringing up children. Similarly professional educators who have taken up the task only for the material remuneration, who are impatient, excitable and do not have an understanding of the child's nature and psyche will not be able to put their trainees on the right track.

Dr. Jalali writes:

“Whosoever has the responsibility of upbringing a child should occasionally do introspection on his own character and behavior, realize his responsibilities and try to correct his failings.”

Hazrat Ali says:

“The person who is in the lead should first reform himself and then try to correct others. Before teaching the norms of good behavior to others he should set an example himself. One who educates himself in learning and manners is more deserving of respect than he who only teaches the norms of good behavior to others.”[^١]

[^١] Nahj al-Balagha.



“You respect your elders that your children respect you.”[^١]

“If you wish to reform others, then commence the exercise with reforming yourself. If you like to correct others and keep yourself flawed it will be the biggest blemish.”[^٢]

“When the talking tongue is silent on sermonizing and the actions of the sermonizer speak for themselves, then no ears can keep the sermon out and nothing is more effectively beneficial than this.”[^٣]

One lady writes in a letter:

“...my parents’ character has deeply impressed me. They have always been kind to their children. I never found any flaw in their words or deeds. We also acquired this habit. I cannot forget their good character and behavior. Now that I am a mother my endeavor is to see that I don’t do any thing in the presence of the children, which is not considered good. My parent’s character is the example to be emulated in my life. I try to see that my children too are brought up the same way.”

Another lady wrote in a letter:

“...When I recapitulate my past life I recall that my mother used to argue and shout on trivial matters. Now that I am a mother I feel that with a little difference my condition is nearly the same as my

[٢٠] Ghurar al-Hikam, Page ٥٤٦.

[٢١] Ibid., Page ٢٧٨.

[٢٢] Ibid., Page ٢٣٢.



(٣٠)

mother’s was. All her negative manners have become a part of my character. The strange problem is that however much I try to reform myself I am unable to make much progress. Definitely it is proved in my case that the parents’ character and behavior has far-reaching effect on the molding of the character

of their children. The saying, therefore, is correct that a mother with the good training of her children can transform the world.”



ABSTAIN FROM DOMESTIC DIFFERENCES

For a child the home is like a nest. He feels very much attached to it. His heart is always tied to it. If the parents are on friendly terms his nest remains durable like a warm lap. The child in such a home feels contented and secure. Getting an upbringing in such congenial atmosphere the latent qualities and capabilities in the child will truly find expression and will bring out salutary results. But if the parents are excitable and fighting type then the child will lose its calm and contentment and he will be uneasy and restless. The parents who argue and fight do not realize that the feelings of the poor child. In such a situation the children get frightened and with hurt hearts they seek some corner to hide themselves wondering as to why their parents are behaving in that manner. Otherwise they seek the avenues of fleeing from the nest that has been so dear to them and seek refuge in some lane or bazaar. The bitterest memories of a child are the times when the parents have heated, loud arguments and fights. The children are unable to forget such scenes till late in their own lives. These events remain etched on their psyche and have deleterious effect on their natures.

Such children have weak hearts and stunted physique. They will be heart broken and spend their lives miserably. It is quite possible that daughters of such

parents carry an impression that all men are as harsh and rude as their own father is. This may lead to abhorrence of the very thought of marriage for such girls. It is also possible that the sons of such homes think that all women are as ill mannered as their own mother is and decide to remain celibate all their lives. . In such an environment the children become rebellious and start hating the parents and the things come to such a pass that some children become revengeful. The statistics indicate that lot of gallivanting, alcoholic and anti social children is the consequence of the disturbed atmosphere at home

If one thinks of the bitter events of his childhood when the parents had bitter differences then he will feel that despite the passage of long years the unpleasant memories are remaining etched on his mind.

One intellectual writes:

“The parents should know the fact that when there is an argument or fight between the elders of the house there will be deleterious effect on the thinking of the children. The type of relations the elders keep will have definite effect on development of the children.....if the atmosphere of unity and peace is absent from the house then it is not possible to give proper upbringing to the children. When the elders become argumentative and excitable they forget that the impressionable children are with them whose upbringing is their responsibility. In such an atmosphere the children do not learn any good lesson. The children then become secluded and ill tempered. Particularly children of slightly higher age find the

situation very difficult. Their hearts cry over the attitude of the father. They are unable to decide whose side they should take. In some cases they become antagonistic to both the parents.”

Another person writes in a letter:

“.....from the most unpleasant incidents of my childhood the vividly etched on my mind are those when my parents used to fight exchanging abusive language. During these events my sister my brother and myself used to stand shivering in a corner. As long as the fight continued we used to watch helplessly. I remember my sister used to cry at such events and these fits lasted for long. She is now a victim of nervous breakdown. It seems that the wrangles of our parents had a very bad effect on the spirit of my sister...”

Another person writes:

“...the thought of an unpleasant event of my childhood doesn't leave my memory. My father was ill mannered, excitable and selfish. He used to invent excuses to fight at home and shout at everyone. Our parents used to fight throughout the day. I wonder they never tired of doing this. The fights generally used to be on trivialities. There was no night when I went to bed without shedding tears. This was the reason that my nerves were weak. I am a scared person and I get bad dreams. I have consulted doctors who say that the reason for my condition is the effects of the atmosphere at my home. He says that there is no cure for this other than rest and peace at home. My happy days started when I got married and I escaped

from that house. Now, although my life is peaceful, I have a feeling that I am a defeated person and I cannot make much progress in life. I appeal to parents, In the name of God! If you have any differences, do not fight in the presence of your children!”

He further writes in his long letter:

“The worst event of my life happened when I was eight years old. That day my parents had a very bad fight. All the children went scurrying to corners. The event had such a sad effect on my spirit that for a long time I couldn’t erase the thought from my memory. I was fed up with my family and myself. I used to think that I should not return home from school. I used to offer a silent prayer to God that I die of some serious sickness. Many a time I thought of committing suicide. Several times I dreamt that I was married and fighting with my spouse. During such dreams I used to plan a strategy for preserving my rights. After my marriage I tried several times to pick up a quarrel with my wife to demonstrate to her that I am an angry person. Luckily my wife is of a cool nature. She treats me with love and affection and convinces me with good arguments and advice. It is my good luck that the ill temper did not last long with me. When I recall the mistakes of my parents I did introspection over my own failings and I tried hard to mend my nature. Now I am leading a peaceful life.”

Another gentleman writes:

“...When I was nine years old my parents separated because of acute differences. They left my sister, my

brother and me in the care of our paternal grand father. We used to cry there very often. While visiting my mother I used to dream while sleeping that I wouldn't go to my father's house. After some time some well-meaning relatives intervened and made my parents to reunite. My mother returned back to our home. But during that short break my spirit got so much affected that even now I feel sad about it. Now I make a serious effort that whenever I have any differences with my wife, we don't give vent to our feelings in the presence of our children."

Another letter reads thus:

"...there are many bitter memories of my childhood and pleasant memories are but few. When I remember those days I become sad and I am unable to control the tears wetting my eyes. The reason for this sadness is that I always found my parents arguing and fighting. Thus they made life difficult for us brothers and sisters. We are a family of eight children. I never argue with my husband that I do not become the cause of the bitterness of my husband and children."

In one letter someone writes:

".... Age five is the best part of one's childhood. When I was of this age there came about bitter differences between my parents. My father brought a second wife. Because of these differences my mother secured a divorce from my father. We were six brothers and sisters. One day turned very bitter for us. I was playing with one of my brothers when our mother came to say her adieus to us. God knows how sad we children were. Our mother went away and we

remained with our father and the new mother. We remained away from our own mother for two years bearing the pangs of negligence that our father showed to us. Then one day our mother came and took me and one of my brothers home. She had received some legacy from her mother's property. With that inheritance she carried on our upkeep. Later on the other brothers and sisters too joined us. Our mother gave us the treatment of both a mother and a father. We cannot forget her courage and sacrifices.”

Another lady writes in her letter:

“... My parents always used to quarrel and there was turmoil in our home. My mother always used to be angry. I was eight years of age when she used to leave my other siblings in my care and go out. My sister and brothers were of age two, four and six. I used to care for them to the best of my capability. Sometimes I used to get beatings from our father. Despite all the difficulty I was trying to continue my studies but I failed in my second standard. My tutors were aware of my difficulties. They took pity on me and gave me grace marks. In such circumstances I reached high school. Now I am also a mother. I make a sincere effort that differences do not plague me and my family.”

The parents who feel their responsibility and they have interest in good upbringing of their children refrain from giving rise to any differences and fights in the family and they definitely avoid airing any differences in front of the children. There is no worse act than the parents disturbing the children by squabbling in their presence

and leaving them behind. If they realize the feelings of the children during such absences, however brief they are, then they would try never to fight again. Such events are remembered till the end of one's life. However there are hardly any families where there is no meaningful difference of opinion. But in marital life there is always the need for rapprochement. Wise and informed couples resolve their differences with cool and calm discussions. If the children learn of the differences of their parents, they should handle the matter tactfully and convince them that the matter is being sorted out and they need not worry on that count. The parents should take care that they do not talk of divorce in the hearing distance of their children. This not only affects their married life but can cause damage to the delicate minds of the children. Separation between husband and wife is a grave injustice to the children. They feel that their nest has fallen down. And their lives are shattered. This is naturally because the children have love for both the parents and cannot imagine any one of them abandoning them. If the children remain in the custody of the father after the divorce and he gets a second wife they will be required to unwillingly live under the care of a stepmother. However good and gentle the stepmother is, she cannot take the place of the real mother. General observation is that most stepmothers do not take good care for stepchildren. The newspapers carry many stories of bad treatment of children at the hands of stepmothers. If the children revert to the care of the separated mother, they still feel the void created by the absence of the father. And if the parents are so thoughtless that they leave the children to the care of foster parents, it will be very sad for the young kids.

Anyway, the husband and wife are free till they have children. But they have added responsibility after they have children and this will be the time when they have to make sincere efforts to avoid any serious differences cropping up. They must protect the good atmosphere at home and do not become the cause of worry to the children. Otherwise they will be answerable and subject to retribution in the Court of Allah.

STARTING LIFE AS A MOTHER

When the sperm of the man enters the womb of the woman and fuses with the ovum, the process of fertilization and the woman becoming a mother commences. The fertilized egg (Ovum) starts fast metamorphosis and ultimately takes the final shape of a human being. In fact the age of a person can be counted from the day the process of fertilization takes place.

One intellectual writes:

“When a person arrives in this world, he would already have completed nine months of his age. And in these preliminary nine months he passes through a metamorphosis which determines the shape he gets ultimately as a complete human being for a complete lifetime.”

When a woman is pregnant, she becomes a mother from that moment. She bears the responsibility for the child developing in her womb. It is a fact that the father's germ has a bearing on the legal inheritance, the physical and psychological make up of the person but the new arrival's future depends more on the care of the mother. The father's germ is like the seed but the

development depends much on the developing environment it gets.

Another intellectual writes:

“The parents of a child can provide a growth



environment which is ideal for its progress and can also give an environment which may be deleterious to its optimum development. If the growth environment is not proper it is not congenial for the immortal spirit of the offspring. This is the reason that the parents bear a heavy responsibility for the upbringing of the child.”

Every person’s welfare, illness, strength, weakness, looks, character take shape in the mother’s womb. The rudiments of the child’s morals and fate are established from the very womb of the mother.

The Holy Prophet says:

“The Fate—good or bad—of a person is determined when he is in the womb of the mother.”[١]

The pregnancy is a very delicate period and puts tremendous responsibility on the expectant mother. A woman who is aware of her responsibility does not consider the pregnancy as an ordinary time and doesn’t indulge in careless behavior. She knows that slight carelessness might affect her health badly and the baby she is carrying might get damaged. This damage could be so severe that the child arrives with irreparable defects that it may have to carry for the

life.

Another intellectual writes:

“The mother’s body and the events connected with it have an effect on the child she is carrying. The child in the mother’s womb is very sensitive to the changes her body is undergoing. This is because the mother’s

[¹] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧٧ Page ٧٧, Vol. ٧٧ Page ١١٥.



body is complete and the child is developing to take the final shape. . Therefore it is the duty of every expectant mother to keep a good environment at the house. She can succeed in this if she knows what events can have salutary effect on the child and what will not. A careful mother can provide the right environment for the ideal development of the child in her womb. An ideal environment for the child in pregnancy and immediately after birth is an utopia. But the parents make their best effort to see that they provide an environment as near to perfect as possible. But the accidents of ignorance cannot be ruled out. If people are not aware of the consequences of carelessness, they may be faced with problems during pregnancy and after delivery of the child. One should realize that coming into the world without any physical defect is the right of every human being.

WELFARE OF THE EMBRYO (FOETUS) DEPENDS ON THE MOTHERS NUTRITION

In the womb of the mother the foetus is not an integral part of her body although it gets sustenance from her blood and nutrition. A pregnant mother's food has to be properly planned and balanced which has to provide nutrition not only for her maintenance but also to the foetus.

Therefore a pregnant woman's recipe of nutrition has to be meticulously planned. Otherwise there is always a risk that the deficiency of certain vitamins and minerals in the food may prove deleterious to the health of the mother and the child.

In the eyes of Islam the nutrition of the pregnant woman is of prime importance to the extent that she can be exempted from mandatory fasting during the month of Ramadan. She is given the liberty to fulfill her obligation after delivery of the baby.

Research proves that eighty percent of the genetically deformed children with physical and mental aberrations

are because of deficient food given to the mother during her pregnancy.[١]

Dr. Jazairi, an eminent nutritionist, writes:

“It is known since long that the development of the foetus and the baby before birth and during feeding on mother’s milk the nutrition received by the mother is very important. The mother has to take care that all the essential proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, fats and other materials are taken in optimum quantities and at proper intervals for proper growth of the living cell that is the foetus. The foetus, which remains in the stage of metamorphosis in the womb, requires all these essentials for proper and healthy growth. It does happen during pregnancies that the mother remains healthy outwardly but due to deficiency of certain vitamins the foetus shows abnormal growth.”^[۲]

Karner says:

“Sometimes the reason for a new-born being abnormal is that although the seed is good it doesn’t get a proper environment in the womb. It also is sometimes because although the womb’s environment is good the seed is defective. In these conditions babies are born with several deformities like cleft lips, small and sunken eyes and flat soles of the feet etc. Earlier these defects were thought to be genetic of nature but now the research points out that they are caused by deficient availability of elements like oxygen during the pregnancy. The living environment and the

[۱] Aijaz e Khurakiah, Page ۲۲۰.

[۲] Biography Before Delivery, Page ۱۸۲.

surroundings during the pregnancy of a woman are considered the cause of the congenital defects like paraplegic limbs etc.

Imam Sadiq says in a tradition:

“Whatever a pregnant mother eats or drinks, the foetus draws its sustenance from that.”[١]

[١] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٦, Page ٣٤٢.

THE EFFECT OF THE MOTHERS NUTRITION ON THE FOETUS

During pregnancy the type of food taken by the mother has a marked effect on the nature, intelligence and capability of the child. This is because the brain of the child responds to the quality of nutrition provided to the foetus by the mother during its growth. Islam has clearly defined that the mother’s food intake during the pregnancy has a definite effect on the character of the child. Here some traditions on the subject are sited:

The Holy Prophet says:

“The mothers must ensure that during the final phase of pregnancy they must eat dates that their children grow to be gentle and sober.”[١]

And he also said:

“Ensure that your expectant wives eat behdana seeds (Seeds of Quince, a Central Asiatic tree of the rose family the fruit of which resembles a hard fleshed yellow apple). Such wives bear children with good health and character.”[۲]

Imam Reda said:

[۱] Ibid., Page ۱۱۶.

[۲] Makarim al-Akhlaq, Vol. ۱, Page ۱۹۶.



“When pregnant women eat behdana seed it enhances intelligence and wisdom of the child.”[۱]

The prophet of Islam said:

“The pregnant woman who eats melons will give birth to pretty and polite children.”[۲]

[۱] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۶۳۰.

[۲] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۶۳۰.



THE MOTHER'S NUTRITION

Research on the different types of food materials is not in the scope of this book nor can we enumerate the qualities of each because it is a subject that requires consideration at length. Nor is the author an expert on the subject of nutrition. Luckily many useful books have been published on the subject and the readers interested in a more detailed study may refer to such books. But it will not be out of place if we have a cursory look on the subject.

Although the nutrition intake requirement of pregnant women increases, it is a matter of worry that their appetite generally reduces in this condition. Many of them feel listless and dull. In such a state they need to plan to consume concentrates which are foods with lesser bulk and more nutritive value. The nutrients required by the human body are contained in different types of food materials. Therefore keeping variety in the ration of a pregnant woman gives scope for designing ideal feeding program for her.

The experts in this field write:

“To keep the body fit not only food intake is necessary but also it should be a planned mix of food materials taken at planned intervals.”^[1]

[1] Ilm o Zindagi, Page ६१२.

The mother should ensure that she takes supplemental vitamins and minerals

with the morning and evening meals that will help the foetus in the seventh month. This will not only help in the proper growth of the teeth and the gums but also some other important bones of the body.[^١]

Dr. Giasuddin Jazairi writes:

“Consumption of yoghurt and cheese during pregnancy provides vitamins and fats to the woman and prevents her from consuming many other unnecessary things which she might otherwise be inclined to eat. She should however avoid taking sour yoghurt. Stale cheese may also not taste well. At breakfast she should take a glass of milk and a broth of oats. Vitamin B is present plentifully in liver, kidneys, intestines that are useful foods and should form a part of the pregnant woman’s diet.”[^٢]

It is better that the pregnant women should take milk at regular intervals. This is a complete food and the Prophets in the past were very fond of this food.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq says:

“Milk is the food of the Prophets.”[^٣]

Dr. Giasuddin Jazairi writes:

“Most women feel pain in the limbs and the back due to deficiency of calcium during pregnancy. They also

[^١] Biography Pesh uz Tawallud, Page ٨٠.

[^٢] Aijaz Khurakia, Page ٢٢٣.

[^٣] Bihar al-Anwar.

find their nails breaking during this period. They are therefore advised to consume fruits and vegetables that are rich in calcium. They have also to be particular to regularly take soup made from bones of sheep and lemon juice”[١]

Generally for people and in particular for the pregnant women the raw and cooked vegetables and fruits are considered good food. The plants derive the nutrients from the soil, water, air and sunlight and store the food for us. All the fruits have good nutritive value but particularly apples, quince, pears, dates are very useful. Likewise every vegetable has its own nutritive value. Different vitamins and minerals are provided to the body by different food grains, fruits and vegetables. A person who wants to take good care of his nutrition should take a mix of fruits and vegetables and try to eat all the seasons fruits, even if occasionally. Particularly, the pregnant women should make a careful mix of different food materials in their diet. Islam exhorts its people and the pregnant womenfolk to eat fruits and vegetables. A few quotations are given here to prove our point:

Imam Sadiq says:

“Everything adorns some place or other and similarly the vegetables adorn the dining area.”[٢]

One day when Imam Reda sat for his meal he found the vegetable salad missing from the fare. He told his servant, “You know that I don’t eat food without the salads. Please bring the salads for me.” When the salads

[١] Aijaz Khurakia.

[٢] Mustadrak, Vol. ٣, Page ١٤٨.



were brought the Imam commenced his meal.

The Holy Prophet is on record saying,

“Eat quince because it enhances your intelligence, removes worries, and makes the child gentle.”[١]

“Eat quinces and present it’s good fruits to your friends because it improves the eyesight and makes the hearts mellow. The pregnant women too draw lots of benefit from this fruit and their new born children are pretty and healthy.”[٢]

“During the last months of pregnancy the women should eat the dates that their children have forbearing natures.”[٣]

Hazrat Ali says:

“Eat the dates that they are the cure of all pains.”[٤]

There are innumerable traditions of the Prophet and his Infallible Descendants that throw light on the high nutritive value of different fruits and vegetables. Nutritionists can devise ideal diet schedule including appropriate quantities of these fruits and vegetables for various requirements. Consulting a nutritionist or

a specialist medical practitioner will be very useful.

[١] Makarim al-Akhlaq, Vol. ١, Page ١٩٦.

[٢] Mustadrak, Vol. ٢, Page ١١٦.

[٣] Ibid., Page ١١٣

[٤] Ibid., Page ١١٢.



CONSUMING TOBACCO

Pregnant women are advised to abstain from cigarettes and any other type of tobacco based product. Consuming of tobacco is not only deleterious to their personal health but will also have harmful effect on their foetus. In this connection we quote from a paper published in a foreign journal. We invite your attention to what it has to say:

“One study made in the Scandinavian countries on ٦٣٦٣ pregnant women showed that those of the group who smoke have given birth to babies on an average weighing ١٧٠ grams less than the babies of the women who do not smoke. This weight difference was recorded in ٥٠% of pregnant women who habitually smoked. On the other hand the height of the babies of the smoker mothers was recorded to be less than the other group. Similarly the heads and the bladders of the babies of smoker mothers were found to be smaller than those of non-smoker mothers are. The infantile mortality of the babies of the smoker mothers has also been recorded to be six times more than those from the other group. The children of the smoker mothers are likely to be born with physical defects than those of non-smoker mothers. The use of

cigarettes causes deficiency of oxygen in the blood of the foetus thereby causing excessive production of hemoglobin. Congenital heart disease is ٥٠% more prevalent in babies born to cigarette smoking mothers than others. Statistics prove that children of mothers who smoke are poorer at their studies when they go to school than those of the other group. The intensity of this condition depends on the quantum of smoking the mother did during her pregnancy because the tobacco causes reduction in the cells of the brain of the foetus. What has been said above is only a part of the damage that can be caused to the baby of the mother who consumes tobacco. Perhaps there are more serious damages caused by cigarette smoking that have not been identified so far. Therefore, all those mothers who are concerned about their own and their children's health should avoid smoking.”[١]

Dr Jazairi writes:

“Tobacco smoking is harmful for the mother and also for the baby growing in her foetus. Alcoholic beverages too are very dangerous for carrying mothers. In addition to the poisonous effect of the alcohol it destroys the vitamins which are the essential requirement of the mother and her foetus. Such women have the risk of giving birth to babies with disabilities. Smoking and consumption of strongly brewed tea too are very harmful for pregnant women.”[٢]

[١] Maktab Islam, Year ١٥, Issue No. ٦.

[٢] Aijaz Khurakia, Page ٢١٥.

Dr Jalali writes

“Alcohol, marijuana and other drugs get into the blood stream of the parents and move into the embryo thereby affecting the growth of the foetus adversely. Some experts are of the opinion that when pregnant women smoke cigarette, the heart of the foetus is affected and its beats increase abnormally.”^[۱]

[۱] Rushinasi Kudak, Page ۲۲۲.

WHEN PREGNANT WOMEN FALL ILL

When a pregnant woman needs medication for any indisposition, she has to exercise utmost care in the consumption of medicines because the medicines are generally designed for adults and might not be compatible for the delicate foetus and affect it adversely. It cannot be predicted what effect the drugs might have on the foetus. It is a fact there is no medicine, which will not affect the foetus. This is the reason a pregnant mother must exercise maximum restraint in taking medicines. Firstly, she should avoid intake of medicine. But if the condition of the health becomes such that medication becomes absolutely necessary, then she should have access to it on the expert advice of a medical practitioner who can suggest the right medicine and the dosage.

When the illness is risky for the mother and the child, the pregnant mother

should obtain expert medical opinion and treatment, as, otherwise it might cause irreparable damage to the foetus.

One expert writes:

“It is possible that certain viruses and microbes escape from the mother and the father into the indefensible foetus and infect it with the same disease which the parents were suffering from.”



He writes at another place:

“Any change in the dietary habit of the mother, the medicines which she has to take and the diseases with which she gets afflicted will have effect on the embryo. Any diseased condition, which affects the embryo in the initial stages of conception, will progressively enhance. It is therefore imperative that the pregnant women should prevent themselves against diseases. Sometimes diseases may destroy their capacity to conceive in the future.

He also writes:

“There are several non-food materials which, when consumed by a pregnant mother, will adversely effect the development of the foetus. Most of the medicines are for adults and their trials are made only on grownups before they are approved for prescription. The viruses, bacteria and the germs in the body of the mother sometimes affect the foetus too.

Sometimes the foetus starts getting the same symptoms of the disease or

sometimes abnormal growth takes place in the foetus because of the infection.”[١]

[١] Biography Pish az Tawalud, Page ١٨٢.



EFFECT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION OF THE MOTHER ON THE EMBRYO

The experts have been deliberating the fact whether the psychological condition of the mother has any effect on the embryo she is nursing.

Some experts say that if a mother is confronted with excessive fear and unease then the foetus will get affected and there is a strong possibility that the child will be timid and also the tendency of jealousy and malicious nature of the mother will be there in the child. As against this the good nature, humanity, honesty, boldness and affection in the mother will have a salutary effect on the nature of the offspring. These experts are of the opinion that the child in the womb of the mother is in fact a part of her and therefore it will be influenced by the thoughts and psyche of the mother. But there are some geneticists and child psychologists who reject this theory. They feel that it is not necessary that the psychological condition and thoughts of the mother influence the mind of the newborn permanently.

Dr Jalali writes:

“There is no direct contact between the mother and the foetus but it is only

through the umbilicus which does not possess any senses and the closed umbilicus has blood carrying nerves, therefore the earlier opinion



that the psychological condition of the mother influences the mind of the child may not be correct.”[١]

But, the truth is with the intellectual, that it cannot be claimed that the thoughts and psychological condition of the mother indirectly influences the mindset of the child. But it is not right to say that the mother’s thoughts have no direct effect at all on the mind of the child. This point of view is illustrated in the following arguments:

The human mind and spirit are connected to each other. The illness and good health of the human body and the strength of the nerves and physical potential or weakness and even the appetite or lack of it has a bearing on the thinking and morals of the person. The moral personality of an individual and his nature have a bearing on the development of his brain it is possible that the deficiency or absence of food might give rise to the nervousness and amoral thoughts in the brain.

The embryo utilizes the food, which gets synthesized in the womb of the mother and reaches it. As long as the child remains in the mother’s womb it depends on her for its sustenance. The mother’s food habits therefore have a direct bearing on the physical and mental development of the child.

Dr Jalali writes:

“Whatever is beneficial for the mother is also beneficial for the foetus. If the mother’s food is deficient in calcium, this deficiency will affect the

[^] Rowan Shinashi Kudak, Page ١٨٨.



development of the bones and the teeth of the child.”[^]

This is well known that extreme disturbance and restlessness in a person causes indigestion, constipation and affects his body. Excess of sadness or fear reduces the appetite of a person and his digestive system gets impaired. The digestive glands do not function normally.

In the light of the above three points it can be said that although the mother’s thoughts and spiritual condition do not directly transfer to the brain and nerves of the child, it is related to her digestive function which can ultimately affect the child’s physical and spiritual make-up.

The mother’s pangs of anger or uneasiness will affect her general nature and disturb her digestive system. This condition is damaging to the mother’s body as also to the foetus.

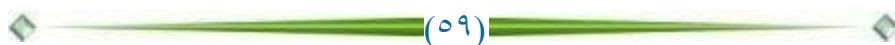
It is possible that the child in such a mother’s womb gets afflicted with such

disease, which might manifest itself at a later stage.

Dr Jalali writes:

“The pangs of excessive uneasiness suffered by the pregnant mother and the unpleasant happenings in her environment are definitely harmful to the development and the nature of the child. Such conditions create problems and give rise to the unwanted glands. Because of this the digestive system is unable to perform its normal function. Perhaps this is the reason that some children have several nervous

[١] Rowan Shinashi Kudak, Page ١٨٨.



ailments. These conditions may also be responsible for the miscarriage of the foetus.”[١]

A pregnant lady physically and mentally at ease will have her foetus in good health. Such peaceful environment is ideal for the perfect development of the child in its mother’s womb. To the contrary the foetus of a jealous, envious, excitable, timid and mentally ill mother will not be properly nurtured and can be affected with several ailments of mind and body.

In this regard:

“The psychological experts have proved that ٢٦% of psychologically ill

children have inherited the condition from their mothers. Therefore if a mother is hale and hearty then her child too shall be the possessor of good physical condition. If the mother cares that her child is healthy then she should take good care of her own physical and mental well being during the pregnancy. The effects of the environment on the development of the child are always pronounced.”

[۱] Ruwan Shinasi Kudak, Page ۲۲۲.



AN ADVICE TO PREGNANT WOMEN

Pregnant women are advised to abstain from lifting heavy materials. They should also avoid very tiring tasks. If a carrying mother tires herself, she is likely to tire the baby too. In such cases there is the danger of miscarriage of the pregnancy.

Traveling during the last months of pregnancy too is not advised. If there is no urgent need of traveling, it is better the carrying mothers do not undertake a journey in that period. However doing light work and restricted movement is not harmful and, in fact, is beneficial for the health of both the mother and the child.

Dr Jalali writes:

“Excessive fatigue in pregnant women gives rise to poisonous substances in the blood. Since this blood is the source of nutrition for the foetus, it can adversely affect the growth of the child.”[۱]

CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

The growing child in the mother's womb requires oxygen although the foetus cannot breathe itself. But it utilizes the oxygen acquired by the mother from the atmosphere. The mother not only consumes oxygen for her own sustenance but also provides it to the foetus. If the mother breathes in a clean and hygienic atmosphere she can ensure her own health and that of the child she is bearing. If the mother's environs are polluted and she is breathing poisonous air, then there will be danger of illness afflicting her and the child. The pregnant women are therefore advised to take particular care of the environment in which they live. They should move in pollution free environment and breathe deeply. The pregnant women should also avoid late nights, which might tire them excessively.

During pregnancy the women should avoid smoking and protect themselves from breathing in any polluted environment. While sleeping they should keep the windows of the bed- room open so that fresh breeze is available to them. It must be noted that deficiency of oxygen might be very harmful to the foetus.

We are repeating the following paragraph from Dr Jalali,

which has also appeared earlier in this book, for your attention:

“Various defects in the body like cleft lips, flat soles of the feet, sunken and small eyes were previously thought to be of genetic reasons. But now it has been found that these defects in the new born children are because of the environmental conditions and particularly the deficiency of oxygen during the pregnancy of the women.”

MISCARRIAGE

There is no objection in Islam to contraception or family planning with the mutual consent of the spouses. If the wife and the husband desire not to have any more issues, they can prevent conception with harmless pills, injections and other contraceptive methods. But obviating birth of already conceived is undesirable in Islam. Islam wants that the progeny of its followers flourish. When the male and female cells have fused to form an embryo, it is the rudiment of a living being and its abortion is forbidden in Islam. Although the embryo is a minuscule object, it has full right to existence. It is an existence, which is fast developing towards becoming a full-fledged human being. This small creature wants its mother to provide congenial environment to grow in and take birth as full-fledged human. If one aborts such an existence, one has committed murder and the act will be liable to punishment of the parents on the Day of Judgement.

The Faith of Islam, which is the guardian of the rights of all, has banned completely the abortion and infanticide.

Ishaq bin Ammar says:

“I submitted to Imam Moosa ibne Ja’far that in case a woman is scared of getting pregnant do you permit her to take medicine which brings about abortion.” The Imam replied, “No! I cannot give such a permission!”



The narrator again said, “What is the decree for the time when the pregnancy is in its initial embryonic stage?”

The Imam replied, “The development of man commences with the formation of the embryo. Allah says in the Quran: On the Day of Judgement the parents will be asked: for what crime you have killed your innocent child? ﴿٨٠﴾:٨-٩”

Abortion of foetus is a very amoral act, which Islam has forbidden. Also, such operations are highly risky for the life and health of the mother. Dr Pak Nagar, addressing a seminar on abortion has said:

“...It has been proved that forcing abortions reduces the expected age of the woman. Scientific research also has proved that abortion upsets the psychological balance of the woman’s mind.”[١]

From ١٩٥١ to ١٩٥٣, according to the statistics of the New York City, ٢٦٠١ women died during abortions. In the next ten years the fatality on this account has risen by ٤٢%. In Chile ٣٩% of female deaths were on account of abortions.

One excuse for having access to forced abortions is poverty. Some parents take

shelter behind their poverty to kill their innocent children.

There is no doubt that lots of families are victims of poverty. It is no doubt very difficult to bring up a family in the midst of poverty. But Islam does not accept the excuse of aborting children because of the unfortunate condition of poverty and penury. Allah says in the Holy

[١] Maktab e Islam, Year ١٣, Issue ٨.



Quran:

“Do not kill your children with fear of poverty. We give you and them the sustenance. Killing children is definitely a big sin. ١٧:٣١”

When the foetus has already formed, the parents should bear the hardship courageously that possibly the child might grow into a great person and bring laurels for the family and the society. Possibly the child may become the cause of the economic well being of the family and they get relief from their poverty.

Other excuses are also made for undergoing abortions like outdoor activities, official responsibilities and already having too many children. But these are not such valid excuses that the Islamic Jurisprudence and common sense permit abortions.

Not only abortion is unlawful in the eyes of Islam but also retribution has been

fixed for this sinful act which differs according to the age of the foetus which has been aborted forcibly.

Imam Sadiq says:

“If the aborted child is in embryo form then the blood money is equal to ۲۰ dinars of gold. If the pregnancy has reached the form of a lump of flesh, the blood money has to be forty dinars of gold. If the pregnancy has advanced to the form of muzga and flesh the blood money has to be sixty gold dinars and if the foetus has formed bones the levy is eighty gold dinars. If the foetus has reached total human form the levy is one hundred gold dinars. If the aborted child is so developed that it has spirit in it, then the deet or



punishment will be one human life.”[۱]

Khanam Afsar al-Malook Aamili has written a beautiful poem on this subject.

Its translation is:

The tiny aborted child appeared in my dream and said:

‘If you meet my mother, ask her, mom! What fault you found in me that you shed my blood unnecessarily!

As a child I was biding my time peacefully, then why the order for my killing?

You have sharpened your fangs and paws, and have sullied your lapel with my

blood!

I was a newly arrived guest with you and had caused no harm to you.

Guests are there to be entertained, not to be killed heartlessly

You were worrying about the expenses for my upkeep that you extinguished my tiny existence!

Mom! I had brought my sustenance with me, but it is a pity you didn't believe in it!

You preferred to keep yourself free to move around, instead of looking after me, and laid the foundation for tyranny!

For children the mother is their hope and with her they are contented!

[١] Wassail al-Shia, Vol. ١٩, Page ١٦٩.



(٦٧)

I wished that I look at your face and pick flowers from your beautiful garden.

I wished to suckle milk from your bosom and thus relieve your sorrows.

I wished that I drank your milk and your voice reached my ears.

I thought that when you saw my smiles you would sit near me on my bed.

I hoped that you would send me to school and give me the lesson of righteousness.

Returning home from school I would make you happy by reciting the nursery rhymes.

I wished that when I am a youth, then you would realize my value.

In your frail old age I would have been your prop and help.

Now I am in the Heaven like a pure spirit and my place is with the Houris.

You should now express repentance that perhaps the Merciful Allah forgives you.

O Afsar! My request to you is to convey my message to all the mothers'



DIFFICULT DELIVERIES

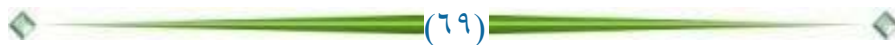
Pregnancy generally lasts for nine months and ten days. The pregnancy period is very sensitive and full of risks because it has a bearing on the future of the growing foetus. The child in the period spends its life within that enclosure over which it has no control and can be exposed to several physical and psychological dangers. The child will not have capabilities of himself confronting and contending with these risks. After completing the nine months in the womb successfully it has to pass through another risky phase which is delivery. The process of delivery is not easy and simple but it is very sensitive and difficult.

The child grows to a size in the nine months that particularly its head at this

stage is much larger than other parts of the body that its delivery from the narrow passage of the womb becomes very difficult. The possibility during delivery is always there that the child's bones get crushed or twisted. There can also be the likelihood of the brain getting damaged due to the pressure during parturition.

One expert writes:

“The process of delivery can possibly cause psychological defects in the child. Psychiatrists are of opinion that the process of delivery of a child will have a significant bearing on its entire life. In their



view delivery is a revolutionary change in the environment and life of the child and deprives it of the security and rest, which it had so far in the foetus. At the time of delivery fear and concern becomes a part of the psyche of the person. The future life of the person is spent imagining unknown thoughts of troubles. The life spent in the foetus was carefree and delivery is the arrival in the travails of the world.”[١]

Dr. Jalali writes:

“When a child arrives in the world, it will be under pressure for a few hours and the most affected will be its head that will be the largest part of the body at birth. If the delivery is not normal then the arrival will be more difficult and besides the risk of the environment, the child has to face the risks of handling with mechanical instruments used during the delivery. In such cases there is

chance of infantile mortality. The illnesses like madness and paralysis in children may also be related to difficult deliveries.”[۲]

Therefore, delivery of children is not a simple process and requires utmost care and skill to ensure safety of the mother and the child. A little carelessness on the part of the handlers might cause great damage to the mother and the child, sometimes resulting in mortality of either or both. But nowadays the facilities of skilled doctors and specialty medicines are in the access of people and the likelihood of harm to the mother or the child is much reduced.

[۱] Biography Pish az Tawallud, Page ۱۶۰.

[۲] Ruwanshinashi Kudak, Page ۱۹۳.



The pregnant ladies are advised that if they have access to a good gynecologist or a nursing home, they should consult them much ahead of the delivery. They must ascertain from the doctor the expected date of delivery and seek admission to the nursing home ahead of the delivery that they get better care than they can at home. The main advantage in such cases is that the doctors and nurses are available at the nursing homes and if there is any emergency it can be attended to without much loss of time. If, while staying at home, a pregnant woman faces an emergency, the delay in reaching her to the doctors might result in danger to the mother and the child.

The other valid reason for sending the pregnant woman to the maternity home

prior to the delivery is that the same sanitary environment and personalized medical attention cannot be provided at her own home.

Another advantage of going to the maternity home is that the chances of the pregnant lady facing unnecessary and unwarranted interference and opinions of the other women from the family will not be there. Generally such opinions are not educated and they may at times be harmful.

The husband too has a big responsibility during the pregnancy and delivery of his wife. Religiously and morally it is his duty that during this delicate and hazardous time he should provide help and courage to the wife and take all the possible steps to ensure safe delivery of the child. Carelessness on the part of the husband may even sometimes result in the loss of the mother and the child or they sustain physical and psychological damage. Such heedless husbands will be



deemed criminal in the eyes of religion and the society and they will be answerable on the Day of Judgement. They will also suffer the pangs of remorse if for reasons of carelessness or miserliness they avoid providing necessary care to the pregnant wives. Sometimes, because of the neglect at the required time the husbands have to incur much more expense to salvage the resultant damage. If the families of the pregnant women do not have access to the maternity homes then they should take the services of the competent midwives who have necessary skills and experience of attending to deliveries.

In this regard the following precautions must be taken:

The temperature of the labor room should be moderate and it should not be too cold. This is important because the pregnant women will be under tremendous pressure and due to the long hours of labor pain they will be indisposed and sweating and there can be likelihood of the babies catching colds and getting exposed to several ailments. If the delivery room becomes colder after the delivery the mother will most likely catch cold. The cold wind is very harmful for the newborn baby because the environment in the mother's womb will be warmer (having the normal human temperature (37.0 degrees Centigrade) and the room temperature will be much less. The body of the baby at the delivery will not have sufficient strength to adjust to the change Such babies are likely to fall ill and their treatment is rather difficult. Mortality rate in such babies is rather high.

It is necessary to prevent the air in the delivery room from becoming poisonous with the smoke of burning kerosene oil or coal. Breathing such polluted air is dangerous for both mothers and children.



It is advisable to maintain privacy in the delivery rooms to the extent possible. Keep unnecessary visitors out of the labor room. Such visitors might cause embarrassment and unease to the pregnant woman and may carry infections when they come from outside. Other women looking at the private parts of a woman is prohibited under Islam. During deliveries the pregnant women will be unable to cover their private parts. Imam Sajjad ordered other women to leave

the labor room when a pregnant woman was delivering lest her private parts are exposed to them.[^١]

A responsible pregnant woman should exercise all care during pregnancy and delivery that she delivers a healthy baby to the society that it becomes a useful member of the community. In the view of Allah too it is the best service that a woman can give and will get its reward. One day the Prophet was speaking on the subject of Jihad. One lady asked, “O, Prophet of Allah! Will the women be deprived of the benefits of Jihad?” The Prophet replied that the woman too gets the benefit of the Jihad that the time from the conception to delivery and feeding of the child till its weaning the woman is like the man who is at the battlefield doing Jihad. If that woman dies during this period she would have achieved martyrdom.[^٢]

[^١] Wassail al-Shia, Vol. ١٠, Page ١١٩.

[^٢] Makarim al-Akhlaq Vol. ١, Page ٢٦٨.



AFTER THE BIRTH

When a child takes birth the air gets into its lungs and it starts breathing. After commencing the act of breathing the baby cries for the first time. This crying is because of the reaction of the air getting into the lungs. If the child doesn't breathe and cry, it is held with its feet up and the head is gently stroked to help it breathe. Then the umbilicus is tied and is severed with a sanitized scissors. After this the child is given a bath with soap and lukewarm water and clothed. For sometime the child does not need feeding. Then drops of warmish water

mixed with sugar are put into the child's mouth.

The newborn will generally be in a state of dreaming. It needs lot of rest because it has undergone external and internal transition. Earlier it was dependent on the mother's nutrition but now it's own digestive system has to start functioning.

During pregnancy the child depended for oxygen on the mother's breathing but after delivery it's own respiratory system has to start functioning. It now takes its own oxygen from the atmosphere and ejects carbon dioxide during breathing. Its internal functioning would have undergone a major change and its external condition and environment is also totally changed. Earlier in the womb of the mother the temperature was 37.0 Degrees Centigrade but now it is in an environment which has transient temperature conditions. During delivery too the



child is subject to lot of pressure which needs mitigation. At this time the child will be like a postoperative patient who has just come out of an operation theatre who, above all, needs lots of rest. It will be like a machine, which has just come out of the shop floor, which needs delicate and careful handling. In this circumstance the best that can be done for the child is to provide him restful environment that it overcomes the hardship faced during the process of delivery.

Dr Jalali writes:

“Tickling the child to laughter, lifting it up repeatedly, changing its garments frequently and showing it to others are not desirable acts which one should refrain from. The child is not a toy and it needs rest and peace. Avoid speaking loudly in its presence and refrain from lifting him up and down in an attempt to soothe him. Hugging and kissing the child too are not good for him.”[1]

The mother too needs lots of rest and strength. During the nine months of pregnancy she would have gone through lots of travails. Especially after delivery she would be very weak as if she has lost most of the blood from her body. At this time the thoughtful husband: should provide to her all possible comforts and with good nutrition try to put her back to normal health. If medical attention and medication is required, then it should be provided without any loss of time. If the husband is negligent at this juncture then the wife will remain dull and weak and the consequences will have to be borne by him too.

[1] Ruwanshinasi Kudak, Page 223.



MOTHER’S MILK—THE BEST NUTRITION

The mother’s milk is the best and complete food for the child. In many ways it can be preferred over the other food products available for them, like: the milk of cow, goat or commercially branded milk foods.

The mother’s milk, on account of its nutrient value, will be ideally suited for the machinery of the child. It is very compatible for the child’s needs because it has been drawing nutrition from the mother for nine months during the pregnancy

and will continue to get the same contents from the milk provided by the mother.

Because the mother's milk is utilized in its natural condition it retains its nutritive value. To the contrary the cows milk has to be boiled before use and many nutrients might get destroyed in the process.

From the point of view of the child's health the mother's milk is most preferable because it is least likely to be contaminated with germs because it is fed to child directly from the bosom. The other milk passes through many utensils and can be infected by germs in the process.



The mother's milk is always consumed fresh, while the other milk might spoil during storage.

There is no likelihood of adulteration of mother's milk but other milks have that risk.

Mother's milk will be free of disease causing germs but other milk has the risk of carrying such organisms.

Mother's milk is the safest food for the newborn and other babies. The children brought up on the mother's milk are healthier as compared to those who are fed on milk from other sources. Infant mortality in children fed on mother's milk is also found lesser than in the case of the other group.

There is another advantage in the mother feeding the child on her own milk is

that her periods are delayed and the chances of her getting pregnant again are postponed to that extent.

Islam too stresses the importance of the mother's milk for the child and terms it the natural right of the child to be fed on it.

Hazrat Ali says:

“No other milk is as good as the mother's milk for the child.”[1]

The mother's milk is of such prime importance in the eyes of Islam that when she feeds her child on it, she is earning rewards for the Hereafter.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

[1] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. 2, Page 172.



“As many times as a mother suckles her milk to the child, so many times Allah's reward to her will be equivalent to freeing a slave from the tribe of Ismail. When she reached the weaning stage, an Angel would put his hand on the arm of the mother and say, 'start your life afresh that your past sins have been pardoned!'”[1]

At a seminar in the University of Shiraz the experts agreed, to the last person, that any other food or combination of vitamins cannot be a substitute of the

mother's milk for the newborn child.

Dr Simeen Wakifi says:

“It is a matter of concern that lots of mothers, blindly following the practice of the Western women, forcing early weaning on their children, give them dehydrated milk powders and other synthetic baby foods. This practice is against the nutritional requirement of the child and is no substitute for the mother's own milk which is superior in every respect.”[٢]

Another expert writes:

“The mother's milk is a unique food which nature has provided for the babies and no other feed is substitute for that. Therefore every effort should be made to see that the mother is able to feed the baby on her own milk. If the mother is running dry, she should take extra care of her own nutrition to revive lactation.”[٣]

[١] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. ١٥, Page ١٧٥.

[٢] Behdasht Jismi Rawafi Kudak, Page ٦٢.

[٣] Aijaz Khurakia, ٢٥٨.

The responsible and informed mothers who are interested in the welfare of their children don't deprive them of the bounty that Allah has provided to them. These women know the effect of the milk on the body and mind of the growing

child. Therefore they sacrifice their own comfort for the health and welfare of the child. Only such women deserve to be called mothers and not those ignorant and selfish women who, despite proper lactation, render themselves dry and bring up the children on dried milk powder.

The women who do not feed their babies on their own milk might become victims of several physical and psychological ailments. The cancer of the breast is one serious ailment that is prevalent in such women.

It is appropriate here to draw the attention of the mothers who feed babies on their own milk to take special care of their personal diet. The nutrition that the mother takes has a direct bearing on the nutritive value of the milk she produces. The mother's food should be a balanced combination of different fruits, vegetables and grains.

Fluid and succulent foods are useful. The mothers should not think that only expensive food could be good food. They can judiciously plan a balanced food that can be nutritious and not expensive at the same time. They can refer to good books on diet planning for this purpose. One such books observes:

“Expert dieticians advise that lactating mothers should consume a combination of food products available to them. In particular they should include beans, grams, milk, fresh butter, coconut, olives,



walnuts, almonds, sweet and succulent fruits like water melon, gurma or musk

melon, and pears etc.”[¹]

Imam Sadiq says:

“If you have engaged a Jewish or Christian woman to foster feed your child then ask her to abstain from consuming pork and alcoholic beverages.”[²]

If the feeding mother falls ill and has to take medication, she must keep the matter in mind that her own milk might get the effect of the medicines and harm the child who feeds on it. The mother should not indulge in using medicines without consulting a competent medical doctor.

[¹] Aijaz Khurakia, Page ۲۵۱ to ۲۵۶.

[²] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۲۲۴.



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SUPPLEMENT THE MOTHER’S MILK

The principal food of the baby is no doubt the mother’s milk but it is better to supplement judiciously with a little fish oil and fruit extracts. This will ensure that the feed is complete and the child grows in a better way. As the child grows its requirement of food increases. It reaches a stage when the mother’s milk becomes insufficient for the child. At this stage other food materials are included in the child’s diet to provide optimum level of nutrition. After four months of delivery, or latest by six months, the child must be trained to eat other foods. It is important that the baby’s feed is soft and succulent. Juices of different fruit can be ideal at this stage. Water strained after boiling vegetables in it can be a good source of nutrients for the child. Soups are good for the

growth of the child. When the child starts setting teeth the diet can have boiled potatoes, boiled eggs, biscuits, fresh cheese, bread, butter and fresh fruits. There should be variety in the diet of a child, but care has to be taken that it is not over fed.



WEANING FROM MOTHER'S MILK

There are certain times when a child is deprived of the mother's milk.

The time when the mother is affected with some infectious disease.

When the mother is suffering from a serious health condition like a heart attack and the doctors advised not to breast- feed the baby.

When the mother is mentally ill or suffers from epilepsy.

When the mother is suffering from anaemia and feeding the baby on her own milk may be harmful to both.

When the mother is addicted to drugs and alcoholic beverages because her milk poisoned by these materials will harm the baby.

In such conditions when there is the danger of infecting the baby or transferring poisonous matter through the milk, it is better to avoid feeding on the mother's milk. When the breast-feeding mother becomes pregnant, she should wean the child in stages and simultaneously introduce other foods in the diet



THE SCHEDULE OF BREAST FEEDING

The experts have suggested two methods for feeding of the babies. Some are of opinion that for feeding the child well thought out schedules have to be devised and the feeding should be done implicitly at those predetermined intervals. Between two feedings some have prescribed a delay of three hours and some suggest a gap of four hours. In the interim period it is recommended to abstain from feeding the baby.

Some other experts do not approve of this type of scheduling. And they believe in feeding the baby more frequently on the basis of the indication of the appetite by the baby. They say that whenever the baby shows the desire for food, it must be fed.

Some other nutritionists feel that the latter method of feeding is more suitable as they believe that the baby must get the milk whenever it shows signs of hunger. Both the methods, however, have their own pros and cons as illustrated here:

Hunger or thirst of a child cannot be determined positively because it cannot express its need clearly. In the initial stage of feeding it will be drinking the milk for sating its appetite and then it continues to suckle the breasts. In such situations the child cries not so much with hunger as with the desire to suckle the mother's



breast. The mother too gives her milk to the child to stop his crying. Often the child cries without any appetite for food but the mother gives it the milk

thinking that it is hungry...The child therefore drinks the mother's milk while it has the appetite and sometimes when it doesn't. It is a well-established fact that taking of food at erratic intervals is not good for the health of the children as it is for the adults this habit might upset the digestive system of the child. . .

This is why unplanned feeding of babies is fraught with risk of illness for them.

Hazrat Ali says:

“Excessive eating and eating more thereafter should be avoided. Those who eat more are more likely to fall ill.”[¹]

The child who drinks milk without any controlled schedule will have a disorganized existence from the very beginning and grow into a disorderly adult.

It is common practice that whenever a baby cries, the mother's breast is given to it without trying to determine the cause of the crying. Such children get into the habit of skulking all the time. They think that crying and shouting is the only way to get things done according to their wishes. They can never show patience and courage in doing anything. They want to achieve their end immediately even if they have to cry profusely for the purpose. They do not feel ashamed at playing such shameful antics.

[¹] Mustadrak, Vol. 3, Page 12.

The parents and other members of the families are always restless because of such children.

Dr Jalali writes about such children:

“If the feeding schedule of a child is fixed in consultation with an expert paediatrician then it will get used to the timings and the mothers will understand when the child is hungry and when its appetite is sated.

Secondly, people do their daily tasks as a force of habit. Similarly feeding of the child too becomes a habit and is done almost automatically at the scheduled timings.”[١]

Russell says:

“These days an ordinary mother knows the norms of bringing up children. She knows that it is important to feed the baby at predetermined intervals and not whenever it cries for some reason or the other. She knows that such regime is followed to keep the digestive system of the baby in good trim...

When the children see that the parents are acceding to their cries, it becomes their second habit and keeps crying at the slightest excuse. It also happens that the repeated episodes of crying over a long period earn them the anger of their parents. When the children realize this, they become morose and the world looks cold, dry and bleak to them.”[٢]

[١] Ruwan Shinasi Kudak, Page ٢٢٤.

[٢] Dar Tarbiat, Page ٧٨.

Attention must be paid to a few points:

(۱) For all the children the same program of feeding could not be possibly adopted. Every child will have its own digestive and nutritive requirements. And also the food requirements of any child are very dynamic. The digestive system of the new-born will be delicately tiny for the first forty to fifty days from birth. Therefore it can retain very small quantity of milk. It will be able to take a very small quantity of milk at a time. But it becomes hungry very soon thereafter. During this period the feeding times have to be of shorter intervals, say, every hour and a half to two hours. But as the children grow the gap between the feeds have to be increased, say, a feed every three to four hours or even more.

(۲) All the children will not be of the same physical condition and digestive capacity. Therefore an individual feeding program has to be developed for every individual child. Some children become hungry quite soon after a feed and others take more time for the same. Careful mothers are very observant and they take care to design an ideal schedule of feeding for their children in consultation with experts.

(۳) Whenever milk is given to the baby, care has to be taken that it is fully satisfied with the feed. But mothers must carefully observe that the newborn babies fall asleep while feeding on their breasts. In such instances they may not be fully fed and the mother has to gently strike the back of the



child that it wakes up and completes its feed.

(۴) When the complete program of feeding the child is prepared it must be put to practice very carefully. The gaps between the feeds must be strictly adhered to. In between two scheduled feeds the child must not be given the milk even if it cries. This task needs patience and firmness on the part of the mother to ensure that the child gets used to the regime. Then the child will awake automatically at the scheduled time to receive its feed. Patience and forbearance will become a part of the nature of such children.

(۵) The feeding schedule of the children must be prepared in such a way that from midnight to dawn there is no need of feeding it. When the child takes to this habit, both the mother and the child will have a good night's rest.

(٦) The breasts must be cleaned with a little cotton wool after every feed. This is essential for the health and hygiene and will also prevent the chance of injury to the breast.

(٧) When a child suckles the mother's milk some air too enters its digestive tract and makes it uneasy. Therefore, after every feed the child has to be raised a little and its back is gently tapped to see that the air comes out of its digestive system.

(٨) The suckling baby should be fed from both the breasts of the mother. This should be done to avoid drying of the milk, which can result in the pain of the breast. One lady says: Imam Sadiq told me: Do not feed your child only



from one of your breasts to ensure that it gets complete food.[١]

(٩) The lactating mothers should take care that they do not perform very tiring physical tasks and avoid spells of anger. This is advised because such events can affect their capacity to produce milk, which ultimately is bad for the child.



IF THE MOTHER IS DEFICIENT IN MILK

If the mother is unable to satisfy the appetite of the baby, she has no right to deprive the baby of her own milk. She must breast feed the baby to the extent of the milk available with her and supplement it with other milk and nutrition. But if the mother

Is totally dry, which condition is quite rare, she can wean the child and turn to the cow's milk, which is qualitatively very similar to the mother's milk. When shifting to the cow's milk the following have to be borne in mind:

The cow's milk is generally denser and heavier than the mother's milk. Therefore it should be diluted with some boiled water before feeding to the child so that it comes closer to the density of the mother's milk. The milk should also be sweetened with a little sugar.

The cow's milk should be boiled for fifteen minutes to ensure that any germs present there are destroyed.

The milk, while feeding to the baby, should neither be too hot nor very cold. The temperature of the milk to be ideally close to the temperature of the mother's milk.

Every time the child is given milk, ensure that the feeding bottle is properly washed and free from contamination to prevent the child from getting infected.

Efforts have to be made to ensure that right type of milk is used for feeding.

If the mother wishes to use dried milk powders for feeding the child then it is necessary to consult a paediatrician to get the recommendation for the baby food suitable for the child. There are several products available in the market to suit specific requirements of children of varying ages and physical condition and only an expert can decide on the product suitable for any particular child.

If the milk recommended by the doctor is not found suitable, then the mother should refer back to the doctor and get a fresh recommendation.

WEANING THE CHILD

The baby should ideally be on the mother's milk for a period of two years. Every child has a right to be on breast-feeding for two years, which Allah has granted to it. Allah says in the Quran:

“Mothers should feed their milk to the children for two years. ۲:۲۳۳”

If the mother has to wean the child earlier than two years, she is permitted to do it but not earlier than twenty-one months of feeding.

Imam Sadiq says:

“The period of the mother feeding the child should be a minimum of twenty one months. If someone feeds the child for a lesser period, it will be causing a hardship to the child.”[۱]

In the two years of feeding by the mother, the child slowly gets used to consuming other types of food. In this period the mother can taper down the breast-feeding and substitute it with other nutritive foods. After the period of breast-feeding is over the child is weaned.. Now it will get ready to have other type of nutrition. Careful and informed mothers know the type of foods on which their children can be fed. These foods have to suit the nature

[¹] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. ١٥, Page ١٧٧.



of the child and should have good nutritive value.

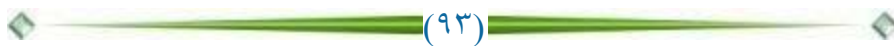
Weaning the child from the breast is however not an easy task. For some days it will cry and crave for the breast-feeding. At this juncture the mother has to exercise a lot of patience and tact. The mothers sometimes try to apply some bitter material on their nipples or color the breasts black that the child develops an aversion for feeding on it. But care has to be taken not to scare the child. The child should not get a fear complex during weaning that it can have wrong effect on its health and psychology.



DAUGHTER OR SON

No sooner a woman becomes pregnant the speculation commences whether she

will have a male or a female issue. She offers prayers for having a son. When her relatives come visiting her they say that the glow on her face indicates that she would get a son. Her adversaries say that her eyes indicate she is carrying a girl. The husband too wishes for a son. He occasionally expresses this desire to her. Prior to delivery the mind of every relative around in the maternity home wonders whether she will give birth to a boy or a girl. When they come to know that the new arrival is a girl, sudden quiet descends on the gathering. But if it is a boy there will be instant shouts of joy. When the father hears of the birth of a boy, he becomes overjoyed. He will run to fetch sweets and fruits for the visitors. He issues instructions for taking good care of the child lest he caught cold. He starts pampering his wife and distributes gifts to the midwife and the attendants. But, if the new arrival were a girl, his mien would drop. He would go and sit in a corner. He starts cursing his ill luck He thus makes his existence bitter. He neglects his convalescent wife and sometimes even talks of divorcing her. This is the state of affairs of our degenerate society. But there are always exceptions. There are parents who receive a daughter with open arms and affection as they do the son. But such families are in a minority...



Dear father and respected mother:

What difference it makes if you have a son or a daughter? Is a daughter less human than a son? Doesn't a daughter have the capacity to grow and progress? Can't she become a useful and valuable person? Is the daughter not your offspring? What special advantage the parents draw from a son that the daughter cannot provide them? If the daughter was not important in the eyes of

Allah, then the progeny of the Holy Prophet would not have come through his daughter Fatima Zahra.! If you bring up the daughter properly she will not be any less than a son for you. If you see the pages of history you will find references of women who were more capable than thousands of men. Why this ignoble thinking in our society which has reduced the status of our women. There is need to carry on jihad against this evil. There is need to remove the thought of any difference between a son and a daughter. A daughter can be as useful and efficient a person as a son. You must receive the news of the birth of a healthy child, be it a son or a daughter, with equal happiness. You must thank God that it is a gift from Him that has come to you. It is a part of your existence that has come to the world.

The Prophet and his Holy Descendants always took this attitude towards the life.

Whenever the Imam Sajjad received the news of the birth of a child he never enquired if it was a son or a daughter. But he used to offer a prayer to Allah when he used to be informed that the newborn was hale and hearty.[١٧]

[١] Wassail, Vol. ١٥, Page ١٤٣.

One day the Holy Prophet was busy talking to his companions when a person reached his presence and informed that Allah has given to him a daughter. He was joyed and offered his thanks to Allah. But when he saw the faces of his

companions he found them crestfallen. He was upset with them and said,

“What has happened to you? Allah has given to me a flower whose fragrance I smell. Allah has ensured sustenance for her too as He would for a son!”[١٨]

Allah has deplored the discrimination between the sons and daughters thus:

“When they get tidings of a daughter their faces turn dark with shame; anger pervades them and they hide their faces from others. ١٦:٥٨-٥٩”

[١] Wassail as-Shia.



(٩٥)

NAMING THE CHILD

One of the prime responsibilities of the parents is the selection of a name for the new-born child. They should not treat this important thing as a triviality. Individuals and families are recognized with their names. If the name is affable the person will be well received by the people. Persons with unpleasant sounding names will not get good attention from others and sometimes even they might ridicule them. The persons who are given improper names will be victims of inferiority complex. Therefore Islam requires the parents to exercise care in selecting good names for their children.

The Holy Prophet has said:

“It is the responsibility of every father to choose a good name for his child.”[١]

The Prophet also said:

“The children have three rights over their fathers. The first is that they are given good names. Secondly, they are provided good education; and lastly, they help them to select good spouses.”[۲]

Imam Moosa Kazim said:

“The first good that a father does to his child is that

[۱] Mustadrak, Vol. ۲, Page ۶۱۸.

[۲] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۱۰۴, Page ۹۲.



he selects a worthy name for him.”[۱]

On the other hand the name of a person has a lot of social significance too. It is his name, which gets recognition to a person that he belongs to a respectable family. If the parents have high regard for a well-known poet, they may name their child after him. If the parents are fond of high learning they may select the name of a reputed scholar. The highly religious parents name their children after the prophets, the Imams and other religious personalities. If the parents desire their children to struggle in the cause of the faith, they name them after Mohammed, Ali, Hasan, Hussain, Abul Fazl, Abbas, Hamza, Ja'far, Abu Dhar, Ammar, Saeed etc.

If the parents are enamored of any sport they like to name their children after renowned players of that sport. Similarly if the parents appreciate the art of any musician, they may prefer to name their child after that person.

When the nature of the parents is tyrannical, they take pride in naming the child after historical personalities like Alexander, Changez, Timor etc. It is noticed that while naming the child the parents generally associate themselves with certain groups and people of the past this will have a definite impact on the nature and thinking of the child when he grows up.

The Holy Prophet has said:

“Keep good names, because on the Day of Judgement you will be called by these names only. It will be

[١] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. ١٥, Page ١٢٢.



proclaimed, ‘so-and-so son of so-and-so! Rise and get associated with your light! O, So-and-so, son of so-and-so! Arise that there is no light for you that can guide you!’”[١]

One person said to Imam Ja'far Sadiq, “We name our children after your name and the names of your revered ancestors. Is this beneficial for us.” The Imam replies, “Yes! By Allah! Is faith anything else than love for the pious and hate

towards the profane!”

For the propagation of their beliefs people derive benefit from every opportunity to project the names of the important personalities. They go to the extent of naming the towns, streets and other landmarks after important personalities. A responsible and devoted Muslim too takes every opportunity to perpetuate the names of the great personalities of Islam and one of such acts is to name his children after them.

Yes! Hasan, Hussain, Abul Fazl, Ali Akbar, Hur, Qasim, Hamza, Ja'far, Abuzar, Ammar are amongst the names which enliven the spirit to remember the valiant acts of the great persons and encourage the coming generations to groom themselves on those models. When a person is named after the Holy Prophets like Ibrahim, Moosa, Issa or Mohammed he is bound to have a feeling that he must try to be as righteous a person as he can. When a person is named after the friends and devotees of the Holy Ahl al-Bait like Abuzar, Meesum and Ammar he will realize the significance of the deeds of those great men. An intelligent Muslim will not give the names of tyrants and

[¹] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. ۱۰, Page ۱۲۳.

enemies of Islam to his children.

Imam Mohammed Baqir says:

“Beware of the Satan! When he hears that someone is called as Mohammed and Ali, he melts in such a way as the lead melts and when he hears that someone is named after one of our enemies he is overwhelmed with happiness.”[¹]

The Prophet of Islam said:

“Whoever gets four sons, and he has not named even one after me has been cruel on me.”[²]

Imam Mohammed Baqir said:

“The peerless names are the names of the Prophets.”

The Holy Prophet attached so much importance to names that if he did not like the name of any companion or a place, he would immediately change the name. He changed the name of Abd al-Shams to Abd al-Wahab. He named Abd al-Uza (the slave of Uza the idol) to Abd Allah. Abd al-Haarid (the tiger) to Abd ar-Rehman and Abd al-Kaaba to Abd Allah.

[¹] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. 4, Page 127.

[²] Ibid., Page 127.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

The dress of the child should be so designed that it suits the weather and the climate of the environment in which it is living. The dress should be such that

the child should neither sweat during warm weather nor should it shiver during winter. Soft and simple cottons are ideal for the child. The clothes should not be tight fitting which obstruct the movements of the child. Changing tight fitting garments is inconvenient for the child and the mother finds it difficult putting them on or removing them. It is a practice among people that they pack the child in tight clothes that its limbs do not move. Definitely, this is not a good practice and is harmful for the child. Doing this the freedom of the tiny baby is badly curbed. Such practice does hamper the normal growth of the child.

One author from the West writes:

“No sooner the child is delivered from the mother’s womb, it wants to move its limbs and enjoy its freedom. This is when many mothers confine them to tight clothes. They first stretch the limbs of the babies on the ground, wrap them with many cloths and tie a belt around them that they are unable to move. Thus the growth of the children, which has to be dynamic at this stage, slows down very much and they are stunted. The countries where this uncivilized practice is not prevalent, the children have their



normal growth and the people are generally robust, healthy and strong. To the contrary the areas where babies are tied up after birth there come about many deformities like lameness, dwarfing etc. Can one imagine the impact of such upbringing on the mind and soul of the children? The first thought the child gets is of being a captive because it is not able to move freely. The condition of the child will be worse than that of a prisoner. Such children become irate and start

crying and shouting. Imagine, if your limbs too are tied up, would you not cry and shout!”

The child too is a human being. It will have feelings and sensations. It also wishes to have freedom and comfort. When its freedom is curbed by tying it up tightly it will naturally feel the pain. But it cannot defend itself and the only reaction it can show is that it starts crying. This creates pressure in the child’s mind and in stages makes him excitable, peevish and short tempered. The child’s dress should always be kept clean. Whenever it wets the clothes, they must be immediately changed. The child’s feet must be washed at intervals and the body given massage with olive oil so that it doesn’t develop a dry skin. After a few wettings, the child should be given a bath. This way the child can be prevented from many ailments. Such a child will also appear clean, tidy and attractive to the eyes of the beholders.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Islam is the faith of purity. You must try to be pure and clean because only the clean can enter the



Heaven.”[۱]

The Holy Prophet has also said:

“Clean the children from oily dirt because the Satan smells them and they get

scary dreams and the Angels get agitated.”[٢]

Circumcision of the male child is a mandatory Islamic custom. This is very important for the health and hygiene of the child. This operation will prevent the child against the possible infection of the male genital organ. The circumcision can be postponed till the child grows up, but it is better to perform it within the first few days of the birth. Islam prescribes that the circumcision should be done on the seventh day of the birth of a male child.

Imam Ja’far e Sadiq says:

“Do the circumcision of your child on the seventh day of his birth. This is best for him. It is also beneficial for his proper growth and upbringing. Certainly, the earth abhors the urine of the person who has not been circumcised.”[٣]

The Holy Prophet says:

“The new born must be circumcised on the seventh day of its birth that he gets healthy growth and upbringing.”[٤]

Tonsuring the baby on the seventh day is prescribed in

[١] Majma al-Zawaid, Vol. ٥, Page ١٣٢.

[٢] Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١٠٤, Page ٩٥.

[٣] Wassail as-Shia, Vol. ١٥, Page ١٧١.

[٤] Ibid., Page ١٧٥.

Islam. An equivalent of the weight of the tonsured hair in gold or silver has to be given in charity. On the same day as aqeeqa a fat tailed ram (dumba) is butchered and the meat distributed to the poor and needy. They can also be invited to partake of it in a feast. The aqeeqa is a good charity and will avert any evil in store for the child.

The newborn is very delicate. It needs all the care and attention of the parents. The foundation of health and happiness, or otherwise, will be laid in early childhood. The responsibility for this is on the shoulders of the parents. The parents, who are the cause of the child coming to the world, bear the responsibility to strive and bring it up as a robust, healthy human being. If the parents neglect this duty, they will be answerable for the consequences. The child is always surrounded with the possibility of several illnesses. It can be prevented from them with good care. The ailments, which can affect the children, are infantile paralysis, boils on the body, measles, diphtheria, convulsions, kalazar etc. Preventive vaccinations against such ailments are given to the babies. Generally paediatric hospitals have facilities of giving free preventive vaccinations to children against these diseases. The parents have no excuse to neglect their duty of getting timely preventive care for the children. If any disease afflicts the child because of their carelessness, they will be answerable to Allah and their conscience too will ever curse them. It must be understood that it is the responsibility of the parents that they take good care of the health and well-being of their children that they grow into fit humans.

MOVEMENT

During the first few weeks after the birth, the child sleeps most of the time. Approximately a newborn sleeps for about 20 hours in a full day, but progressively the duration of waking hours increases. The need for total rest and sleep for a baby cannot be over stressed. Too much disturbance and noise makes the child restless and fidgety. The child prefers a peaceful environment so that it can sleep comfortably. Too much hugging, kissing and shifting from the arms of one person to another and bringing in too many visitors to see the baby will upset its tranquility. Noisy environment and blaring sounds of television and radio might affect the delicate nerves of the child. The sound sleep of the child should not be disturbed by careless behavior. It should not be moved around unnecessarily. If this practice is continued, over a period of time, the child will become short-tempered, excitable and peevish.

The newly born baby dislikes noisy surroundings and getting moved around. Care has to be exercised to see that its environment is kept noise free and the child is moved around only when it is absolutely necessary. The child prefers to be on the mother's lap or in its cradle, delicately swung, which makes it feel comfortable. With the motion of the cradle the child feels that some caring person is around. If there is total quiet and there is no



movement the child feels lonely. This is more so because the mother's womb is a cradle in which the child keeps moving and when it arrives in the world, it

wants to move too. The mother's sweet lullabies too comfort the baby.

The child's first year in the world is the period for the exercise of its body and limbs. The child likes movement for which it throws around the limbs. For this purpose the garments of the baby have to be loose fitting and of soft fabric. Tying up a child in many layers of clothing will impede its free movement and will have ill effect on its nerves. Such children have no other alternative than crying which will be the precursor of rebellious and angry nature.