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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.¹

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 mothers 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."²

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

Imam as-Sadiq says in a tradition: "Whatever a pregnant mother eats or drinks, the foetus draws its sustenance from that."³

1. Aijaz e khurakiah, p.220

2. Biography Before Delivery, p. 182

3. Bihar al-anwar, v 6, p. 342

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