

Chapter 29: Religious Upbringing of the New Born

It is a fact that the new born children are unable to comprehend the meaning of what is told to them but they definitely are able to identify the surroundings and the faces around them. They do hear the sounds and their senses and the minds take note of them. Therefore it is not correct to say that the newborn babies don't take any impression from what they see and what they hear in early childhood.

Although the new born are unable to understand the meaning of the talk going on around them, the sounds of the words are registered on their minds and in stages they start to understand the meanings and they become a part of their vocabulary. Even amongst adults it is noted that the words which impress the mind most are retained in the memory. The adults recognize well-known persons easier than casual or occasional acquaintances.

Similarly the new born baby too, living in a spiritual environment, hearing the recitation of the Holy Book, the word of Allah coming to their ears and having seen the parents offering prayers in their presence will develop into religiously upright persons. On the other hand the new born babies who are surrounded by irreligious persons, hear the sounds of uncivil and abusive language, are exposed to amoral music and songs, will no doubt grow up to be persons similar to those in whose company they are growing up.

Intelligent and thoughtful parents will not waste any opportunity of training their children. They go to the extent that they take care to see that the children get to hear only good sounds and see good things.

The prophet of Islam too has given his view on this important aspect of training of the children. He has said:

"No sooner the child is born, recite the *adhan* (the Call for Prayer) in the right ear and the *iqamah* (the Call to rise for offering the Prayer) in the left."

'Ali narrates from the Holy Prophet:

"When a child is born in any family, the *adhan* should be recited in the child's right ear and the *iqamah* in

the left ear that the child is protected from the evil of the Satan. He (The Prophet) gave the same instruction at the birth of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. In addition he asked for recitation of ayat al Kursi, the final verses of Hashr, al Ikhlas, al Nas, and al Falaq to reach the child's ears"¹

In some traditions it is narrated:

"The Holy Prophet himself recited the *adhan* and the *iqamah* in the ears of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn at their birth."

Yes. The Holy Prophet was aware that a child is not able to comprehend the meanings of *adhan* and *iqamah* recited into its ears, but the impact of the words which will be there on the mind of the new-born was not over looked. The Prophet was stressing on the point that these pious words would have salutary effect on the mind and spirit of the new arrival.

Perhaps, the Holy Prophet was intending to instruct the parents about the proper upbringing of their children, that they commence their task right from the birth of the child. When a thoughtful parent recites the *adhan* in his child's ear, then he is proclaiming that he is attaching his child to the group of worshippers of Allah.

The effects the child takes in its early days are not related to the sense of hearing only. But, it can be said that whatever exposure the child's other senses get will impact its mind and memory. For example, if a child witnesses any amoral act, although it may not understand the purport of the act, it will definitely have effect on its psyche.

This is the reason the Holy Prophet has said:

"If the child in the cradle is seeing, the man should refrain from copulating with his wife." ²

1. Mustadrak al-wasail, v2, p. 619

2. Mustadrak al-wasail, v 2, p. 546

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