

## ***How to create a new generation healthy in both – body and spirit - according to the example of the ancient Greek philosophy.***

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We now know that each stage of our lives has an effect on those which follow. Psychiatrists have demonstrated this, and we have all noticed it in our own lives or in the lives of those close to us.

This obvious fact is the result of a long process of development.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, developments in the psychology of deep-rooted behaviour revealed the importance of the emotional experiences of early childhood and their repercussions on the way an individual behaves.

For example if a psychological block occurs during this sensitive period, the resulting suffering influences a person all his life.

On the other hand, if a young child is given enough love, and is acknowledged to be a human being with an inherent value, if his development is accompanied by the necessary gradual move towards independence, then this child has every opportunity of becoming a well-balanced adolescent and adult, who is serene, happy and has confidence in himself, in others and in life. If he is free to live, and to express his true essence, then he will become a stable, open and creative person.

During the 1970s new advances were made in our understanding of life, when obstetricians such as Frederic Leboyer and Michel Odent, and psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, such as Thomas Verny, Janus, Kafkalidis and many others all over the World made us aware that the great journey of birth and the quality of welcome afforded to the new-born infant and to the embryo leave profound traces in the latter's psyche. They believe that 90% of our fears have already been established in us at the time of our birth and of our intra-uterine life, thus largely determining our behaviour as a child, an adolescent and an adult.

This recent explosion of studies is suggesting that the quality of prenatal environment determines to a great extent health later on in life.

Scientific research of the last 30-50-years (coming directly out of laboratories in America, Canada, England, France, Sweden, German, Austria and Greece), utilizing a new medical technology, verifies the discovery that the unborn child is feeling,

remembering, reacting, aware being. What happens to him in the nine months between conception and birth moulds and shapes his health, personality, character, drives and ambitions in very important ways.

The foetus can see, hear, experience, taste and even learn '*in utero*'. Most importantly, he can feel especially the love and acceptance or the rejection of his mother and his father, including indifference or negativity, or the ambivalent feelings of them towards him. Investigators believe that something like consciousness exists from the first moments of conception.

The embryo's memory is now known. When someone asked maestro Boris Brott how he became interested in music, he answered this:

*'You know this may sound strange, but music has been a part of me since before birth'. Perplexed, the interviewer asked him to explain. 'Well', said Brott, 'as a young man I was mystified by this unusual ability I had to play certain pieces sight unseen. I'd be conducting a score for the first time and, suddenly, the cello line would jump out at me; I'd know the flow of the piece even before I turned the page of the score. One day, I mentioned this to my mother who is a professional cellist. When she heard what the pieces were, the mystery quickly solved itself. All the scores I knew sight unseen were ones she had played while she was pregnant with me...'*

Memory traces do begin forming in the foetal brain very early... (*'The Secret Life of the Unborn Child'* ; by Thomas Verny) ...

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At no other time in its existence does the human being experience a comparable intensity of development to that of the prenatal period: to start as a cell and, in just a few months become a complete being, or virtually complete, possessing astonishing abilities, indelible acquisitions, is incredible.

Therefore, whilst recognizing the importance of the child's education – especially in the first years of life - and without denying the efficacy of self-education by the adult who takes charge of his own development by working on himself, we can state that neither the education of the young child, nor the self-education of the adult will ever have the fundamental impact of prenatal education.

*The new-born baby has already 9 months which have largely set the bases of the future being.*

A corollary to this discovery is that what a child feels and perceives begins shaping his attitudes and expectations about himself. Whether he ultimately sees himself, and hence acts, as a happy or sad, aggressive or meek, secure or anxiety-ridden person depends, in part, on the messages he gets about himself in the womb.

The chief source of those shaping messages is the child's mother. Chronic anxiety or a wrenching ambivalence about motherhood can leave a deep scar on an unborn child's health and personality. On the other hand, such life-enhancing emotions as joy, elation and anticipation can contribute significantly to the physical and emotional development of a healthy child.

This knowledge deepens and enriches the meaning and importance of being a parent, especially in the area of mothering. In fact, the single most gratifying aspect of our new knowledge is what it reveals about the pregnant woman and her role in shaping and balding her unborn child's personality. Her tools are her thoughts and feelings and with them she has the opportunity to create a human being favoured with more advantages than previously thought possible. Parents can actively contribute to his happiness and well-being and not just 'in utero', nor in the years immediately following birth, but *for the rest of his life*, (Dr. Th. Verny).

We now have a way of improving an entire generation's chances of entering life free of corrosive mental and emotional disorders. Why maternal emotions etch themselves so deeply on his psyche and why their tug remains so powerful later in life? Major personality characteristics seldom change. If optimism is engraved on the mind of an unborn child, optimism will accompany him forever. (*The secret life of the unborn child* by Dr. Th. Verny).

Maternal diet, drinking, but also the mother's emotions and thoughts play a role and have an effect upon the unborn child directly because there is a constant flow and interchange of currents and forces between the mother and the baby in the womb. The child has nothing of its own, it receives everything from its mother. This is why she must be fully aware of what she is doing and make sure that she gives it only the most luminous and the purest possible materials.

No educator, no doctor, will ever change the innate nature of a child. You can give him a little superficial varnish, but that is all. Any attempt to improve his character really boils down to a sort of 'breaking in'. If someone is born-criminal or a born-saint, no one will ever change him. Superficially, perhaps, and for a brief while he can be influenced but fundamentally he will always be the same (*'Education begins before birth'* by O. M. Aivanhov).

More than a thousand years ago, the Chinese founded prenatal clinics where expectant mothers spent their pregnancy in an atmosphere of serenity and beauty.

The whole period of pregnancy should be spent in a beautiful poetic atmosphere, with walks and admiration of beautiful nature, and with music (Mozart, Vivaldi, etc.). Expectant mothers, with the fathers could sing to their child, love him, stroke the womb (which he can feel), speak to him and pray for him. They should also imagine and visualize him as an adult, expressing human values and virtues as love, wisdom, justice, peace and truth.

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This knowledge of the importance of prenatal life and the necessity of a prenatal education, which science just now has discovered, was well-known in the ancient and modern Greek philosophy and tradition.

Pythagore, Plato, Ploutarch, Empedocles, Socrates always taught that the education begins before the birth, even before the conception of the child.

*'Since when should we start educating our child?*

*Since when should we care about his health, his good character and the education of moral values?' parents asked Socrates.*

*'Nine months before his birth...' says Socrates. And so says science too.*

*After birth is too late. The new born has all the parts of the body formed before birth; it is already a complete being.*

The embryo absorbs life from its mother, like the tree from the earth (Aristote).

The mother's womb is the embryo's first environment, first small universe. In its first stage of embryonic life, the future human being, will receive from its parents at the moment of conception and from the mother during the nine months of pregnancy different elements: material, spiritual or emotional. From all that depends its lifelong health, mental stability, talents, virtues and the capacity of its soul to give and receive love – in other words his or her happiness.

The physical, emotional and intellectual state all thought man's life in our universe, depend on the initial elements, the embryo will receive within the first universe.

Parents need to experience during this very significant period of nine months of expectation of the birth of their child, peace, love and serenity. The mother needs to take care of her food and her breathing. They both need to lead a healthy life and be positive in their thoughts and feelings. This positive nourishment of all sorts that they will send to their unborn child, constitutes the most significant and important gift that they can offer to their child for his whole life.

For the Greeks this harmonious building of the new human being from the very beginning of its life is at the same time the most radical prevention and healthy education that can be (Plato).

The Greek men and women, future parents should know, first of all, that the creation of life is a sacred act and that they have to prepare themselves for it with consequence and respect. They should take care, already before conception, of their food, the quality of their life, and, more than anything else, to the raising of the quality of the love between them. Through mutual acceptance, understanding, appreciation and admiration of each other, they should aim to the expression of the highest quality of love. They should practice giving to their companion with self-denial. This was considered the only way to reach happiness and to offer to the City a healthy and wise new generation.

Husband and wife should look at each other with generosity of heart, not with pettiness. They should have an attitude of forgiving the other person's weaknesses (let each one first think of his own weaknesses and how to overcome them) and of admiring his or her gifts of heart.

An harmonious life before conception, science teaches, forms a barrier against the transmission of hereditary defects.

For Greek people true motherhood starts from conception. Fatherhood as well.

If conception and pregnancy of a human being are lived with tenderness, spirituality and the respect that is due to them, the new generation would develop its inner wisdom, its health, its joys and talents. And the parents will be the first to feel happy, proud, dignified.

That was the motherhood's true dimension: the creation of a child that can be from its roots harmonious in body and spirit.

According to Pythagorean teaching, during the period of the reproduction, the couple should

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completely avoid the consumption of wine. They should be cautious to their good nutrition. Most importantly, they should be aware of the importance of the harmony of their soul, avoid thinking, feeling and living with violence, cruelty and injustice, since they believed that these emotional conditions reflect on the body and soul of the embryo.

It was believed that the embryo would form the same physical and psychic characteristics of what the mother was thinking, loving, seeing and imagine. Modern Science is aware too that the mother's impressions, thoughts and feelings have direct effect on the embryo.

So the pregnant women should live in peace, calm, harmony, measure, wisdom and beauty.

They were devoting their children to Apollo, God of Harmony, Light and Music, in order for them to become harmonious, bright and healthy like him.

The city and the houses were decorated with beautiful statues of heroes and gods, so that the pregnant women, by admiring them, pass and imprint their celestial beauty and their virtues to their children - body and soul.

The traditions of recent times are identical to those of the ancient Greek philosophers.

An old grandmother is still advising her pregnant little daughter: *'You should see beautiful children and mainly the beauty of mother Nature and Life itself in order to pass all this Beauty and Health to the body and soul of your child'.*

Isn't it obvious that Prenatal Education was the secret of ancient Greece? Due to this awareness, antiquity gave birth to so many celebrities in science, philosophy, art, politics, who have transmitted to the whole World the foundations of our contemporary civilization.

Ancient Greece, many centuries ago, discovered an open window for a new civilization in prenatal education. Humanity once again has to follow this example. Instead of leaving the State to spend billions on hospitals, prisons, law courts and special schools, it would be more useful for it to concentrate all its attention on its pregnant mothers. The cost will be far less and the results infinitely superior. The only thing that the State has to do is to inform young people in schools, colleges and universities, in health services, about the importance of the period of reproduction and the importance of knowledge concerning pregnancy.

At the time of conception, father and mother have an equally important part to play. But during the nine months of pregnancy, it is the way the mother lives that is determinant. The words mother, mater and matter stem from the same root, because the Ancients knew already that woman, the mother and she alone has direct power over the living matter of the child.

This power is so great that it can attenuate negative elements and amplify the positive elements of the genetic capital.

We all share some responsibility in this immense achievement that nature entrusts to the mother, the parental couple. We are all partners and, to a certain degree, responsible for the forthcoming child. We must help them by provoking a collective conscience, to which social decision-makers reply with appropriate measures.

Mothers must live, during the prenatal period of their child's life according to the old traditions, in serenity, in love for the expected being, in harmony, listening to music, in contact with beautiful nature, in admiration of all virtues and of the greatest and most true people around them, then they have the possibility to give birth to children that can be part of a New Generation, healthy, virtuous and creative, a generation of True People. These true people can transform a society of sickness, aggressivity and rivalry into a society of health, peace, co-operation and creativity.

All the women of the world, all the couples must unite for the regeneration of the human race.

In a one or a few generations, handicaps would considerably regress until to disappear, men and women would be profoundly transformed in their physical and psychic quality. One can then hope that, stronger, more stable, more confident inn themselves, more open to others and to life, they will be capable, on a planetary scale, of creating a more fraternal world in

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which everyone has his place and lives happily.

A dream ... which can become the reality of tomorrow, if every woman, every man, every professional person directs his efforts towards its concrete achievement.

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