

159845 - Types of immunisations and the ruling on vaccinating people with them

the question

The vaccinations or immunisations that are given to children are a questionable matter. The prevalent theory says that once you give the child a small amount of the virus that causes a certain disease - which is known as immunisation or vaccination - he then develops immunity against that disease for the rest of his life. But I became concerned about this issue after I read that most of the immunisations that are given to children are derived from rotten blood of horses, pus from sick cows, pigs' blood, rabbits' brains, dogs' kidneys, chickens' wombs... The list is long. What I want to know is the ruling on these things, and whether it is permissible for parents to give their children these immunisations. If the information I have read is correct, this means that the children of the world are being injected with impure and rotten substances. Didn't the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: "Allah did not put the remedy of my ummah in its disease"? So what should we do then?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Immunisation - which is also called protection and vaccination - makes the body of the one who is immunised produce substances known as antibodies; their function is to fight disease. They do not, in principle, cause disease to the one who is immunised. What happens of side-effects as a result of being immunised cannot be compared to the future benefits, in sha Allah.

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In al-Mawsoo'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-'Aalamiyyah it says: Protection or active immunisation is another word for vaccination. The vaccine contains a substance that can strengthen the immunity of the body and enable it to produce antibodies to a specific contagious disease. These antibodies protect the individual if he catches the live agent that causes the disease. The vaccine contains a strong substance that is enough to stimulate production of antibodies but it is not strong enough to cause the actual disease. Most vaccines contain the bacteria that causes the disease or dead viruses; some others contain living pathogens but they are in a weakened state that cannot cause the disease. These vaccines contain toxins that are secreted by the pathogens that cause the disease and these toxins are treated chemically so that they give immunity without causing disease.

Secondly:

The ruling on immunisation depends on the ruling on the substance used in it and the effects it has. They are of different types:

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The first type is substances that are basically permissible to use and have beneficial effects.

There is no doubt that these are permissible; in fact they are among the great blessings that Allah, may He be exalted, has bestowed upon His creation. This medical achievement has put an end to the spread of many epidemics.

Shaykh Sa'd ibn Naasir al-Shathri (may Allah preserve him) said:

Among issues having to do with epidemics and contagious diseases is the ruling on vaccinations that are given in order to protect against these diseases. We say: vaccinations are of two types:

(i) Vaccinations the effects of which are known from experience to give protection against this

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disease by Allah's leave. The ruling on these is that they come under the same ruling as medical treatment, as they are a type of medical treatment. That is because they are included in the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "Seek medical treatment." So they come under the same rulings as medical treatment. Some fuqaha' had a problem with the idea of vaccinations and said: The vaccination is a reduced level of sickness that is transferred to the body so that the body will be able to fight the real sickness (so that the body gets used to resisting sickness). They said: How can we allow introducing sickness into the body? But the more correct view is that there is nothing wrong with doing that; rather it is a righteous act because the introduction of harm in this case does not result in further harm; rather it serves a purpose which is to protect the one who receives this vaccination from severe illness. This indicates that there is nothing wrong with receiving this vaccination.

End quote from a lecture entitled Ahkaam Fiqhiyyah tata'allaq bil Awbi'ah

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See also the words of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) in the answer to question no. [20276](#).

Whether this permissible substance is a virus or bacteria or some other substance, they all come under the heading of that which it is permissible to consume if it will have a beneficial effect.

See the ruling on treating sickness with toxins and using toxins in vaccines in the answer to question no. [109424](#).

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The second type is that which is a substance that it is permissible to use, but it causes more harm than good to the body or it is of no benefit at all.

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With regard to these vaccinations there is no doubt that it is not permissible to use them because we have been forbidden to harm ourselves by consuming harmful food, drink, medicine and so on.

See the answer to question no. [20276](#).

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The third type is that which is made from a substance that was originally haraam or impure (najis) but it has been chemically treated or other substances have been added to it that changed it in name and quality to a permissible substance, which is what is called istihaalaa or transformation, and it has a beneficial effect.

In al-Mawsoo'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-'Aalamiyyah it says:

Some vaccines are made from parts or secretions of the live agents that cause the disease and other types of vaccinations are made from live agents that are similar to those that cause the disease. These agents give immunity but they do not cause disease. End quote.

It is permissible to have these vaccinations because the transformation that changed the name and quality of the substance also changed the ruling, so they became permissible to use.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to smoke from an impure substance or matter, (the ruling) is based on a principle which is that the impure substance, if it is transformed and becomes good like other goods substances, it is pure, like what falls into the saltworks of blood, animals that die naturally (without being slaughtered properly) and pigs becomes pure salt like the rest of the salt.

There are two scholarly views concerning this type of transformation. One view is that it does not become pure, as is the view of al-Shaafa'i and is also one of the two views of the madhhab of Maalik; it is also the well known view of the companions of Ahmad and is one of the two opinions

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narrated from him. The other view is that it does become pure. This is the view of Abu Haneefah and of Maalik according to one of the two opinions, and it is one of the two opinions narrated from Ahmad.

The view of the literalists and others is that it becomes pure, and this is the definitive correct view, because these transformed substances are not referred to in any text of prohibition, whether explicitly or implicitly. So they are not haraam and there is no reason for them to be haraam, and there is no justification to suggest that they are haraam. Rather the texts indicate that they are halaal because they are pure. They also come under the category that all are agreed is halaal.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 21/70, 71

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The fourth category includes every substance that is harmful or haraam, or the effect of which is not certain or there is a difference of opinion among doctors and specialists as to whether it is beneficial.

It is not permissible to take these vaccinations because of the possibility of exposing oneself to death and disease.

Shaykh Sa'd ibn Naasir al-Shathri (may Allah preserve him) said:

One of the issues having to do with epidemics and contagious diseases is the ruling on taking vaccinations that are given to protect against these diseases. We say that the vaccinations are of two types:

(i)... Mentioned above.

(ii)Vaccination against contagious diseases where there is no certainty of its effect and it is not yet known from experience, or the doctors differ concerning it and there is nothing to base one's

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judgement on and there was no medical opinion that seems to be more correct than others. In that case the basic principle is that it should not be taken and it is not permissible, because there is no certainty that it will have the effect of protecting against disease, but we are certain that it is harmful and that it is damaging to physical well-being, and we cannot be certain that its benefits outweigh its harms. Therefore we disallow it because we do not allow doing anything unless its benefits outweigh its harms. If we are not sure about that then the basic principle is that it is disallowed, i.e., if we are certain that a particular action is harmful and that the benefit that may result from this action is not proven, then in this case it is disallowed.

End quote from a lecture entitled Ahkaam Fiqhiyyah tata'allaq bil Awbi'ah

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And Allah knows best.