21169 - Ruling on Birth Control Pills and the Coil in Islam

the question

What is the shar'i ruling on using the coil (IUD – intrauterine device) as a means of preventing pregnancy, knowing that this means does not prevent fertilization of the egg, but it prevents the embryo from attaching itself to the wall of the uterus? May Allah reward you with good.

Summary of answer

In Islam, birth control pills and the coil are only permitted if there is a valid medical reason and with the husband's consent. Permanent contraception is discouraged unless medically necessary. Scholars have warned against potential harms, and Islam encourages having many children to increase and strengthen the Ummah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Islam Encourages Having Children and Growing the Ummah

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What the Muslims should do is to have as many children as they can , because this is the command issued by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he said, "Marry the one who is loving and fertile, for I will be proud of your great numbers." Because increasing the number of children increases the size of the Ummah, and being of great numbers is a source of pride, as Allah said, reminding the Children of Israel of that (interpretation of the meaning):

{And We helped you with wealth and children and made you more numerous in man-power.} [Al-

Isra’ 17:6]

And Shu`ayb (peace be upon him) said to his people:

{‘And remember when you were but few, and He multiplied you.’” [Al-A`raf 7:86 – interpretation of the meaning]

No one would deny that if the Ummah is great in number this will lend it pride and strength. This is contrary to what is imagined by those who think evil thoughts, that the large numbers of the Ummah is the cause of its poverty and hunger. If the Ummah increases in number and relies on Allah, and believes in His promise, in the ayah {And no moving (living) creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allah} [Hood 11:6 – interpretation of the meaning], then Allah will make things easy for them and will grant them sufficient means from His Bounty.

Conditions for Permissible Use of Birth Control Pills in Islam

On this basis, the answer to the question is as follows:

A woman should not use birth control pills unless the following two conditions are met:

- She should have a reason for that such as being sick and unable to bear a pregnancy every year, or being physically weak, or having other reasons why getting pregnant every year would be harmful for her.
- Her husband should give his permission , because the husband has the right to have children. This must also be done in consultation with a doctor, to find out whether taking these pills will be harmful to her or not.

If these two conditions are met, then it is OK for her to use these pills, but that should not be on a permanent basis, i.e., she should not use the type of birth control pills that prevent pregnancy permanently, because this is preventing progeny. (End quote from *Fatawa Al-Mar’ah Al-Muslimah*, 2/657, 658)

The Harmful Effects of Birth Control Pills

Concerning the harms caused by contraception , the Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Birth control pills: I have heard from a number of sources that doctors say they are harmful. Even if we do not know this from the doctors, we know it from ourselves, because preventing something natural that Allah has created and decreed for the daughters of Adam is undoubtedly harmful. Allah is Wise, and He has only created this blood which flows at certain times for a reason. If we prevent it with these medicines, that is harmful without a doubt.

But I have heard that the matter is worse than we imagine, that they may be a means of damaging the womb, and a means of causing nervous disorders. This is something we must beware of. (End quote from *Liqa' Al-Bab Al-Maftuh*, question no. 1147)

Ruling on Uterus Removal for Medical Reasons

Shaykh `Abd Al-`Aziz ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on removing the uterus in order to avoid having children for medical reasons which are either present, or may occur in the future and have been predicted by medical and scientific means?

He answered:

If that is necessary, then it is OK , otherwise it should not be done, because the Lawgiver urges us to have children and promotes that in order to increase the size of the Ummah. But if there is a necessary reason then it is OK, just as it is permissible to use means of contraception for a limited time for a legitimate Shar`i reason. (9/434)

Risks and Islamic Ruling on Using the Coil (IUD)

What is said concerning the birth control pill may also be said concerning the coil. It has been definitely proven by the doctors that this contraceptive method causes harm , especially when it is used continually. It is known that the woman who has a coil inserted has an increased flow of menstrual blood, and her period may come twice a month, which causes an iron deficiency in her body. Iron is one of the important minerals which the body needs. Some women may become anaemic when they use the coil and it makes their periods longer, resulting in the woman losing a large amount of blood and thus a large amount of the iron stored in the body. It has also been proven that many women suffer infections of the uterus as a result of using the coil . Despite all this, a woman may become pregnant with the coil in place, as has happened to a number of women. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.

And Allah knows best.