2159 - Using foetuses as a source of organs for transplant

the question

In some fields of medicine there is a trend towards using aborted foetuses for organ transplants. What is the ruling on this?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Nowadays there is something known as the trade in foetuses, in which some doctors deliberately abort foetuses so that they can profit from selling the foetal organs or cells, from which some kinds of injections may be prepared for the benefit of elderly rich people and others. This is a major crime, because it entails the deliberate murder of innocent souls for financial gain. This is a serious form of wrongdoing and the rulings concerning it are well known and obvious. The question of whether the aborted foetus may be used as a source of transplant organs has been researched by the Islamic Fiqh Council, which issued the following fatwaa:

1. It is not permitted to exploit foetuses as a source of organs needed for transplant into another person except in certain limited circumstances under stringent conditions.

1. It is not permitted to deliberately induce abortion for the purpose of exploiting the foetus for organ transplants to another person. Only foetuses expelled through natural or spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) or aborted for a legitimate reason may be used in this way. Surgery should not be performed to remove the foetus except in cases where the mother’s life is at risk.

2. If the aborted foetus is viable and capable of living, then medical attention should be aimed

at preserving its life, not at exploiting it for organ transplant. If it is not viable and will not live, its organs cannot be used until after it has died naturally, according to the conditions of sharee’ah.

1. It is not permissible to exploit any part of the procedures required to obtain and transplant organs for commercial gain.

2. The procedures surrounding organ transplants must be supervised and regulated by a specialized and trustworthy organization.

And Allah knows best.