234124 - Does Artificial Insemination Invalidate the Fast?

the question

I have been married for eight years and have not had any children. I want to have artificial insemination, but because of my circumstances I will be doing the procedure to implant embryos during the day in Ramadan. Does this invalidate the fast? Do I have to offer expiation for that day or not?

Summary of answer

Artificial insemination procedures, whether they are done inside or outside the body, and implanting embryos in the uterus, do not spoil the woman's fast. But it is better for the woman to avoid doing that during Ramadan if possible, so as to guard her fast and avoid any areas of doubt.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What is artificial insemination?

What is meant by artificial insemination is fertilizing the woman's egg with the sperm of the man, without having intercourse.

How can artificial insemination be done?

Artificial insemination may be done internally or externally.

- In the case of internal insemination, the semen is taken from the man to be injected into the appropriate place inside the wife's uterus, so that the sperm will meet the egg naturally and fertilization between them will occur.

The sperm is injected inside the wife's uterus via a thin tube that transfers the sperm to the cervix (neck of the womb).

- External fertilization (test-tube babies) is done by taking the semen from the man and the egg from the woman's ovary, then they are placed in a test tube , under specific physiological conditions so that fertilization between them may occur, then the fertilized egg is transferred to the wife's uterus so that it may attach to the wall of the uterus and grow like any other foetus.

We have previously explained the ruling on artificial insemination in a number of fatwas. Please see the answer to question no. 3474 .

Effect of artificial insemination on fasting

In order to understand the effect that artificial insemination has on the fast, we must explain a number of rulings:

1. Taking semen from the man by means of masturbation : if this is done during the day in Ramadan, then this is one of the things that invalidates the fast, according to the majority of scholars.

Therefore the man must avoid this during the day in Ramadan .

1. Taking the woman's eggs in the case of external fertilization is not regarded as breaking the fast, because this is usually done by means of a laparoscope (i.e., through an incision in the abdomen) or through the vagina, as a fine needle connected to the equipment is inserted through incisions made at the umbilicus and the lower abdomen, and the fluid containing the eggs is extracted, or it is done using ultrasound.

Neither of these methods is regarded as breaking the fast.

1. Insertion of the man's semen into the woman's vagina by means of a tube is also not regarded as breaking the fast, because this fertilization procedure does not come under the

heading of food and drink, neither in a real sense nor by any resemblance, and it is not akin to eating or drinking in any sense at all.

Modern medicine has proven that the woman's vagina is not connected to the digestive system at all, so anything that enters the woman's vagina cannot be regarded as breaking the fast.

Al-Bahuti said: "Rather her fast is broken if a man's penis penetrates her vagina, because that is intercourse, and intercourse breaks the fast because it is likely to lead to ejaculation." (Sharh Muntaha al-Iradat, 2/364)

Resolution of the Islamic Fiqh Council on artificial insemination

This is what the Islamic Fiqh Council based its view on when it stated that anything that enters the vagina is not regarded as breaking the fast. In their statement it says: The following things are not regarded as breaking the fast:

- Anything that enters the vagina, such as a pessary, douche, scope or fingers for a medical exam.
- Insertion of a scope, IUD ("coil") and the like into the uterus.
- Anything that enters the urethra of the male or female, such as a catheter, scope, opaque dye for certain types of diagnostic imaging, medication or a solution to wash the bladder. (Qararat Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islami, p. 312)

Insertion of semen via this method is not regarded as intercourse; hence an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "If she inserts semen via her vagina or rear passage, she is not required to do ghusl." (Rawdat al-Talibin, 1/85)

An-Nafrawi said: "The woman does not have to do ghusl if semen enters her vagina without her maniy also being emitted." (Al-Fawakih al-Dawanah, 1/117)

Based on that, artificial insemination procedures, whether they are done inside or outside the body, and implanting embryos in the uterus, do not spoil the woman's fast.

But it is better for the woman to avoid doing that during Ramadan if possible, so as to guard her fast and avoid any areas of doubt.

For more, please see this answer: What Breaks Your Fast .

And Allah knows best.