



109424 - Ruling on receiving vaccines and antidotes extracted from the venom of scorpions, snakes and so on

the question

Is it permissible to make an antidote to scorpion stings from the venom of the scorpion itself? In general, is it permissible to give antidote is extracted from the venom or secretions of animals, or from the animal itself, such as its body?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

What is known in the world of medicine is that the British doctor Edward Jenner (1749-1823 CE) was the one who discovered vaccination – or inoculation – as a means of preventing smallpox. The author Paul Vallely said in an article entitled “How Islamic inventors changed the world” that inoculation was known to the Muslims before others, as he said: “The technique of inoculation was not invented by Jenner and Pasteur but was devised in the Muslim world and brought to Europe from Turkey by the wife of the English ambassador to Istanbul in 1724 CE.”

Secondly:

Some of the scholars disallowed seeking treatment before becoming ill, but their view is not correct.

Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ar-Rajihi (may Allah preserve him) said:

The ruling on giving vaccinations before disease occurs is that it is permissible, such as giving vaccines for meningitis and cholera. The evidence that that is permissible includes:



1. What is soundly narrated in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever eats seven dates of Madinah in the morning, no witchcraft or poison will harm him.” So this hadith clearly refers to protection against disease before it happens, and it comes under the heading of taking permissible measures to ward off harm.
2. The scholars are unanimously agreed that food and drink protect against the harm of hunger and thirst, and wearing thick clothing and woollen garments protects against the harm of cold, and the mujahid’s wearing armour and taking up weapons protects against the harm of the enemy. All of this comes under the heading of protecting oneself against ill health before it occurs, and all people are agreed on that.

End quote from *Fawa'id fil-`Aqidah*, 18.

See also the words of Shaykh `Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) in the answer to question no. 20276.

Thirdly:

With regard to the ruling on consuming poison, we should differentiate between taking poison and using it for medicinal purposes. Previously the scholars disagreed on the ruling concerning that in terms of whether it is impure (najis) or pure (tahir). The correct view is that it is pure, but it is not permissible to consume poison with the aim of committing suicide. There is a warning against doing that in a clear, authentic text.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: “Whoever throws himself down from a mountain and kills himself will be in the Fire of Hell, throwing himself down therein for ever and ever. Whoever takes poison and kills himself, his poison will be in his hand and he will be sipping it in the Fire of Hell for ever and ever. Whoever kills himself with a piece of iron, that piece of iron will be in his hand and he will be stabbing himself in the stomach with it in the Fire of Hell, forever and ever.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 5442; Muslim, 109).



As for the ruling on using poison for medicinal treatment, it is permissible if it is proven to be of benefit, but it should be prescribed by a skilled doctor. In the past, they used to use it for kings to protect them, so that poison would have no effect on them if someone wanted to kill them with it. It has also proven to be effective for those who live in the wilderness or in lands where snakes and scorpions are common.

Imam ash-Shafa`i (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to taking medicine in which there is some venom or poison that is usually safe to take, there is no sin on the one who consumes it, because he is not consuming it in order to harm himself or to intoxicate himself, even if it happens to cause some kind of intoxication.

End quote from *Al-Umm*, 1/88.

Ibn Qudamah said:

With regard to medicines that contain venom or poison, if using them will most likely lead to death or insanity, it is not permissible to consume them, but if the medicine is most likely to be safe and there is the hope of benefitting from it, then the view that it is permissible is the right view, as is the case with other medicines.

But it may be that it is not permissible, because he is exposing himself to the risk of death, so it is not permissible, just as it is not permissible for one who consumes it without intending it as medicinal treatment.

But the first view is more correct, because with many medicines there is some fear of harm [side effects], but it is permissible to use them in order to ward off greater harm. So if we say that it is prohibited to consume it, then it comes under the category of prohibited things like alcohol and so on, but if we say that it is permissible, then it comes under the category of permissible medications, like any other medicine.

End quote from *Al-Mughni*, 1/447.



Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-`Asqallani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to simply taking poison, it is not prohibited in all cases, because it may be permissible to use a small amount of it, when it is mixed with something else that reduces its harm, if there is some benefit in that.

End quote from *Fat-h al-Bari*, 10/248.

Imam al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is permissible to use poison or venom for medicinal purposes, but it is not permissible to consume it otherwise. End quote from *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, 2/220.

In *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 25/257, it says:

It is permissible to use poison or venom for medicinal purposes, even according to those who say that it is impure, provided that it can be used in a safe way and there is the hope that it will be beneficial, by way of choosing the less harmful of two options and warding off the greater harm, on condition that you seek the advice of a Muslim doctor of good character, or you have good knowledge of what can be used for medicinal purposes, and there is no alternative that could treat the problem. End quote.

The same applies to all other vaccines and antidotes. All of that is on condition that it should be prescribed by a skilled doctor, in the light of experiments that led to certain results, or almost certain results, and on condition that no harm will result from taking it, and whatever temporary negative consequences (side effects) occur, such as fever and so on, are negligible in comparison to the great benefit of that vaccination or antidote. We have discussed this in the answer to question no. [20276](#).

It makes no difference whether the source of the vaccination or antidote is the same venomous animal, such as scorpions or snakes, or any other animals. What matters is that it is proven to be beneficial.



Shaykh Muhammad al-Mukhtar ash-Shinqiti (may Allah preserve him) said:

The scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) mentioned using venom or poison for protection, as some doctors used to administer it to great leaders if they feared that they could be poisoned. So they used to give them a few doses of the poison, so that the body would become able to handle it, and the scholars used to give concessions allowing that, because the reason for the prohibition is fear of dying from the poison, so if the reason is no longer there, the ruling is no longer applicable. Based on that, if it will no longer cause harm, or it is thought most likely that it will not cause harm, then it is permissible to administer it.

End quote from *Sharh Zad al-Mustaqni`*, *Kitab al-At`imah*.

And Allah knows best.