12289 - Ruling on aborting a deformed foetus

the question

A woman is pregnant and has had several scans, which show that there are deformities in the foetus. Is it permissible to abort it?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly: We have already stated in the answer to question no. 12118 the ruling on aborting a foetus that is physically deformed, and that this is permissible before the soul is breathed into the foetus, i.e., before 120 days of pregnancy have passed. This is allowed after exhausting all possible means of treating the problem. But after the soul has been breathed into the foetus it is not permissible to abort it because of deformity.

The parents have to be patient and accept the will and decree of Allaah, and remember the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning):

“and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allaah knows but you do not know”

[al-Baqarah 2:216]

“it may be that you dislike a thing and Allaah brings through it a great deal of good”

[al-Nisa’ 4:19]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for all his affairs are good, and that applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him he gives thanks and that is good for him, and if something bad happens to

him he bears it with patience and that is good for him.” Narrated by Muslim, 2999.

Secondly: Here we will add something from a fatwa of the Standing Committee concerning this matter.

The Standing Committee was asked about aborting a pregnancy in the fifth month, after scans proved that the foetus was deformed and the top of the skull was absent.

They replied:

It is not permissible to abort the foetus because of the deformity mentioned in the question. Allaah may heal the foetus during the remainder of the pregnancy, and it may be born normal and healthy, as has happened to many people.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 21/440.

They were also asked about a pregnant woman who was treated for cancer with radiotherapy, which would affect the foetus and cause it to be born deformed – is it permissible to abort it?

They replied:

It is not permissible to abort the foetus which it is feared may be deformed. Rather the matter should be left to the will of Allaah; it may be free of deformity.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 21/249.

They were also asked about a woman in the fifth month of pregnancy; scans had shown the presence of several deformities in the foetus which made the doctors sure that it would die after birth. These deformities were as follows: a deformity in the heart, a severe deformity of the spinal cord and spinal column, the size of the head is very small, there is a large sac between the head and body that is bigger than the head, the intestines are outside the abdominal cavity, and there is a deformity in the brain. Is it permissible to abort it?

They replied:

After studying the question, the Committee replied that it is not permissible to abort this pregnancy, because often the doctor’s reports are speculative, and the basic principle is that the foetus must be respected and it is forbidden to abort it, because Allaah may make the foetus whole during the remainder of the pregnancy, so it may be born free of the things that the doctors mentioned, even if what they said was correct. We must think positively of Allaah and ask Him to heal him and make him whole, and to cause him to be born healthy. His parents have to fear Allaah and ask Him to heal him from all ills and to delight them with a healthy child. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah says: ‘I am as My slave thinks I am.’”

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 21/250-251.

They were also asked about a woman in the fifth month of pregnancy, whose foetus has some deformities which expose the mother’s life to danger. Is it permissible to abort it?

They replied:

After studying the question, the Committee replied that if the situation is as described, and continuation of the pregnancy to full term will result in danger to the mother’s life, then there is nothing wrong with aborting the pregnancy before it reaches full term, in order to protect the mother’s life. But if the abortion is because of the deformities only, then it is not permissible to abort the pregnancy.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 21/452.