152447 - Is It Permissible to Donate Bone Marrow?

the question

I would like to donate bone marrow to patients who are suffering from leukaemia (blood cancer) but I want to make sure that it is halal.

There are two ways of helping leukaemia patients, either through a surgical bone marrow donation or by donating peripheral blood stem cells through a non-surgical procedure, called PBSC.

Donating bone marrow is a surgical procedure done under general or regional anaesthesia in a hospital. While a donor receives anaesthesia, doctors use needles to withdraw liquid marrow from the back of the pelvic bone.

PBSC donation is a non-surgical procedure done in an outpatient clinic. PBSC donors receive daily injections of a drug called filgrastim for five days, to increase the number of blood-forming cells in the bloodstream. Then, through a process called apheresis, a donor's blood is removed through a needle in one arm and passed through a machine that separates out the blood-forming cells. The remaining blood is returned to the donor through the other arm.

Are both procedures islamically allowed? Which procedure is preferred? Is there any reward for donating bone marrow and possibly rescuing the recipient's life even if he is most probably a non-muslim?

Summary of answer

In Islam, donating bone marrow is permissible as long as it does not harm the donor and is done with a sincere intention to help others, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, provided they are not in a state of war against Islam.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Islamic Ruling on Bone Marrow Donation

In the answer to question no. 108125, we discussed bone marrow and quoted the statement of the Islamic Fiqh Council that it is permissible to take it from adults if that will not cause them any harm.

Is It Permissible to Donate Bone Marrow to non-Muslims?

The Muslim will be rewarded for donating it if his intention is sincerely for the sake of Allah and he intends to do good to the person to whom it is donated, whether he is Muslim or non-Muslim, on condition that he is not a Harbi (a non-Muslim in a state of war against Islam), because there is nothing wrong with showing kindness to a non-Muslim who is at peace with the Muslims. Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity.} [Al-Mumtahanah 60:8]

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas were asked:

Is it permissible to transfer blood from one person to another even if they are of different religions?

They replied:

If a person is sick or is very weak and there is no way to treat him or help him except by transferring blood to him from someone else, and that is a way to save him, and the experts think it most likely that it will benefit him, there is nothing wrong with treating him by transferring blood from someone else to him, even if they are of different religions.

So blood may be transferred from a non-Muslim, even if he is a Harbi, to a Muslim and from a Muslim to a non-Muslim who is not a Harbi. But in the case of a Harbi, he is not under the protection of Shari`ah and it is not permissible to help him. (End quote from *Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah*, 25/66)

Medical Advice on Safe Methods for Donating Bone Marrow

With regard to your questions about the two methods you described of extracting marrow and separating it, it seems that there is nothing wrong with either of them. Determining which of them is better should be left to specialist doctors and the method which is easiest and least risky for the donor should be chosen.

And Allah knows best.