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THE ISLAMIC POSITION ON ABORTION

In Islam, life is sacred and highly valued, and for this reason, it must be honoured and promoted. The preservation of life is one of the basic necessities and purposes (Maqasid) in the Islamic law. Therefore, abortion is considered unlawful and a major sin (HARAM) in Islam regardless of the stage of pregnancy.

However, a greater degree of sin would be incurred if the pregnancy was aborted at a later stage. When the pregnancy progresses to 120 days, the soul enters the fetus and this is confirmed by the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who stated: [With regards to your creation] “Every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first 40 days, and then he becomes a clot for another 40 days, and then a piece of flesh for another 40 days. Then Allah sends an angel to breathe the soul into his body.” [Bukhari & Muslim]. In this case, abortion becomes a greater degree of sin and is deemed a form of deliberate murder.

In other cases, Islam considers the permissibility of abortion in the following circumstances:

1. Abortion is permissible at any stage of pregnancy even after 120 days if the pregnancy poses any exceeding danger to the mother, this must be confirmed by a qualified and trustworthy medical report. Such threats include the life of the mother being at serious risk.

2. Abortion before 120 days of conception is treated on a case by case basis, with the previous rules kept in mind. Such cases is the permissibility if the mothers health is in danger or if the fetus is examined to have an abnormality that is lethal or will cause severe disability.

Given the above, abortion remains a major sin (Haram) which one should repent from and ask Allah for forgiveness. Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an: “And do not kill the soul whom Allah has forbidden except by right.” {Al-Isra’a - Verse 33}

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