



Parents' duty to protect the health of children and address their health needs, including vaccination

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It is understood that the responsibility for children's healthcare rests with the parents in the first place because children are the focus of the parents' attention and compassion. Parents instinctively seek to protect their children and their healthy development to keep them free from any diseases that would lead to disability or health problem until they grow up and become active members of the society.

Allah urges parents to look carefully after their male and female children, so they can grow up physically and mentally healthy and be a good offspring of their parents. To that end, the following Quranic verse states: "Give to the near of kin...".⁽¹⁾ The Quran also states that relatives have responsibilities towards each other according to the degree of kinship. It is known that the degree of kinship between the parents and their children is a first-degree kinship. This degree of kinship places a greater responsibility on parents when it comes to looking after their children and protecting them from any risks, most importantly deadly diseases, including polio and other diseases preventable by vaccination as prevention is better than cure.

Parents' failure to protect their children by leaving them prey to diseases and not paying attention to the benefit of vaccines that prevent diseases is a clear violation of the responsibility of parents for the safety and protection of their children from any harm. This is

(¹ Surat Al-Isra [verse 26].

something the Prophet has warned against, as the following hadith indicates: "Neglecting one's own dependents is a reason enough for a man to commit a sin".⁽²⁾

Insofar as the child is considered to be one of his parents' dependents, if parents do anything that would harm him, they would be sinful as the hadith suggests. Additionally, protecting children is an obligation everyone must observe as the following Quranic verses state: "Allah orders you all to hand back trusts to their owners...";⁽³⁾ "Believers, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray your trust."⁽⁴⁾

Given the fact that the children are a trust in the hands of their parents - especially young children who cannot maintain their interests or care for their rights - the duty to preserve that trust by the parents is obligatory and the failure to perform that duty is a betrayal of that trust and is forbidden in Islam. One of the most important aspects of parents' care for children entails: Protecting their health by pursuing any method that would ensure this, including the prevention of diseases with vaccination and the use of vaccines that strengthen the body and protects it from paralysis or other diseases that children need to be vaccinated against.

Such level of care and protection requires parents to handle these health issues with full honesty and openness. They must not evade such issues or handle them improperly by avoiding the use of anti-disease tools or promoting misconceptions that hinder the use of such tools. They must not claim that such prevention tools are not important or are meant to sterilize children so they won't be able to reproduce and bring generations that would stand up to enemies who promote such vaccinations. The parents must also avoid false rumors claiming that these vaccines contain prohibited substances that are not sanctioned by Sharia, or that Sharia prohibits their use, or any other statements that deprive children of vaccinations.

Furthermore, parents must commit to truthfulness and frankness in matters of vaccination. They should not falsely claim that their

⁽²⁾ Narrated by Imam Muslim, 2/692 No. 996, and Imam Ahmad 2/160, No. 6495.

⁽³⁾ Surat Al-Nisa [verse 58]

⁽⁴⁾ Surat Al-Anfal [verse 27]

children have been vaccinated, while in fact, they have not, heeding or favoring false propaganda at the expense of the truth and reality and the actual interest of their children whom Allah entrusted parents to look after.

The rights of children are the rights of the Almighty because they are weak and do not know how to preserve their rights. Therefore, the failure to preserve their health and life interests is tantamount to a violation of Allah's rights.