

An insight into the use of contraceptives in Islam

Madam, it has for long bothered people, especially the Muslims, if the use of contraceptives is morally and ethically right. And if it is not, then there needs to exist an alternative to preclude unwanted pregnancy. We also need to know if doctors should take into account any non medical factor, such as religion, when advising contraceptives to a patient.

It has for long been argued that perhaps preventing pregnancy in any way other than abstaining from intercourse is intervening in God's ways. Faith is that it is solely in God's hands to decide what happens in an individual's life and any attempt to interfere in His decisions is a heinous sin. What has also given us food for thought is the idea that contraception has inadvertently had a major role to play in promoting promiscuity, which is considered a sin in Islam. People are more prone to become actively involved in sexual activity if they know that pregnancy is a rare possibility with contraception and hence it is unlikely that they will have to bear the brunt of the consequences. Moreover, when one member of the couple secretly uses or disuses contraception, it not only jeopardizes the relationship but also raises questions of ethical disparagement of honesty between them. A wife or a husband may not be in favour of having a child at the time, or even vice versa, but because one member goes against the plan without the knowledge

of the other, it leads to disagreements.

The Qur'an does not refer to contraception openly, but Muslims opposed birth control and they often quote the Qur'an, "You should not kill your children for fear of want" (17:31, 6:151).¹ Hence, as long as the form of contraception used is PREVENTING the formation of life and not DISSOLVING it after a mother has conceived, it will not be branded abortion and is therefore accepted.

Islamic medicine has always been notorious about birth control for centuries with Muslim writers like Avicenna (980-1037) and Al-Razi (d 923 or 924) referring to different methods of contraception.^{1,2}

There lies immense disparity between the use, misuse and abuse of absolutely anything. God thought it was essential to give us brains so that we try and use them to reason with every issue.

M. Owais Khan, Rabeea Mirza

Medical Students, Dow Medical College, Karachi.

References

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