

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

The Eleventh Regular Session of the European Council of Fatwa and Research, Held at the Headquarters of the Islamic Association of Sweden, at the Islamic Center, Stockholm, Sweden,  
For the Period of 1-7 Jumada I, 1424 H. (1-7 July 2003 A.D.)

Fatwa 11 / 11

The following question has been received from the East Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organization:

As you know, for about a decade the World Health Organization (WHO) has been carrying on a campaign to eradicate poliomyelitis, so that, with God's permission and assistance, it would no longer exist at all on the face of the earth. The incidence of disability and death that humanity will be spared is obvious. The disease, God willing, will no longer afflict the human race.

The child vaccine for immunization against poliomyelitis is prepared with the virus that causes the diseases on a tissular culture, i.e. a culture made of multiplying cells that form a cellular tissue of contiguous cells. When the culture succeeds, these cells have to be disconnected. The disconnection is done by using an enzyme called trypsin, derived from pigs. Small, almost negligible, amounts of trypsin are added, because the enzymes achieve the desired effect with minimal concentration. When added to the contiguous tissue cells, trypsin disconnects them in a very short period of time. The disconnected cells are thoroughly laved, so that no trace of trypsin remains. Next, poliomyelitis viruses are cultivated, in order to multiply on the cells. The multiplied viruses are then cropped, and an undoubtedly-lawful solution is added. The viruses are thus made ready for the preparation of vaccine, two or three drops of which are orally administered to every child.

Out of piety, some brother Muslims in various parts of the world, particularly in East Asia, have made the *fatwa* that it is not permissible to administer this vaccine to children, due to the fact that porcine trypsin is used in preparing it.

We have argued back as follows:

6022 391493  
(2)

- What God forbids is the partaking of pork, and trypsin has nothing to do with pork.
- Even if we admit that trypsin is forbidden, the scanty amount that is added in preparing the vaccine is too small to make any difference, if one applies the rule that "when the amount of water exceeds two *qillās*, impurities no longer affect it," even when the water does contain impurities.
- Supposing that trypsin is truly unclean and thus forbidden, the trypsin that is added is so thoroughly laved that it leaves no traces whatsoever.
- In case the three arguments already made are insufficient, taboos are made permissible in cases of necessity and pressing need.

Kindly state the Islamic ruling in light of the facts mentioned above. Please take into consideration that the hesitation of some parents to have their children immunized with this vaccine poses a risk to Muslim children alone. At the same time, it gives an unfavorable image which portrays Muslim as hindering a process that aims to eradicate, with God's permission, the existence of this disease on earth once and for all. After all, this eradication cannot be complete while there is even one child on earth carrying the virus.

#### The Answer

The Council considered the above question and—having investigated the purposes and consequences of Islamic Law, its rulings, and the statements of jurists—reached the following decision.

*First*, it has been medically established that the administration of this medicine is useful; that, with God's permission it immunizes children against polio; and that so far there is no alternative vaccine. Consequently, it is permissible to use it for purposes of treatment and prevention, especially since forbidding its administration results in great harm. Even if it is admitted that this liquid vaccine is impure, there are ample cases in Islamic jurisdiction where the prohibition of impurities is waived. In this case the impurity is exhausted through lavation and multiplication. Moreover, this is a case which involves a necessity or a need that amounts to a necessity. It is well known that one of the principal purposes of Islamic Law is to achieve benefits and ward off harm and corruption.

20/01 03 MON 14:01 FAA +204 2100410

DR. M. H. HANAWAY

004  
(4)

*Second*, the Council urges Muslim leaders and officials at Islamic centers not to be too strict in such matters that are open to considered opinion and that bring considerable benefits to Muslim children, as long as these matters involve no conflict with any definite texts.