

363929 - Obedience to Parents in Bringing Them Medication

the question

can I be obedient to anyone or especially to my parents' request on something which I know will harm them? Let's say my mother asks me to bring her medicine that will stop her headache. But I know and anyone who studies these subjects a little bit knows that these products contain chemicals and other substances which are dangerous to the body. Similarly, if my mother asks me to bring her processed foods which contain sugar and other substances. How do I have to handle the situation? I feel like I know that these things that they ask me finally will cause them cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood sugar, and other damages. What should I do?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Obedience to parents is obligatory in all permissible matters that are beneficial to them and do not cause harm to the child.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "It is incumbent upon a person to obey his parents in matters other than sin, even if they (the parents) are sinful, and this is the apparent meaning of Ahmad's statement; this is in matters that are beneficial to them and not harmful. If it is difficult for him but does not harm him, it is obligatory, otherwise, it is not." End quote from "Al-Fatawa Al-Kubra" (5/381).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar stated regarding the definition of disobedience (*`uquq*): "It refers to the occurrence of something that causes the parent to be hurt by their child, whether by word or deed, except in polytheism or sin, unless the parent is being unreasonable." End quote from Fath Al-Bari (10/406).

Secondly:

Manufactured medicines are not free from side effects that result from them. The principle of dealing with them is to weigh the benefits and harms. If their benefits and interests prevail, the harm is tolerated. If the harm prevails, they must be avoided; because one of the principles of Shari`ah is that "harm is not removed by harm."

And if the benefit and harm are equal, this is a matter for consideration and Ijtihad.

The reference in this is to the doctors.

Medicines - as is known - are not licensed for sale in pharmacies except after permission from the competent authorities, which means that they have undergone trials that prove their benefits are greater than the side effects they may cause, but these effects may increase for some individuals, so the doctor orders them to refrain from this medicine, and these are individual cases.

Therefore, it is permissible to take medicines that contain chemical substances if the benefit is predominant, and this is the reality, as well as consuming manufactured foods that contain sugar or colors or preservatives, due to the predominance of their benefit, despite the presence of harm in them, but their harm is tolerable in light of their benefit.

We do not know of anyone from the scholars who has prohibited the consumption of what has been mentioned, so beware of prohibiting what Allah has permitted, and of speaking about Allah without knowledge. If medicines were to be completely abandoned due to their side effects, it would be necessary to eliminate most of them and leave people suffering from pain and the compounded effects resulting from the continuation and aggravation of the disease.

In conclusion:

If your parents order you to bring medicine prescribed for them by a doctor, then hasten to bring it, or if they order you to bring food containing sugar, then comply with their order; for they only command you with what is permissible, and they are hurt by your disobedience to them in that.

And Allah knows best.