

Introduction

بِسْمِ تَعَالَى

In His Name, the Most High

The uncontrolled growth of population this century has posed a huge dilemma and has brought with it irreversible damages to all aspects of life – including the environment that people live in and the health and welfare of the family. Keeping in mind that if the economic, societal and cultural factors do not expand to keep in line with the growth of population, then this population growth will definitely have a negative impact on the well being of the entire society.

Where as 150 years ago, the population of the world was a mere 500,000,000 people, at the present time, there are currently over 6,000,000,000,000 people inhabiting the planet Earth and this number is on the increase as can be seen by the current growth of population of the world. We must also keep in mind that 90% of this increase has taken place within the non-Industrialized countries of the world.

Iran is also one of those countries in the category of those whose population growth has led to a change within the society. Due to improvement of the state of health and medicine at the present time in comparison to the past, the number of deaths and mortalities especially the death and mortality rate amongst children has dropped – however the number of births within the country has also gone up.

In the census of 1345 (1966), the population of Iran was close to 26,000,000, however during the census of 1365 (1986) – meaning during the span of twenty years – this number had almost doubled and the population reached close to 50,000,000.

Keeping this increase in mind, it can be stated that by the year 1400 (2021), the population of Iran may well be 100,000,000. In addition, according to the statistics of the median age of the population taken from the various indicators of the growth and planning of families within the Islamic Republic of Iran that were gathered in the month of Tir, 1376 (1997), 36.7% of the population of Iran were under the age of

15.

It is clear that the securing of food resources, work, residence, health, ways to spend free time, education, etc... for a population that is on the increase is one of the most essential issues in the path of expanding the economic situation and in maintaining the society.

In their responsibility as assistants in helping in family planning within the country (of Iran), in addition to the above mentioned opinions, the *Ministry of Health* has also strived to present the outlook of Islam in relation to population control.

Keeping in mind that there are pregnancies of girls under 18 years of age and of women over 35 years of age; pregnancies which are taking place less than two years after delivery of the previous child; women having three or more children and other such things which significantly increase the chances of death of the mother and her child and also keeping in mind that both of these groups – both the mothers and their children – are two groups that face more of the societal pressures, it was necessary to go forth in the correct manner (in educating others) to help prevent the death of these individuals.

Thus, following in the direction of other political developments that have been taking place with the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from the year 1368 (1989), population control was included as one of the principle programs of the Ministry of Health.

The outcome of this step forward was a decrease in the growth of the population which in the year 1365 (1986) was approximately 3.9% to around 1.4% in the year 1375 (1996).

That which was the principle factor which guaranteed success of this movement was the co-operation of the respected Grand Scholars through their contemplation on the issue of family planning and issuing of *Fatawa*¹ in these regards.

This development in the field of Islamic *Fiqh*² gained the attention of many of the Islamic countries such that within two years, many scholars of the highest caliber, the Leaders of *Salatul Jumu`ah*³ and *Jama`at*⁴, those in charge of the Health Ministries (of their own countries) and groups from Malaysia, the Philippines, Yemen, Sudan, Mali, Maldives, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau and other countries traveled to Iran and were able to witness from up close the changes that were taking place (in regards to family planning).

The present book is a compilation of *Fatawa* from the top caliber religious scholars of the Shi`a and the Ahl as-Sunnah within the Islamic Republic of Iran in relation to the various methods of birth control.

During the course of a few months, Doctors Shahryari Afshar, A`dham Dukht Rahimi and Shirin Qadhi Zadeh Ihsa'i were able to compile these religious enquiries.

We would like to express our thanks to these three ladies who went through great difficulties and also the difficulties that the respected assistant of the Ministry of Health also went through in this work.

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1. Religious injunctions issued by senior Scholars. (Tr.)
 2. Jurisprudence – the science of extracting and deducing the Islamic laws from the primary sources. (Tr.)
 3. Friday Prayers (Tr.)
 4. Congregational Prayers (Tr.)

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