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Theological developments in Bioethics

Summary

This text is derived from the book *Theological developments in Bioethics: 1992-1994*, edited by B.A. Lustig in 1997 in Texas. Generally, it contains ideas of various religious and churches about issues of bioethics. I have chosen one of them, which indicates the opinion of islamic religious.

The matters of bioethics are contemporary problems, especially in modern medicine. It means issue of the medical research, mainly its new technologies, new possibilities of the treatment, system of the health care in general atc. The common problem is that the new ways and technologies can be and are different and controversial in the societies. Islamic society view is based on the Holy Qur'an. The interpretation which describes and gives the regulation to the human conduct is called Sharia. It is the main source of the rules for life and bioethics as well in muslim countries.

In the societies there is very important a cooperation between national laws, medical ethics and the religious teachings for the stability of the system. But in fact, what is legal cannot be ethical. Principles of the society have to be focused to the credit for all the people. It means several principles. The first one is the beneficence which was explained before, the second one is the autonomy which means respect to human beings, the third one is the principle of non-maleficence which says that there is not allowed to harm anyone like hate or envy to each other. The last one is the principle of the justice. In Islamic tradition these instructions are valid for the behavior of the people to each other but also to behavior to animals and to the nature in general.

These four principles extend to items of bioethics. New reproductive technologies and medically assisted conception, gene therapy, abortion, birth and care of severely disabled newborns, experimental treatment, active euthanasia, embryo research, these are the main topics of bioethics. There are mentioned some other problems like equitable access to health care and so on.

The Qur'an, the reference of the prophet Mohammad, support modern science and its new knowledge. At the same time it gives a big stress to religious and its moral values. In Muslim world is very important the treatment of the infertility. The adoption is unacceptable there but the life in marriage without children is degradating in this society, especially for the women. Although they support new reproductive technologies there are a lot of conditions for it. For example the donation of reproductive cells to another couple is strictly forbidden

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because of mixing genes. The opinions about abortion are different inside the Muslim community. There is believed that the embryo achieves the own soul 120 days after conception. Some groups agree the abortion before 120's day is acceptable, another groups disagree. Abortion is permitted there only in cases when the mother or the child are jeopardise or the child is seriously disabled. Active euthanasia is considered like killing and is completely forbidden in Sharia.

The Islamic bioethics matters include also global problems like differences among developed and developing countries, especially differences in health care among them. All the people should have right entrance to medical centres, no just riches.

These are summarized just basic and in my opinion most debatable matters of bioethics. The assisted reproduction, abortion or euthanasia are the question which everyone can solve in the personal life. The base of ethical view of Islam to bioethical issues is built up on the 4 principles – beneficence, autonomy, non-maleficence and justice. Theological approach is based on the Mohamed's teaching and there must be coincidence.